

Independent Evaluation of United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub- region (UNIAP) Phase III (2007-2013)

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Annexes (separate file)

1. List of Persons Consulted;
2. List of Documents;
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4. Terms of Reference;
5. Letters from key stakeholders in chronological order: NZ Aid 29 September 2010; Five COMMIT Governments (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam dated 29 September 2010; US Government statement 1 October 2010; Royal Thai Government dated 11 November 2010;
6. UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre information;
7. Audit trail.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APRC	Asia Pacific Regional Centre (UNDP)
ARTIP	Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project
ARCPPT	Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking project
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative on Trafficking
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
GTIP	Global Trafficking in Persons Report (US Department of State)
HT	Human Trafficking
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMM	Inter-Ministerial Meeting (COMMIT)
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
M+E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTV Exit	Music Television End Exploitation and Trafficking Campaign
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordination (UNIAP)
NZ Aid	New Zealand AID
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PD	Project Document (UNIAP 2006)
PMB	Project Management Board
PPR	Principal Project Recipient
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (UNDP)
RMO	Regional Management Office (UNIAP)
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SCUK	Save the Children UK
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIREN	Strategic Information Response Network
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting (COMMIT)
SPA	Sub-regional Plan of Action
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-agency Project on Human Trafficking
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-GIFT	United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNRR	United Nations Resident Representative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOS	United States Department of State
WV	World Vision

Executive Summary

1. This is an evaluation of the United Nations Inter-agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) which provides support to Governments in the Greater Mekong Sub-region in their counter-trafficking efforts, particularly through the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process. It also carries out other activities aimed at supporting the work of the broader counter-trafficking community.

2. It assesses UNIAP's performance from a strategic perspective and has a two-fold purpose (Terms of reference - annex 4):

- Build on the mid-term evaluation and provide a solid assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of benefits.
- Provide a series of recommendations and proposals for improving project design, governance and management structures, and strategic programme approaches in order to inform decisions concerning the future course of action.

The evaluation was carried out over a period of 80 days between 26 September 2011 and 14 March 2012 using various methodologies including interviews/meetings involving 187 individuals and the review of 178+ documents and some 500 pages of contemporaneous interview notes.

1. Key findings and conclusions

3. The key findings on the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, impact, sustainability, relevance and efficiency are as follows:

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project varies with each of its four key objectives:

- **Objective 1** - The project is largely effective in meeting objective 1. It is highly rated for its support to participating Governments, excepting one, in consolidating and deepening their efforts to combat trafficking, and in strengthening bilateral cooperation with nearby countries. UNIAP's work on this objective is well-regarded by the majority of stakeholders. There are areas for improvement, and a particular concern that the project is not supporting all Governments in the equal and unified way needed to best foster regional cooperation.
- **Objective 2** – The project is largely ineffective in meeting objective 2. Although there are joint events and activities, UN agencies in all but one country, tend to find the project of limited service to them. Most interviewees acknowledge UNIAP's information meetings, its achievements on other objectives and cordial relations with UNIAP country staff. But disagreements are frequently mentioned. UNIAP's interpretation of its role

and lack of sufficient coordination with the UN system is criticised. There are various underlying causes for this tension.

- **Objective 3** – The project is partially effective in meeting objective 3. UNIAP has provided useful services to the wider anti-trafficking sector. Its research efforts are seen as high quality but raise serious issues of process management which require attention. UNIAP has provided a forum for information exchange but other services have received less attention, and civil society feedback is mixed.
- **Objective 4** – The project is partially effective in meeting objective 4. There is little awareness amongst most stakeholders as to what this objective is about. The projects are appreciated by the beneficiaries and donors of these specific activities. UNIAP's approach to special projects has not served its overall coordination function however; critics say it has gone too far into implementation and filled gaps that others are better placed to fill.

It is worth recalling that Objective 1 is the main part of the project and occupies the majority of the project's time and resources. As such when considering overall effectiveness, due weight must be given to the fact that the project has executed its main function in terms of serving Governments/COMMIT effectively.

Impact - There is considerable anecdotal evidence of the project's impact but it is beyond the scope of this evaluation report to make a full determination on impact.

Sustainability – there is partial sustainability of benefits. The prospects for sustaining COMMIT activities at national level are promising as national mechanisms, action plans, capacity building activities and budgetary support are in place. However, as the COMMIT process is essentially about inter-governmental cooperation, sub-regional support is a sine non qua – without it COMMIT cannot operate. The sub-regional support arrangements are overly dependent on UNIAP and lack sustainability. Little attention has been paid to the sustainability of other project components.

Relevance - The project is highly relevant. The COMMIT process and support to Government action remains the top priority. The research work fills critical gaps in knowledge. The remaining project components, particularly coordination, both within the UN, and among national players, have diminished in relevance over time as other structures and institutions have become better placed to play those roles.

Efficiency - The project's management and governance structures are dysfunctional, unable to provide the adequate control and guidance needed to keep the project on track, and in dire need of reform.

4. The reason why some objectives have been served well and others have not has to do with the project's interpretation of what these objectives meant and the approach required. An assessment of the way the project has been executed as compared to what was intended by the project document shows some important differences. The project document was an

expression of consensus among stakeholders at the time this phase started in 2006/7 and execution has deviated from these commitments in three respects:

- UNIAP was envisaged as a policy/coordination project but has increasingly taken on the role of implementer;
- It was intended to be a service provider and support to others working in the sector but has assumed a role as a separate entity which exists to lead and organise others;
- The core priority on COMMIT, in terms of 70% focus of the project's time and resources, has not been fully maintained due to a growing emphasis on objectives 3 and 4.

5. This deviation from what UNIAP was expected to do has led to disagreements between UNIAP and others over its role and activities. UNIAP's research work under objective 3 has yielded critical findings which have strained its relations with one Government in particular. Its implementation activities under both objectives 3 and 4 have overlapped with the role of the UN agencies and NGOs, with one interviewee summing up a commonly held view of UNIAP as *"a coordination project which is not coordinating well."* In addition, the role of service provider to the UN as envisaged under objective 2 has not been fulfilled, rather the project has seen itself as one apart from the UN with the mandate to lead, organise or lobby other parts of the UN system. The increasing emphasis on objectives 3 and 4 has inevitably come at the cost of objective 1 which is intended to be the core purpose of the project.

6. These dynamics have also infected relationships with and between other key parties and put a strain on the COMMIT process as a whole. Having one Government highly dissatisfied with the project, and the other five highly satisfied has inevitably meant that the regional focus has to some extent turned to disagreements over UNIAP instead of joint efforts to combat trafficking. The split between the Governments over the future of the project in late 2010 highlights this. Likewise the tensions between the project and UN agencies have spilled over into relations with Governments and donors alike.

7. Although the project has served individual Governments and donors very well and with high quality services, the overall machine does not work – it is beset with contradictions which are pulling stakeholders in different directions. The project has embarked on two conflicting strategies: the first and key strategy from the point of view of the project document is to combat trafficking by fostering inter-governmental cooperation (objective 1); the second strategy developed by UNIAP itself and executed through objectives 3 and 4, is to combat trafficking through a human rights investigation and public advocacy approach. Both strategies are a valid response to human trafficking but it is questionable if UNIAP as secretariat to COMMIT, can take on the latter and still be impartial enough *vis-a-vis* different Governments to maintain the sense of parity and equanimity needed to keep inter-governmental dialogue flowing. All project strategies need to pull together to serve the key purpose which is to combat human trafficking through improved inter-governmental collaboration. Moreover, in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, all stakeholders should work in a harmonised and aligned way that fosters national and regional ownership.

8. Despite this, UNIAP has done relevant and cutting edge work in this phase under these new initiatives and approaches prompted no doubt by a genuine commitment to support victims of trafficking. The issue is that it has not really done what it was supposed to do in the way it was supposed to do it. Given that the approach laid out in the project document had been endorsed by various constituencies in 2006 as important for a systemic counter-trafficking response, UNIAP was not free to go down a somewhat different route without securing the agreement of all concerned.

9. All sides bear some responsibility for this, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the management and governance structures of the project which have been inadequate in providing sufficient oversight, direction or indeed support to ensure that the project keeps on track. There was a particular failure in day to day line management and supervision. Early intervention to check that the project was developing as agreed by stakeholders would have helped avoid an escalation of problems. Naturally UNIAP project management must also share responsibility for the strategic choices made of its own volition and without due consultation with other players or requests for authorisation from a higher level.

10. There are deeper issues and inherent tensions also. The problem is not unique to this stage in UNIAP's history or to the current cast of characters. UNIAP has been creaking for many years under an awkward and inappropriate project design which has long been in need of change. The project was set up with one intention in 1998/1999, UN inter-agency cooperation, this was superseded when COMMIT came on the scene in 2004, and that has now become the central priority. The design has never kept up with these developments. Recurring problems over concurrent phases and recommendations for resolving them in various management reviews and evaluations have not been taken up.

11. The evaluation concludes that the project delivers very well on discreet aspects, and that in this, as in previous phases, it has important achievements in terms of sustaining COMMIT, a globally known inter-governmental process on trafficking, as well as other pioneering quality work. However, the project as a whole does not work in a unified and coherent manner; while there have been gains in terms of visible outputs and outcomes, there have also been losses, perhaps less tangible but no less important (certainly from the point of view of the original project document) in terms of sectoral cohesion, coordination, confidence building and collaborative working within the counter-trafficking community.

12. Stakeholders tend to have a very segmented vision of the project; seeing their part of the pie and being happy or unhappy with it as the case may be. Those who are served well may perceive the findings of the evaluation as rather negative. Equally, those who are unhappy with the project will be disappointed if their specific complaints are not confirmed. In this divisive and divided picture, there is no ready-made analysis for this evaluation to draw on but a responsibility to look at the big picture and to see how all the pieces fit together.

13. These different and polarised visions of the project have forced stakeholders into extreme positions, either wanting the project to end abruptly or to continue indefinitely with no change

at all resulting in the governance crisis of 2010. The reality is somewhere in the middle. The project components need to be brought to fruition. What has been achieved so far over successive phases is important and any kind of premature and unplanned end would undo the investment put in by many – Governments, donors, UN, civil society, and UNIAP. Nevertheless there is a pressing need to evolve the project to another stage.

14. The recommendations made by this evaluation directly relate to the key findings namely that the project design is outdated and the project has outgrown its inter-agency component; it essentially exists to support an inter-governmental process and must be re-designed with this in mind. The project also requires closer supervision and management support than it has received in the past. The recommendations give priority to the views of Governments as beneficiaries, and the UN as manager, since it bears the responsibility for execution of the project. They also take account of the situation of UNIAP staff and obligations to meet donor commitments.

2. Key recommendations

The report makes a number of fundamental recommendations aimed at strengthening UNIAP as it moves forward. A summary is provided here but a full listing and commentary is contained in the recommendations section.

2.1. Recommendations to PMB/COMMIT Governments

15. Recommendation 1 – Project continues with significant changes

- a) The project should continue beyond the end of 2013 but with significant changes as are discussed in the recommendations below.

16. Recommendation 2 - Objectives to be revised

- a) There should be two objectives instead of four:
 - Services to COMMIT/Governments including the engagement of the development community with COMMIT. This should have top priority.
 - Services to the broader counter-trafficking community e.g. some level of coordination as needed in a given context of UN, NGOs, donors etc.; research; civil society capacity building etc. This brings together elements under existing objectives 2-4 as necessary.

17. Recommendation 3 – Objectives to be implemented separately

- a) A firewall needs to exist between these two project objectives with a clear demarcation of staff, budgets, and activities.

- b) The separation should allow the COMMIT/Government function to be serviced by an autonomous unit.

18. Recommendation 4 - Inter-agency character to change

- a) The project should retain an inter-agency service function (as shown by the two objectives above) but it should no longer be under inter-agency management.

19. Recommendation 5 - Name of the project to change

- a) The name will need to change since it comprises the words 'inter-agency'.

20. Recommendation 6 - Management structure to change

- a) It is recommended that the project stays with UNDP under a stronger management structure under the UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC).

21. Recommendation 7 - Governance structure to change

- a) Full management responsibility should pass to UNDP APRC and the project management board and project advisory committee should be reconstituted to form an advisory board.

22. Recommendation 8 - Changes to take place as soon as is feasible

- a) Changes should happen as soon as possible taking into account a number of issues.
- b) From now till end 2013 should be considered a transitional phase in which preparations take place for a seamless move from this phase to the next.
- c) Stakeholders should allow UNDP to work out the specific date for transition sometime in 2013.

23. Recommendation 9 - Interim arrangements to be put in place for the transitional phase

- a) UNDP to appoint a dedicated part-time manager with strong management experience to line manage UNIAP with immediate effect
- b) The line manager can be seated in UNDP APRC if it takes over the project with immediate effect. If this is not an option, the line manager will be situated in the UNRC Thailand office, as now, reporting to the UNRC.
- c) Stakeholders to decide on the design of the new phase. UNDP will facilitate the process: it will consult the counter-trafficking community and place particular emphasis on

ensuring any proposed design meets the requirements of intended beneficiaries (Governments) and the organisation designated to manage and implement the project post 2013.

- d) If the project stays with the UNRC until the current phase is over, UNDP should be given a seat on the PMB in order to have a say in decision-making about the project.

2.2. Recommendations to UNDP for interim period

24. Recommendation 10 - Appointment of interim part-time line manager to oversee the project with immediate effect until end of phase III

- a) UNDP to make the appointment of a line manager a priority.

25. Recommendation 11 - UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific in New York to take charge of all key decisions

- a) UNDP RBAP to approve all management and funding decisions until Phase III is over and/or until currently vacant top management posts in the region are permanently filled.

26. Recommendation 12 - Prepare a management response and action plan until the end of Phase III

- a) UNDP to prepare a management plan covering steps required to successfully conclude this phase of the project and transit to the next as well as follow-up to issues arising in this evaluation.

3. Report structure

27. The report starts with an introduction of the evaluation background in chapter 1 and a brief description of the context and project in chapter 2. **Readers should note that these two sections contain new information and analysis which may be of interest.** The evaluation findings by evaluation criteria are presented in Chapter 3 followed by a discussion of conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1. Evaluation purpose

28. This is an evaluation of the United Nations Inter-agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) which provides support to Governments in the Greater Mekong Sub-region in their counter-trafficking efforts, particularly through the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process. It also carries out other activities aimed at supporting the work of the broader counter-trafficking community. This is an evaluation of UNIAP, not of the COMMIT process.

29. It assesses UNIAP's performance from a strategic perspective and has a two-fold purpose (Terms of reference - annex 4):

- Build on the mid-term evaluation and provide a solid assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of benefits.
- Provide a series of recommendations and proposals for improving project design, governance and management structures, and strategic programme approaches in order to inform decisions concerning the future course of action.

30. The evaluation is intended for use by the PMB and the six member countries of the COMMIT process. It covers the current Phase III (2007-2013) with a consideration of key historical milestones and spans all six countries and all principal stakeholders i.e. six COMMIT Governments, relevant UN agencies, donors, CSOs, and UNIAP regional and country offices. The substantive scope covers various issues including, results achieved against objectives, ownership of stakeholders, "client satisfaction", and sustainability of the concerned actions/functions, both financial and organizational. It considers the inter-agency nature of the project, the overall effectiveness of the governance and management structure as well as the appropriateness of the project some ten years after inception.

31. The TOR elaborated a detailed set of specific objectives and evaluation questions. The inception report prepared by the evaluator at the start of the process¹ further refined the evaluation scope. The key evaluation questions are framed around the standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria commonly used in development evaluations:

- Relevance – Is the project relevant to the problem of trafficking in the region? In what ways is it relevant? In what ways is it not relevant?
- Effectiveness - How effective is the project? What are its main achievements? What has it not achieved?
- Efficiency - How efficient is the project? How well does it function? What are the major internal and external factors that influence the ability of the project to achieve results?
- Impact - What difference has the project made to the problem of trafficking in the region?

¹ Available on request

- Sustainability - How sustainable is the project intervention in terms of project activities, finance, organisation and expertise?

2. Evaluation methodology

2.1. Evaluation principles

32. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in both the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation which highlight in particular:

- Impartiality – findings are triangulated across different data sources i.e. cross-section of stakeholder responses, previous evaluation studies, and documentary review.
- Independence – recruitment process placed strong emphasis in selecting a consultant who had not worked for UNIAP previously. Interpretation services were provided independently of UNIAP – either by external providers or by the UN Resident Coordinator's office in each country. UNIAP staff helped with planning and logistics but did not participate in any evaluation meetings.
- Confidentiality – all interviews were held on a confidential and non-attributable basis. The information so collected remains in the sole possession of the evaluator. Findings are not attributed to any individual source unless permission has been obtained in advance.

The evaluation encountered interviewees who feared reprisals for speaking their minds on UNIAP – an unusual, not to say undesirable sentiment, to find in a development project, especially one focused on human rights. In some cases, interviewees only opened up once they were confident of the evaluation's independent stance. When asked why they did not raise their concerns more openly, one interviewee said, *"We've seen what happens to other organisations, we try and be tactful and don't reveal differences..."*.

- Inclusivity – the evaluation took a participatory approach and reached out to all suggested stakeholders as well as additional sources identified by the evaluator. No sampling was involved; the evaluation was open to everyone.

2.2. Evaluation methods

33. The evaluation used a qualitative methodology involving the following research methods to acquire in-depth insights into the way UNIAP works:

- 1) Interviews. Face to face interviews were carried out with key individuals from all stakeholder groups at both regional and country level i.e. UNIAP staff, UN agencies, six

COMMIT Governments, international and local NGO partners; and donors. Phone interviews were conducted with trafficking specialists based inside and outside the region as well as a UN reform specialist. One or two email contributions were also received.

- 2) Small group meetings were used for country level meetings with civil society.
- 3) Documentary review of project documents, papers on wider policy issues, and documents provided by other stakeholders (annex 2).
- 4) Observation, for instance, attendance at one stakeholder meeting, and visit to a shelter for victims of trafficking.

Three additional methods were added as the evaluation progressed:

- Extended Question and Answer exercise conducted by email whereby the evaluator put some 33+ questions to UNIAP for its official response. This process was initiated to ensure that the evaluation had a sound basis for its conclusions². It struck a balance between the different parties to this process, of which UNIAP is one: by giving UNIAP an opportunity to clarify issues but without advancing a preview of the findings ahead of other stakeholders.
- Historical analysis was extended back to the start of the project in 1998/1999 by tracking down previous UNIAP staff for interviews and retrieving earlier project design documents and evaluations.
- Review of internal UNDP communications about the project.

34. These methods offered the best fit with the requirements of this particular evaluation in terms of evaluation purpose, key principles and underlying constraints. The interviews and group meetings took a semi-structured format based on questions listed in the evaluation matrix and evaluation questionnaire³. These questions were further adapted at the start of the process. An email exchange between donors in October 2011, copied to the evaluator, urged a focus on recommendations and proposals for improvements of UNIAP rather than simply a consideration of past and present performance. Early interviews also suggested the need to breakdown the discussion on effectiveness into specific components as not all stakeholders were familiar with each project objective. The evaluation did not call for meetings with victims of trafficking as the degree to which the project carries out grassroots activities on trafficking cases did not become apparent until a late stage of the evaluation process.

35. The evaluation amounted to a deep immersion into the issues facing UNIAP within a short time frame. Over a period of 80 days between 26 September 2011 and 14 March 2012, the evaluation involved:

² Q+A was carried out over a period of 2 months from 21/12/2011 to 17/2/2012. It involved the exchange of 97 emails and the receipt of 105 documents (document list – annex 2), 6 email correspondences, and 8 notes from UNIAP. This is aside from previous communications with UNIAP earlier in the evaluation.

³ Available on request.

- 122 meetings with 187 individuals broken down as shown in table 1. Most meetings were an hour long, except for meetings with key UNIAP regional and national staff which often lasted several hours and were met on more than one occasion. UNIAP selected and made appointments with the vast majority of interviewees. The evaluator identified a handful of additional persons to interview, and also arranged phone interviews with trafficking specialists directly. (annex 1- list of interviewees; annex 3 – list of schedules)
- 500+ pages of contemporaneous interview notes
- 178+ documents (annex 2)
- 1700+ emails

Table 1: Breakdown of interviewees by stakeholder group

	UNIAP	Governments	Donors	UN	NGOs	Miscellaneous	Total
Number of Individuals	33	41	10	44	45	14	187
Number of meetings	25	25	7	33	19	13	122

36. The data from interviews was systematically analysed by preparing a matrix of points and then comparing them across stakeholder groups and countries. This enabled the evaluation to identify overall trends and patterns. In the case of especially sensitive findings, the data was analysed twice. All feedback was considered relevant to some extent providing it was found credible but with greater priority given to issues raised frequently, especially across different stakeholder groups. The proximity of the stakeholder was a consideration e.g. minority views of Governments, as key beneficiaries, carried greater weight than individual trafficking specialists with little day to day engagement in the project. This qualitative analysis was supplemented by the findings of an in-depth documentary review. The evaluation questionnaire included a quantitative component but as any analysis arising from that would likely be unreliable (due to subjective interpretations and inconsistent incompleteness); it was not reproduced but kept for informal cross-checking by the evaluator. A draft report was shared with stakeholders on which comments relating to factual corrections and omissions were sought. Eight sets of comments were received. Many comments did not relate to factual corrections or omissions – nonetheless, all were considered. Extensive inputs entailing considerable amendments to the report were received just on the deadline of 8 March 2012. In line with evaluation good practice, comments were handled in a transparent manner. All comments were compiled in an ‘audit trail’ setting out each comment received with the evaluation response, for circulation with the final report (annex 7).

2.3. Limitations and responsibilities

37. The evaluation set out to be as robust and rigorous as possible within the time and budgetary parameters set by the evaluation TOR. The volume of information collected and the complexity of the evaluation meant that the allocated 80 days were exceeded. The deadlines

agreed in the inception report were also brought forward to fit around existing UNIAP and stakeholder plans which created additional pressures. The evaluator is not based in the region, and travelled to the region three times to make visits to all six project countries as well as consultations with regional and global level respondents. Two evaluation updates were distributed to stakeholders on 20 December 2011 and 31 January 2012⁴ setting out progress made.

38. The highly sensitive nature of the evaluation only became apparent once the evaluation had begun. This necessitated some adjustments along the way to re-emphasise the impartial nature of the process and to ensure equal treatment of all stakeholders. For instance, the initial findings were presented to all stakeholders at the same time; and a balanced participation of stakeholder groups at the evaluation debrief was insisted on. It was also decided that the full report would be translated into all COMMIT languages. It is fair to say that the process is more than an evaluation as it bears two distinct responsibilities:

- 1) Present an objective assessment of findings and conclusions;
- 2) Propose a constructive resolution and a way forward with recommendations which directly link to the findings but which also take account of the wishes and interests of the majority of stakeholders.

2.4. Evaluation management

39. The Evaluation Management Group (EMG)⁵ was set up to manage the overall evaluation process including prepare the TOR, recruit the evaluation specialist, provide guidance etc. (annex 4). The set-up of the EMG was approved by the PMB/Governments when the evaluation TOR was approved. The EMG comprises of two members of the UN Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific; a sector specialist from UNODC; and the chief of the UNRC's office (as chair of the EMG). It exists to provide technical evaluation advice only; and has no authority over the substantive findings of the evaluation, which remain wholly independent and within the prerogative of the evaluator. As the EMG only comprises one stakeholder group i.e. UN agencies, and in order to mitigate any concerns about bias, the evaluator and the Chair of the EMG, both continuously reaffirmed the role of EMG members as a technical advisors to the evaluation process.

2.5. Report structure

40. The report starts with a brief description of the context in chapter 2, and then goes on to discuss the evaluation findings by evaluation criteria in Chapter 3. It finishes with a discussion of conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 4.

⁴ Available on request.

⁵ The Governments of Myanmar and Lao PDR enquired about the composition and purpose of the EMG at the evaluation debrief and these questions are addressed here.

CHAPTER 2 Context

1. Human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region⁶

41. Human trafficking – essentially the recruitment, transport, receipt and harbouring of people for the purpose of exploiting their labour – affects almost all parts of the world and is widely believed to be increasing in both scale and gravity. In the Asia-Pacific Region, ILO estimates from 2005 suggested that 9.49 million people were in forced labour, with a significant proportion thought to be in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. Although trafficking has existed for centuries, the uneven effects of globalization have, in recent times, contributed to an environment in which trafficking has been able to flourish into a highly profitable and generally low-risk criminal business.

42. The Mekong region compared to many other parts of the world contains very diverse patterns of human trafficking, e.g. internal and cross-border; highly organized and also small-scale; sex and labour, through both formal and informal recruitment mechanisms; and involving the victimization of men, women, boys, girls, and families. Thus, within the Mekong Region, there is not so much a single pattern of trafficking in persons as a range of different patterns, with various victim and criminal profiles. Examples include:

- Trafficking of men, women, children, and families into Thailand from neighboring Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia – against a background of widespread irregular migration – for forced prostitution, domestic servitude, or forced labour into sweatshops or onto fishing boats, construction sites, plantations, or farms;
- Trafficking of children from Cambodian or Myanmar border areas or rural Vietnamese or Chinese areas to beg or to sell flowers on the streets of larger cities;
- Trafficking of Vietnamese girls and young women for sexual exploitation and virginity selling in Cambodia; and
- Trafficking from rural China, Myanmar, or Viet Nam into the interior of China for forced marriage leading to domestic servitude and/or sexual exploitation and internal trafficking for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

43. Trafficking also occurs from the Mekong countries to destinations further abroad. For example, women and girls from Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam are increasingly being found in forced prostitution or domestic servitude in Malaysia. Many utilized formal labour recruitment agencies in the hopes of migrating safely and legally, but were still deceived and exploited at destination. Trafficked Thai women are also found in the sex trade in Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei/Taiwan, Japan, South Africa, the Middle East, Western Europe and the US. Western Europe, especially the UK, reports increasing numbers of trafficking cases involving Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese women. Extra-Mekong region trafficking is not confined to women or to sex work – in fact, extreme exploitation and slavery of Cambodian, Myanmar, and

⁶ Text taken from UNIAP Proposal, “Supporting the COMMIT Process and COMMIT 3rd Sub-Regional Plan of Action, 7 January 2011 Revision

Thai men in factories and on fishing boats from which they cannot escape extends into the South China Sea area as well as the Middle East.

2. Project background

44. The UNIAP project was established in 2000 to enable UN agencies and other stakeholders to promote a coordinated approach to combating trafficking, supported by improved information on the subject and the efficacy of responses. Phase I (2000-2003) promoted critical analysis, built linkages between agencies and supported small-scale pilot initiatives to address emerging issues. Phase II (2003-2006) was originally seen as a consolidation phase, but ended up supporting the development of the newly emerged sub-regional Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the six GMS States (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) on counter-trafficking under which UNIAP was assigned the role of secretariat. Phase III (originally for the period of January 2007 to November 2009) aims to further consolidate and institutionalise existing initiatives, complemented by a “research and development” role.

45. According to the Phase III project document, UNIAP has the following four objectives:

- Objective 1: Services to Governments. To support Governments in the institutionalization of effective multi-sectoral approaches to combat trafficking.
- Objective 2: Services to UN Partners. To maximize the UN’s contribution to the overall anti-trafficking response including the COMMIT process.
- Objective 3: Services to the anti-trafficking sector in general including donors. To facilitate optimal allocation and targeting of anti-trafficking resources.
- Objective 4: Special Projects. To continue to play a catalytic role in the anti-trafficking response by identifying and supporting special projects to address new and emerging issues and opportunities.

46. Phase III of the project was due to end in November 2009. The 6 June 2008 PMB meeting decided on the first extension of the project until November 2010. The 31 May 2010 PMB meeting then agreed on an additional one-year extension, until the end of 2011 subject to a final evaluation of the project being carried out during this additional year. The PMB meeting on 15 December 2010 then extended the project further until the end of 2013. The project has been evaluated three times, once each at the end of phase I and phase II; followed by a mid-term evaluation of Phase III in March 2009.

47. UNIAP is managed from a project management office in Bangkok, with country offices in the capitals of the six GMS states. An estimated funding requirement for Phase III of UNIAP up until the end of 2013 is US\$16 million of which US\$ 14.5 million has been committed to date by some 20 different donors, whose contributions range from US\$2,300 to US\$2.9 million in size. US\$1.5 million thus remains to be raised. Agreements have been signed with Norway, AUSAID, USDOS/GTIP, ANESVAD and USAID for Viet Nam. A New Zealand AID proposal is under discussion now. Table 2 below shows the amount of funding provided by UNIAP’s main donors

and the objectives which they support. These figures are based on information provided by UNIAP and should be taken as estimates only. Figures received by the evaluation from the project changed on a number of occasions due to a variety of factors including exchange rate fluctuations, UNDP financial management systems and UNIAP's own approaches. There was also a difference with donor figures which required clarification. It was a challenge to assemble the information displayed in table 2 which shows a breakdown of UNIAP's key donors by the objective they support. Some stakeholders have complained that UNIAP is not transparent in its financial reporting; in response to this UNIAP has made presentations to the PMB given details of its financial situation. It would appear that a breakdown of donor funding by objective is shown for the first time in this report. The principal donors supporting the major part of the project's work i.e. full project or COMMIT (objective 1) are New Zealand AID, Norway, Sida and AUSAID with contributions over Phase III amounting to US\$ 9,894,924. The US Government is also a significant donor to Phase III and contributes US\$ 2,395,000 overall which consists of US\$ 1,495,000 to research (objective 3) and special projects (objective 4) through USDOS G/TIP; and US\$ 900,000 for activities in Vietnam (US\$ 700,000 for objectives 3 and 4 and US\$ 200,000 for objective 1) through USAID. ANESVAD is the project's sixth main donor providing US\$ 960,990 (273,238 for Non-COMMIT; and 687,752 for COMMIT). Remaining donors include CIDA/Search (US\$ 984,862), ADB (US\$ 500,000), Germany (US\$ 172,550), and others (US\$ 210,844).

48. UNIAP has obligations too in terms of funding to sub-grantees⁷. UNIAP is committed to fund 9 organisations with the following end dates (3 in July 2012, 3 in September 2012, and 3 in March 2013). No more competitive rounds are planned for Objective 4 but there is an upcoming estimates contest (objective 3) which will result in three or four research grants being awarded.

⁷ UNIAP "Summary of Grants 2007-2010" Excel sheet, updated October 2011

Table 2: Key donor support by amount and project objectives

	NZ	Norway	Sida	AUSAID	**USAID for Viet Nam	**USDOS	**ANESVAD
Objective 1 - Commit Area 1 - Policy and Coordination							
Objective 1 - Commit Area 2 - Legal					Areas 2+3 Viet Nam only		
Objective 1 - Commit Area 3 - Protection							Areas 3 + 4
Objective 1 - Commit Area 4 - Prevention							
Objective 1 - Commit Area 5 – Monitoring and data system							
Objective 2 – Services to UN							
Objective 3 – Services to anti-trafficking communities					Viet Nam – Research/ Shelter	All countries – ‘Siren/Worst offenders’; plus Cambodia - ‘underserved victims’	
Objective 4 – Special Projects							China-Shelter
Donor funding by objectives	All Objectives and staffing - pool funding	All Objectives - pool funding	All Objectives and staffing - pool funding	Objective 1 – COMMIT, direct costs and programme support	Objective 4 and Objective 1 -COMMIT (2+3 Viet Nam)	Objectives 3 and 4	Objective 4 and Objective 1 COMMIT (3+4), and direct costs
Total funding by donor in USD – Phase III	1,979,920	3,901,006 (23.2 million NOK)	2,750,000 (18 million SEK on 29/2/12)	1,263,998	900,000 (700,000 Non-COMMIT; 200,000 COMMIT)	1,495,000	960,990 (273,238 for Non-COMMIT; and 687,752 COMMIT)
Donor funding start date	Dec 2006 (start); 2 Dec 2011 (variation)	Jan 2007 (start); 22 Apr 2011 (amendment)	1 March 2009 (start); 22 Dec 2011 (amendment)	31 May 2011	Sept. 2008 (start); Oct 2011	Sept 2008 (start); 4 July 2010; 9 Sept 2010	Feb 2010 (start); 22 Aug 2011
Donor funding end date	Apr 2012*	Dec 2013	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Sept 2013	Apr 2013, and Sep 2013	Dec 2013

* Funds ending, project hopes to hear soon about future funds. ** Details provided for earmarked funding for non-COMMIT activities.

CHAPTER 3

Findings

1. Effectiveness⁸

49. The project is assessed on its ability to meet the commitments set out in the project document for Phase III. As UNIAP notes,

“..[its] mandate for Phase III comes from UNIAP Phase III project document which was finalised and endorsed by a host of government and inter-agency partners in late 2006”⁹.

The evaluation looks at overall progress made in relation to key objectives, and considers progress from a strategic level – it does not undertake a pedantic examination of compliance with lower level requirements. The report first considers effectiveness against the four main objectives set out in the project document and then comes back to various cross-cutting issues affecting all objectives. It follows the order of the project document itself in order to help readers understand the project in its entirety despite the fact that this leads to repetition and a lack of precision in places. The evaluation is not limited by a consideration of the project document. The evaluation interviews and research were open to any information stakeholders wished to give on UNIAP’s work. It was conscious of the need to take account of unexpected results and unintended consequences, both positive and negative.¹⁰

1.1. Objective 1

“Services to Governments - To support Governments in the institutionalization of effective multi-sectoral approaches to counter-trafficking” [UNIAP Project document 2006].

Box 1

Key finding

The project is largely effective in meeting objective 1. It is highly rated for its support to participating Governments, excepting one, in consolidating and deepening their efforts to combat trafficking, and in strengthening bilateral cooperation with nearby countries. UNIAP’s work on this objective is well-regarded by the majority of stakeholders. There are areas for improvement, and a particular concern that the project is not supporting all Governments in the equal and unified way needed to best foster regional cooperation.

⁸ “A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives”, definition given in *DAC Summary of key norms and standards*, available from: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

⁹ UNIAP, ‘Guidance and Talking Points - UNIAP & Casework – August 2010

¹⁰ The Government of China at the evaluation debrief suggested the evaluation take account of the changing context in which UNIAP is working since the project document dates back to 2006. The evaluation compares UNIAP’s progress against its initial commitments and takes stock of the changing context in order to recommend important changes.

It is worth recalling that Objective 1 is the main part of the project and occupies the majority of the project's time and resources. As such when considering overall effectiveness, due weight must be given to the fact that the project has executed its main function in terms of serving Governments/COMMIT effectively.¹¹

50. The official position of five of the six Governments (i.e. all Governments aside from Thailand) is that they are highly appreciative of the services received from the project. These two formal Government positions are set out in letters replicated in annex 5. The evaluation interviewed a range of Government departments at national level in each country and found some diversity of viewpoint in most countries, away from the official line. UN and NGO stakeholders recognise the effectiveness of UNIAP's work on objective 1 but identify areas for improvement. The analysis below discusses the four sub-objectives specified in the project document under this heading.

1.1.1. Capacity building of Government officials¹²

51. This involves regional and national level trainings for Government officials. The evaluation confirms feedback from the project's own surveys which suggest that these trainings are very well-received. There are occasional complaints about the quality of training e.g. sessions lacking in interactivity, but these appear to be localised issues. Sustainability is the biggest challenge facing this aspect of the project's work given the high turnover of staff in national ministries. The Training of Trainer courses aim to counteract this problem by filtering learning down through ministries. The project could place further emphasis on conceptualising capacity building in a broader way through methods such as on the job training, e-learning, written courses, study tours and exchanges, integration of course elements into professional courses etc. Some efforts are being made in this regard, for instance, the project has recently developed a self-learning tool for national stakeholders in the form of a Powerpoint presentation called 'Human trafficking 101'.

52. Knowledge and capacity is also built through ongoing interactions between the project and Government personnel. UNIAP's contribution over successive phases in drawing the attention of Governments to the problem of trafficking, and in keeping them up-to-date on new trends and definitions is strongly recognised. In this phase, UNIAP has helped turn the spotlight on male trafficking victims, trafficking for labour exploitation, and internal trafficking. Although UNIAP is not described as an advocate by Governments, its role in the promotion of ideas at the policy and political level is seen as important both nationally and sub-regionally. Government officials in various countries said UNIAP had helped garner national support for legislative

¹¹ The Governments of Myanmar, Viet Nam and China emphasised at the evaluation debrief that the report should reflect the positive work done by UNIAP especially on objective 1. While UNIAP's effectiveness on objective 1 is agreed the evaluation has a responsibility to consider all objectives and stakeholders: it is a requirement of the evaluation TOR; the objectives have to be inspected in order to see if they should be retained; UNIAP itself gives much prominence to the other objectives.

¹² UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective *"Building national and regional capacity to effectively tackle the problem of human trafficking among key responsible personnel"*.

change e.g. signature of the Palermo Protocol, or encouraged the sub-regional standardisation of approaches, for instance through the adoption of national anti-trafficking laws.

1.1.2. Facilitating coordination between Governments¹³

53. UNIAP is recognised for its work in facilitating cross-border discussions between Governments. It is seen as a helpful “broker”, identifying needs, making contacts, passing messages, facilitating discussions and providing both technical and practical support e.g. translations. Governments often find it quicker to go through UNIAP, especially when trying to reach out to non-traditional counterparts in other countries, instead of using diplomatic channels. UNIAP’s role in facilitating various Memorandums of Understanding was cited several times, as one interviewee put it,

“Through UNIAP’s interactions with the Government, it was able to push the process and provide technical and financial support to get the MOU signed. ...It would not have come about in the same way without UNIAP – it may not have been so well organised and timely”.

54. Whilst bilateral negotiations are welcome, there are calls for a renewed emphasis on regional collaboration. The project says it organises several regional events a year; the issue is not the number of events, but concerns that the spirit of cooperation and unity between Governments at regional level has suffered in this phase due to various factors discussed under objective 3 and in the last section, ‘Cross-cutting issues – Project coherence’ [see para. 91, 146-152, 107].

1.1.3. Strengthening national mechanisms^{14 15}

55. All six countries have national coordinating bodies on trafficking which were established independently of UNIAP (UNIAP played a partial role in one country only – Cambodia – in setting up national structures). Five of the six countries have national plans of action – UNIAP seems to have played a more active role in these. In any case, UNIAP’s technical advice on the content of legal and policy documents such as national plans and anti-trafficking laws is much appreciated. UNIAP’s main focus at country level is on the national COMMIT taskforce and its annual plan – both of which relate in differing ways to the overarching anti-trafficking structure in each country. UNIAP’s specialist advice under this includes helping governments to set up hotlines, databases, websites etc. In one country, UNIAP supported the Government to carry out research in 2010 on the sensitive subject of returnee trafficking victims.

56. The implementation of national COMMIT action plans is supported through a \$100,000 annual budget contribution from UNIAP to each Government. Governments acknowledge this contribution but stress that money is not the main issue since the amount involved is relatively

¹³ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective – “Ensuring national, bilateral and regional complementarity in all anti-trafficking interventions”

¹⁴ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective – “Strengthening inter-ministerial COMMIT Task Forces and other national coordinating bodies in all countries”

¹⁵ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective – “Effective implementation of the SPA and National Plans of Action”

insignificant as compared to national budgets on trafficking in some cases. Figures from two countries suggest that the UNIAP contribution amounts to no more than 1-2% of the overall Government budget on anti-trafficking and goes specifically to activities set out in national COMMIT taskforce action plans which are also supported by other development partners. Government officials in one place said they were not informed about these funds in a timely way and that implementation was delayed, though there may have been multiple causes for this eventuality.

1.1.4. Role of COMMIT Secretariat

This project document lists various components under this heading.

Monitoring and Evaluation¹⁶ of COMMIT

57. UNIAP introduced a number of new M+E processes in this phase. It developed an integrated M+E framework under COMMIT SPA I and II through a consultative process starting in 2007 which involved setting up of targets and timelines. Monitoring tools include annual progress reports and report cards, both of which are prepared using inter-agency inputs. Evaluations are carried out at the end of each SPA by UNIAP staff, again with inter-agency inputs. Aside from tracking the implementation of the SPA, UNIAP has tools for evaluating specific activities e.g. pre and post test questionnaires for all training programmes are systematically carried out.

58. Despite these efforts, a cross-section of stakeholders question whether UNIAP is able to monitor the COMMIT process effectively. There are concerns that the annual \$100,000 contribution to each Government (a relatively small amount in and of itself but totalling \$3 million plus during Phase III depending on when this process started) is money without strings. Interviewees call for improved work plans with better indicators, one NGO stakeholder said, *“Plans need to be SMARTER, it should not just be about box ticking”*. Some also question the point of this money, given the amounts involved and the fact that budgets go un-spent. They call on Governments to take more ownership of the COMMIT process, *“take more responsibility for costs e.g. per diem and airfares”*.

59. UNIAP has made efforts to strengthen the monitoring process in light of such criticisms. The ‘Pre-requisition Process’ involves the regional office approving all financial and technical aspects of proposals in a systematic manner. This offers an appropriate amount of rigour given the levels of funding involved but timing could be improved. Some national stakeholders complain that UNIAP’s final approval comes too late after national COMMIT taskforces have met and taken decisions on proposed activities. M+E at the other end of the process is not yet done on a systematic basis and standardised tools for evaluating typical activities under annual plans would be useful.

¹⁶ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-sub objective *“Monitoring implementation of the COMMIT SPA and evaluating impact of activities”*.

60. UNIAP admits there isn't much critical analysis in the M+E of COMMIT, *"with Governments, a deep analytical process with each year would not be productive"*, and the institution of a reliable and regular monitoring system is seen as a *"major milestone"* in itself. It encourages Governments to strengthen their own reporting e.g. to focus on impacts and not just activities, or to disaggregate victims reached by age and sex but it is aware in relation to this aspect, that as COMMIT secretariat, it treads a fine line between supporting and critiquing governments. Trafficking specialists agree, despite room for improvement, they say UNIAP has done well to bring Governments along with them this far,

"[UNIAP] has managed to both score the performance of GMS countries and get a buy in a way that other attempts to rank or criticise state responses have not".

A more rigorous and independent assessment of Government progress would have to come from outside, for instance through a system of shadow or alternative reporting found under various human rights instruments, if this is deemed necessary.

Engagement of external agencies with COMMIT SPA¹⁷

61. The development community has engaged with COMMIT at both the regional and national levels in various ways. At regional level, the COMMIT SPA II work plan lists the roles of various agencies in SPA implementation e.g. training and capacity building; protection, recovery and reintegration etc. UNIAP also facilitates meetings which bring together both agencies and donors with the COMMIT Governments. At country level, UNIAP has done well to help open up the COMMIT process to outsiders especially in countries where there is a tradition of closed government, and where there are few, if any, other examples of such participation. The national COMMIT task force is open to international participation in four out of six countries. The Governments are pleased with the way UNIAP has been able to bring other agencies round the table to facilitate contributions.

62. On the UN and civil society side, some acknowledge that UNIAP has facilitated engagement, for instance reporting that they were able to contribute to bilateral MOUs etc. Others have unmet expectations and say they feel excluded from COMMIT activities or that participation is tokenistic e.g. one person said they couldn't understand why they were involved in SPA I but not SPA II and III, another said that participation seemed contingent on their agency making a contribution to the Government's travel expenses when it ought to be unconditional, or that UNIAP was not transparent and didn't share the minutes of task force meetings.

63. Some of these parameters are likely set by Governments themselves. At national level, it is evident that Governments determine participation at the official taskforce meetings in terms of who can attend, what their role should be and who task force minutes should be shared with. It is less clear what happens in the case of other COMMIT-related activities, whether the Governments decide or if UNIAP has a say. Agencies acknowledge that there is a link with COMMIT but feel this is at a superficial level (UNIAP coming to agencies to ask for funding) rather than deeper technical and policy engagement. UNIAP for its part reports finding it difficult to get inputs from other agencies both at regional and national level, for instance

¹⁷ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-sub objective *"Working closely with external agencies (UN, NGOs and donors) to coordinate their involvement and support to specific aspects of the SPA"*.

comments on national plans or commitments to training events. This matter is further discussed under 'Cross-cutting issues – strengthening technical capacity' [see para.136 – 142]. In any case, the formalisation of clearer and more direct channels of communication between COMMIT and the development community would help facilitate the contribution of financial, political and technical support and is an important step in the advancement of COMMIT itself.

Upholding international standards¹⁸

64. This is listed as a requirement under the COMMIT secretariat function. UNIAP aims to integrate international standards throughout its activities training and research. However, stakeholders from different organisations comment that appropriate standards are not always followed and that remedial action is not taken when these gaps are brought to UNIAP's attention. UNIAP activities such as presentations, special projects, or statements to government counterparts, for example, are said not to make adequate reference to the distinction between adult and child victims of trafficking as indicated in the UN Trafficking Protocol or in ethical standards for conducting research and/or interviewing child victims or children vulnerable to trafficking.

Administration of the COMMIT process¹⁹

65. Most Governments did not remark on administrative issues during evaluation interviews and appear satisfied with how these aspects are managed by UNIAP. Feedback from some stakeholders on this point included some criticism of the *"unprofessionalism"* of process management. Participants complain about COMMIT/Project meeting documents being sent out too late, *"meeting documents come two days before bamboozling us with information"*. For Governments this can be particularly problematic where processes of internal consultation and decision-making are required to arrive at official positions. Interviewees also complain about insufficient notice when the project wants the participation of others e.g. in training sessions; or that minutes of meetings come too late and are inaccurate. While managing an inter-governmental process, particularly in multiple languages is a challenge, the situation could be improved by better planning and adherence to agreed procedures.

¹⁸ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-sub objective – *"Advocating and ensuring that all COMMIT activities are in line with international standards"*

¹⁹ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-sub objective – *"Coordination of the management and administrative aspects of the COMMIT process"*

1.2. Objective 2

“Services to UN Partners - To maximize the UN’s contribution to the overall anti-trafficking response, including COMMIT” [UNIAP Project Document 2006]

Box 2

Key finding

The project is largely ineffective in meeting objective 2. Although there are joint events and activities, UN agencies in all but one country, tend to find the project of limited service to them. Most interviewees acknowledge UNIAP’s information meetings, its achievements on other objectives and cordial relations with UNIAP country staff. But disagreements are frequently mentioned. UNIAP’s interpretation of its role and lack of sufficient coordination with the UN system is criticised. There are various underlying causes for this tension.

66. UNIAP interacts with a small handful of specialised agencies on a regular basis (ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC); in the past other agencies were involved but have fallen by the wayside for one reason or another. It is important to note that this objective comes from the perspective of supporting the UN in its anti-trafficking response with an emphasis on collaboration and joint working. The other angle of this which is serving Governments by facilitating the engagement of the UN and other development actors with COMMIT/SPA comes quite logically, under objective 1²⁰. The project document specifies four sub-objectives under this heading which are broken down into numerous elements.

1.2.1. Facilitating inter-agency collaboration²¹ and joint UN positions²²

67. UNIAP’s own analysis shows that the number and proportion of inter-agency activities has increased over time, for instance the number of COMMIT activities implemented jointly with partners has increased from 64 in 2008 to 102 in 2010²³. It cites a number of examples from this phase at varying levels and such examples are shown in box 3. The project also seeks to facilitate the development of joint UN positions e.g. efforts to influence agencies to re-target their resources in light of the Poipet sentinel surveillance (Cambodia-Thailand); advocating towards UN partners and others following the SIREN research on Cambodians trafficked onto Thai fishing boats; or the UNIAP Cambodia team’s efforts to rally agencies around the results of the Cambodia recruitment agency report (2011). The project aims to align UN responses to COMMIT plans²⁴ e.g. by involving agencies in the COMMIT annual work planning process (see objective 1) and it may provide ad hoc support services²⁵ from time to time, for assisting supporting the events of others with technical advice, translations etc.

²⁰ For the sake of completeness, joint activities that have been organised by the project, both COMMIT and non-COMMIT, are listed here.

²¹ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective, “Inter-agency collaborative processes and joint priority setting”

²² UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective, “Development of joint UN positions on key trafficking issues”

²³ UNIAP, ‘GMS human trafficking situation and UNIAP’s Phase III Response, October 2011

²⁴ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective – “Strengthened alignment of UN responses with national plans and priorities”

²⁵ UNIAP PD 2006, Other support services to UN such as technical support on M+E, inputs into capacity building, supporting resource centres, streamlining trafficking into other development interventions, translations.

Box 3**UNIAP inter-agency activities in Phase III**

2007 - Development of **COMMIT regional guiding principles for the protection of victims** of trafficking in the GMS (IOM, UNICEF, WV, SCUK, and UNIAP), and the COMMIT regional guiding principles on migrant labour recruitment (ILO, UNIFEM, UNIAP)

2008 – **STOP! Human trafficking awareness-raising event in Bangkok** (Thai Government ministries and NGOs such as WV and MTV Exit)

2008 – Support for **China's ratification of the UN Protocol on Transnational Organised Crime** (ARTIP, IOM, UNICEF)

2008-9 – Analysis of successful and failed **trafficking cases across Viet Nam** (IOM, SCUK)

2009 - **Global financial crisis rapid response alliance** whereby agencies came together over a number of targeted joint initiatives following SIREN research on the impact of the financial crisis in Cambodia

2009 – **Lao PDR regional case analysis workshops** (ARTIP, AFESIP, UNODC, WV)

2009 – Consultation with returned Ranya Paew **seafood factory survivors in Myanmar** (ARTIP, IOM, UNICEF)

2010-2011 - COMMIT region-wide assessment of **reintegration assistance** (SCUK, WV, IOM, UNICEF)

Inter-agency partners are involved as co-trainers in the Regional Training Programme and invited to continually update and improve the curriculum.

Inter-agency meetings are held in all countries e.g. regular stakeholder meetings in Cambodia.

1.2.2. State of collaboration

68. Despite such examples, few interviewees acknowledged instances of successful collaboration with UNIAP. There was only one country out of six where consistent positive relations with other agencies were reported. Lao PDR is the stand-alone exception; there the role of UNIAP in facilitating the work of others is much appreciated. Agencies told the evaluation how they were grateful for UNIAP's intervention in persuading the Government to approve their proposals, in advising them on how to sort out problems with the authorities, in speaking up for and defending agencies (UN and NGOs) in the face of criticism from the Government etc. Viet Nam is at the other end of the spectrum, where a breakdown in relations between UNIAP and One UN has led to a curtailment of its coordination function e.g. stakeholder meetings are now being convened under a One UN working group under rotational leadership. The pursuit of independent funding and activities in Viet Nam by the UNIAP regional office was seen as contravening One UN policies on coordination²⁶.

69. Elsewhere, feedback about UNIAP is measured but lukewarm. Agencies often report pleasant relations with UNIAP country staff and appreciate the opportunity for information exchange at UNIAP stakeholder meetings, *"I feel it is a forum to air things. It is pretty good for information sharing. The agenda is open and there is a chance to contribute"*. They are also very willing to acknowledge UNIAP's achievements under other objectives.

²⁶ Report on meetings with UN Country team in Viet Nam, 15-16 April 2010

70. The evaluation draws out all specific examples of cooperation mentioned in evaluation interviews, a UN stakeholder in one country referred to joint advocacy on nationality confirmation processes and detention periods for returnees,

“Thanks to UNIAP efforts, detention was reduced to three days. Our position is that there should only be voluntary stay but we feel this is a great improvement – and UNIAP played a useful role”.

In another country, a UN agency is hoping to do joint research with UNIAP subject to Government approvals. At the regional level, one UN organisation out of five has consistently positive relations with UNIAP. The strongest and sustained partnership is with UNESCO on the generation of Geographic Information System maps for UNIAP sentinel surveillance and other matters.

71. But interviewees also reported disagreements between UNIAP and UN stakeholders at different levels, some regional, some national and some interplaying at both levels. The joint activities listed above, if mentioned at all, were referred to as problematic. The evaluation cannot get to the bottom of all these arguments, but it can sum up what the differences are about: duplication and overlapping mandates; interferences in Government relations; differences on technical issues; personality clashes and complaints of rudeness. Some arguments were said to be resolved, if not forgotten, but others continue to linger. Agencies frequently criticise UNIAP for becoming overly involved in implementation and for not coordinating its own activities with others, even where their own agency is not directly affected. Overall, it was a rare UN voice that said, *“I like the project very much”.*

72. UNIAP staff members confirm difficult relations, being left out of activities, meetings and major initiatives such as the UN-GIFT review in 2010, or agencies being invited but not turning up to UNIAP events. There are complaints from both UNIAP and UN agencies about the lack of transparency and unwillingness to share work plans and budgets. In this difficult environment, UNIAP country teams make considerable efforts to find ways of working with other agencies but these seem to be thwarted by arguments emanating from UNIAP at regional level.

73. UNIAP regional management is mystified at the level of *“disconnect”* given that there are in fact various joint initiatives which agencies put their names to and has the perception, not shared by others, that relations have worsened since the financial crisis. UNIAP appears to have invested little budgetary resource in progressing this objective. It says that 1% of its budget was spent on objective 2 between 2006 and 2010²⁷. UNIAP receives unearmarked funding from at least two donors (see table 2) which ought to have given some freedom for diverting resources to this aspect. UNIAP says it tries to speak to agencies to resolve these incidents but they refuse to meet. The agencies say they are *“exasperated”* with meeting UNIAP as nothing ever changes.

74. The lack of effective coordination impacts negatively on others too. Civil society stakeholders say they feel caught in the middle in some places, one said that relations between UN stakeholders *“has tarnished the [working] group”*, another added,

²⁷ UNIAP, Mid-phase review 2007-2013, dated 2010

“Personally we have good relations with all agencies but when they come together it is a headache for us.....the UN has power but if it is not united, it weakens itself”.

Governments seeing the project as existing to serve them, tend to find the project does well to bring other UN agencies to the table (although this comes under objective 1 and not 2) but there were one or two instances of different Government ministries being caught up in these quarrels. It was also notable that the positive relationship between the UNIAP and UN agencies in Lao PDR seemed to free up the Government to reflect more openly on the strengths and weaknesses of UNIAP's work. In contrast, where the relationship is very tense, the Governments seemed very protective of UNIAP.

1.2.3. Underlying causes of tension

75. Governments and donors dismiss the UN agencies as self-interested, *“petty UN bickering about funding competition”*. The way agencies articulate their *“concerns about UNIAP competing for funding”*²⁸ reinforces this notion. Observers are unsympathetic, saying agencies *“should be forced to be competent and prove themselves”*. Financial self-interest is the most blatant cause of tension. Competition between UN bodies on any manner of issues is a known and undeniable factor. In the context of this specific project, one donor puts much of the discontent down to competition between UNIAP and other agencies for its own funding, according to UNDP internal records. Governments and donors also say they don't understand why agencies have a problem with UNIAP. The evaluation can understand these views; it too was left with these impressions to start with as no adequate explanation seemed forthcoming to account for the level of tension that existed. However, as the evaluation progressed; more compelling reasons began to surface²⁹ through country level visits and historical analysis and the evaluation was able to arrive at its own independent understanding of underlying causes.

76. Firstly, as an independent institution, the UN has wider political concerns and interests in its relationship with Governments which go beyond the issue of trafficking. UN agencies in their role as standard bearers for international human rights standards for example, express concerns in some places about UNIAP's closeness to governments, *“we feel as if we're talking to the Government”*, making them feel wary of raising confidential issues in UNIAP's presence. Closeness to Government per se is not the issue; agencies recognise it gives a conduit for others to have access *“which has borne dividends for us all.”* It is also acknowledged that trafficking as an issue, over successive phases of the project, has provided an important avenue for dialogue on human rights with Governments in the region. But they ask whether the project is able to serve constituencies with different interests, *“Can the project work so closely with Governments and also be a UN coordinator as well?”* UNIAP does not appear to have navigated this course well; it has taken on the role of go-between, passing messages from one side to the other, without establishing clear protocols. Moreover, functioning as an independent entity, UNIAP

²⁸ PSC Minutes, September 2009

²⁹ The Governments of Viet Nam, China and Lao PDR at the evaluation debrief noted that UNIAP had done much to facilitate objective 2 and that UN agencies were also responsible for making this component work. The evaluation acknowledges efforts made but also has to examine underlying causes of tension. It is noted that Lao PDR is the positive exception when it comes to inter-agency collaboration.

has its own interests (funding, projects etc), and needs to be aware that it may be seen as pursuing its own objectives at the cost of other players through its liaison function and close relationship with Governments. While these issues were raised in relation to UNIAP's relationships with COMMIT Governments, on reflection, they are also relevant factors in terms of UNIAP's relationships with some donor governments taking into account reports of undue influence over the project (see para. 193.) and undue pressure on other organisations (see para. 173).

77. Secondly, there are differing expectations of UNIAP's role. The purpose of objective 2 and the use of the term 'inter-agency' in the title are not fully defined in the project document, giving rise to variable expectations. UNIAP appears to see itself as a central organising force, it *"engages UN partners in UNIAP and COMMIT activities, including pooling funds and joint activities with joint TORs"*. Agencies say this approach means that UNIAP comes to them for funding and technical support after it has decided what to do instead of working in a genuinely collaboratively at an early stage to agree needs and potential solutions. This point is illustrated further in this section and in the discussion on objective 4 [see para. 112-116].

78. UNIAP also sees its role as advocating and lobbying other agencies for action, *"UNIAP advocates to UN partners to respond to findings and recommendations from UNIAP research and fieldwork"*. The tone of this approach can sometimes come across too forceful and undermining of others. Such demarches are not always well received, especially where agencies are working to address challenging problems with limited resources themselves, *"UNIAP looks cavalier and makes us look like we're not doing anything"*. UNIAP says it feels obliged to step in when agencies don't respond.

79. The repatriation of victims of trafficking back to the GMS is an example. Sometimes cooperation with other agencies (UNIAP, IOM, WV, SCUK, ARTIP, etc) over immediate assistance has worked well; and UNIAP itself is approached by the country offices of other organisations to intervene. Recently UNIAP worked with others to organise funding for the return of ten men. On other occasions, UNIAP's pressure for an immediate response to stranded victims, through local NGOs for example, was seen as devaluing established procedures and efforts to build the capacity of Governments to handle such cases themselves. Such problems are on an enormous scale and require a systemic response. According to UNIAP interviews, an estimated 1000 Cambodians are currently stranded in Indonesia with the cost of repatriation estimated to be \$1000 per person i.e. \$1 million overall. UNIAP is currently attempting to coordinate a procedure among agencies for immediate assistance to repatriation victims. It is planning a joint fact-finding mission with another UN agency to explore further options.

80. Another interpretation of UNIAP's role, in contrast to being an organiser and lobbyist, is as a support to the work of other UN stakeholders, which would be more in keeping with the service-oriented wording of the project document. This more deferential approach was taken in Phase II resulting in successful coordination according to the independent evaluation³⁰ of that

³⁰ UNIAP, Final evaluation Phase III, March 2006.

period. One interviewee familiar with UNIAP in successive phases commented on this change in approach,

“before UNIAP would have ideas for projects and bring agencies together to discuss how to tackle things...now it is trying to do things itself and then looks to cooperate with other agencies”.

81. This finding was borne out by the evaluation visit to Lao PDR where the project takes a distinctly different view of its role; the National Project Coordinator who worked on the project in phase two, has continued the approach of the previous phase. Project time is largely spent on objectives 1 and 2, the project does not work on objective 4 at all and does relatively little on 3 – this is in part due to lack of Government permissions for research and project work which comes under those objectives, but also a wariness on the part of the country office in allowing such additional activities to displace its central coordination function. The dividends of this approach are obvious as it is the only place where the project is widely acknowledged as being of service to the UN.

82. Thirdly, the objective of improved coordination within the UN is a global organisational priority and something that the Member States of the UN wish to see. In 2005, the UN General Assembly called on the UN Secretary General to strengthen the management and coordination of UN operational activities and to “Deliver as One” at country level, with one leader, one programme, one budget and, where appropriate, one office. In 2006, eight countries in the world were selected as pilots for the One UN approach - with Viet Nam being the only country in the GMS.³¹ This is the main reason why One UN in Viet Nam clamped down on UNIAP’s independent fundraising and activities; it was not a localised or personalised reaction but part of a wider, very challenging effort, to improve UN coordination across the world. It is sad to see that the very tense state of relations between stakeholders in Viet Nam is not situated in this broader context. In summary, while Government and donor interviewees across countries are generally dismissive of UN concerns about the project, they will no doubt be aware of the challenges of coordination within their own administrations and ministries, and acknowledge that this is something which the UN should tackle.

1.2.4. Challenges of coordination

83. A review of UNIAP’s history shows that inter-agency coordination has always been a difficulty even when the project was much smaller. The first UNIAP evaluation in 2002 discussed at a Project Steering Committee meeting said, *“coordination takes real commitment from agencies to accept to “be coordinated” So far it has sometimes been lacking”*. Those with a long view see,

“genuine cooperation and collaboration between agencies is inherently problematic given the systematized incentives...probably brought about by competition for funds and accentuated when resources are tight....conflict is inevitable....”.

³¹ More details available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone/>

The 2009 mid-term evaluation also picked up on the fact that UNIAP's services to UN partners were *"much less well recognised"* than UNIAP's role in relation to COMMIT with similar questions arising as in this evaluation. It also pointed about the major challenge of improving UN coordination in any context and referred to the statements of UN Secretary General on the mixed fortunes of the "One UN" initiative³².

84. Coordination within the counter-trafficking sector remains important – national stakeholders for example, point out the difficulty of implementing very similar programmes for different agencies but using slightly different tools and materials, *"makes things tricky for national agencies to manage"*. However, there are doubts about UNIAP's ability to play this role. UNIAP staff at different levels seem unaware of the wider issues discussed here and were often found taking misguided comfort in the notion that other agencies are *"simply jealous of UNIAP's success"*.

85. UN stakeholders seem to have given up, *"it can do what it wants but should change its mandate...its hypocrisy to call it inter-agency"*. UNIAP is seen as benefitting from the inter-agency tag but without taking direction from inter-agency stakeholders. A number of UN interviewees felt there were better ways of coordinating within the UN system especially to achieve basic levels of information exchange. UNIAP as a small project lacks the authority to compel others to coordinate, especially if they are unwilling to be coordinated, and even more so if it is unwilling to coordinate its own work with others.

1.3. Objective 3

"Services to anti-trafficking sector in general, including donors - To facilitate optimal allocation and targeting of anti-trafficking resources" [UNIAP Project Document 2006]

Box 4

Key finding

The project is partially effective in meeting objective 3. UNIAP has provided useful services to the wider anti-trafficking sector. Its research efforts are seen as high quality but raise serious issues of process management which require attention. UNIAP has provided a forum for information exchange but other services have received less attention, and civil society feedback is mixed.

86. The counter-trafficking community includes NGOs, donors, experts, private sector and others interested in anti-trafficking work. This objective has 4 sub-objectives which are broken down into multiple elements.

³² 2009 UNIAP Mid-term evaluation , pg 32-33

1.3.1. Information and analysis³³

Research

87. UNIAP's research work is highly regarded and seen as advancing knowledge on the nature and characteristics of trafficking. It is a significant achievement of this phase of UNIAP's work. A cross-section of stakeholders praise the quality of the research, the use of scientific techniques and the presentation of data in accessible formats. As one UN stakeholder put it,

"The research conducted by UNIAP is its strong point. The sentinel surveillance on the Thai Cambodian border, the assessment of the size of the sex trafficking problem in Cambodia, and an assessment of trafficking for forced labour of Myanmar in Thailand were all very helpful documents, and while they do not offer us real clarity about the size and shape of the trafficking situation in the GMS, they make a good start."

88. The presentation and packaging is frequently praised, *"very very nicely done...has data and also policy component"*. The Siren reports are especially singled out, they are said to bring an understanding of vulnerability which goes beyond poverty, and interviewees report using them to describe the context in their own project proposals. The trafficking estimates initiative, done in conjunction with UNESCO, applied an innovative competition approach to generating methods for obtaining trafficking prevalence estimates. There are also indications that these methodologies are influencing trafficking research further afield in South Asia and in El Salvador for example. Donors funding this work are very pleased with the quality and innovation UNIAP is able to bring, *"SIREN provides easily digestible and timely reports containing highly valuable information"*³⁴. COMMIT Governments tended not to know the details of the research. It is worth noting that a minority of interviewees from different stakeholder groups, including research specialists, questioned UNIAP's research methods e.g. generalizations based on inadequate sampling.

89. UNIAP also tries to measure effectiveness in terms of follow-up on research recommendations such as advocacy, new programme development, and behaviour change. UNIAP cites the work of its Cambodia office, for instance, in catalyzing action on the Recruitment Agencies/Domestic Workers in Malaysia report. The evaluator was not able to confirm any follow-up action to this report, although one interviewee said it helped raise awareness through a media report on CNN. While interviewees generally acknowledge the quality of UNIAP's research, none said it had influenced their programming decisions.

90. On the process side, the work is seen as cost effective, *"impressive with a small budget"*, and a number of stakeholders comment on the quality of UNIAP staff, one said they have *"technical capacity, high analytical skills and ability to manage complex data"*. All research products go through an ethics/methods review by a panel of peer reviewers. Some respondents

³³ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objective – *"Ensuring that those developing and implementing anti-trafficking interventions have access to the latest in information, analysis and lessons learned"*. Sub-sub objectives – *"collection and collation of information on human trafficking patterns and trends as well as trafficking responses"*; *"information dissemination and sharing on human trafficking issues and the COMMIT MOU and sub regional plans of action"*.

³⁴ US Government Statement at Project Steering Committee meeting, September 2009

made the criticism that the same handful of individuals are involved over again when it comes to consultation on research, proposals, grant selection etc. The reports do not undergo the usual internal UN scrutiny which normally applies to UN reports with politically sensitive content. The reports are self-authorised by the project without approval by the UNRC. UNDP country offices (in this case Thailand) are normally required to ask the relevant focal points/desk officers in the Regional Bureau for Asia/Pacific in New York to vet politically sensitive documents which has not happened in this case.

91. A potential conflict of interest exists between UNIAP research under objective 3 and its services to Government under objective 1. Although some COMMIT Governments have been cautious in granting UNIAP permission to carry out research activities, the conflict of interest point has not much come to the fore except in one sentinel survey which estimated the numbers of trafficked persons among Cambodian deportees from Thailand³⁵. The main issue in that case seems to have been a faulty process, acknowledged by the project, which saw the draft survey being shared with a donor Government, the US State Department, before it was seen by the Thai authorities. The Thai Government also disputes the methodology used to arrive at the figures for trafficking victims especially as they then appeared in the 2011 US State Department GTIP Report³⁶. The GTIP report is an annual report on governmental anti-trafficking efforts which ranks each country on a three tier system based on the extent of Government efforts to comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. This evaluation does not question the findings of UNIAP's research but notes that the process itself was a considerable error especially as the 2009 mid-term evaluation, based on previous incidents, had recommended that *"Governments should be informed in advance of the release of potentially sensitive reports"*³⁷.

92. Another related but separate issue is that reports to certain donors, e.g. USDOS G/TIP Siren and Worst Offenders project annual progress report dated October 2010 to September 2011, contain details about the issue of trafficking, especially cases investigated by UNIAP, which go beyond reporting on progress in the use of donor funds into issues of content and substantive findings e.g. circumstances and outcomes of cases (including identifiable details such as names of businesses), response of the authorities etc. The exact same information does not seem to be shared with other stakeholders i.e. concerned Governments or other donors (who receive a less detailed standardized report³⁸). Nor does this same information appear elsewhere in UNIAP's publications; UNIAP's website does not reveal identical data in terms of cases or timeframes for example, in UNIAP country datasheets, or in other sentinel surveillance or SIREN reports available publicly. The evaluation received a copy of the project document relating to the aforementioned Siren/Worst Offenders project after the draft evaluation report was

³⁵ UNIAP "Human Trafficking - Sentinel Surveillance, Poipet, Cambodia 2009-2010".

³⁶ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164458.pdf>

³⁷ UNIAP Phase III Mid-term evaluation report, March 2009, pg 44.

³⁸ Other donors appear to receive a standard report which does not contain the same detail – a couple of illustrative anonymous case studies only e.g. UNIAP semi-annual progress report January – December 2010.

submitted which confirmed this point further³⁹. The document shows that it was UNIAP policy, and not just practice, to share information on trafficking collected by UNIAP with USDOS G/TIP, the donor to that project but without any mention of the same information being shared with concerned COMMIT Governments. The SIREN/Worst Offenders Project covers all six COMMIT countries and includes activities under objectives 3 and 4. The project document specifies how different SIREN products would be disseminated:

*“Deliverables: SIREN reports, including Sentinel Surveillance reports (public); case packages (confidential) and case summaries (shared with G/TIP); investigative team missions; publicity (press pieces).”*⁴⁰

The document does not make it clear that as a UN project, it would share information with concerned COMMIT Governments first before sharing it with the donor Government.

93. This raises serious questions about whether UNIAP’s information and findings are shared in an appropriate way among project stakeholders. Most importantly, the impartiality of the UN system vis-à-vis its Member States is compromised if information about State A is given to State B without State A knowing about it. This is particularly relevant in a project which is trying to facilitate inter-governmental dialogue and cooperation. Information of this nature should normally be considered the intellectual property of the UN until such time that it is ready to be released into the public domain on a non-selective basis. As such clear protocols on how and when research information will be shared are necessary. UNIAP says it is simply meeting donor reporting requirements but it is not an issue of donor reporting as acknowledged by UNIAP itself in relation to the earlier incident described in para. 91. The key point is that all UN activities need to align to UN policies and codes of conduct⁴¹ which take precedence above all else. Any donor agreements which require information to be provided in a different way merit review. Standard UNDP donor cost-sharing agreements only commit to financial and activity reports but other formats used by donors may commit otherwise. Moreover such project documents should be put before the PMB (or any substitute governance or advisory structure which takes its place) for review. Stakeholders and COMMIT Governments in particular need to take informed decisions on whether they agree to information about their countries being shared in a selective way with other parties. It is a different matter if the information is intended for public distribution on a non-selective basis. There appears to be no indication that the project document in question was put before PMB/COMMIT in its entirety; the phrase that legitimates this activity (as noted in the quote above) constitutes less than half a line in a ten

³⁹ The evaluation appears to have inadvertently received the GTIP Worst Offenders annual progress report mentioned in para. 92 as when a specific request was made to UNIAP during Q+A for donor reports sent to donors in 2011, this document was not provided. Once the draft evaluation report was submitted, UNDP looked through its own files, and found the project proposal relating to that donor report which was forwarded to the evaluator.

⁴⁰ UNIAP Proposal to US State Department/ G/TIP, Siren & Worst Offenders Project, May 2010

⁴¹ This is emphasized in key UN policy documents such as “Agenda for Development” 1994 which under Part III, Section B ‘The role of the UN in Development’ para. 238 states that “An important feature of the United Nations is its operational activities for development in the field. Their fundamental characteristics should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary, and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the needs of the developing countries in a flexible manner.” <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/unrole.htm> See also UN Standards of conduct for the international civil service and the UN Oath of Office.

page document - it would be easy to miss its existence or indeed its implication, and even more so if it is presented in translation.

94. Ultimately, these types of issues raise questions as to whether a research programme which may yield critical findings about Governments can easily co-exist with a governmental process and yet retain sufficient independence so as not to be inhibited it. In addition, research within the context of a diplomatic inter-governmental process, faces the additional challenge of ensuring that it does not unbalance power relations and the sense of parity among parties needed to keep dialogue moving forward.

95. Other process issues include concerns that UNIAP's approach is not collegiate enough, that key stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in carrying out research, a trafficking specialist said, *"If UNIAP could do SIREN collectively that would give more confidence"*. It should be noted that the project does commonly work with partners in the production of research i.e. consultants, research institutes and local NGOs who are sub-contracted to carry out the work. The issue raised in evaluation meetings was more about the involvement of key organisations in joint decision-making on research ideas and in carrying out research. The reintegration study currently being carried out and referred to in box 3 is an example of an activity involving several such players. Aside from that there are ad hoc examples of particular agencies being involved in specific issues e.g. July 2011 Joint IOM Siren report on the 'State of counter-trafficking research'.

96. Trafficking specialists admire the research work done by UNIAP but request a consolidation and dissemination of research methods and techniques in some sort of guide that can be used to replicate the model elsewhere. This would also be useful for building the capacity of national institutions to carry out this work as well as the wider counter-trafficking community. There's also the view that as a coordinating body, UNIAP ought to do more to promote the dissemination of research done by others, instead of focusing on generating its own data. Finally, UNIAP's research methods involve working closely at the grassroots level, which may merge with hands on support to victims, raising questions about whether UNIAP is going too far into implementation – this is discussed further under 'Cross-cutting issues' at the end of this section.

Other information activities

97. UNIAP organises regular stakeholder forums, generally seen as worthwhile in most countries. One office was particularly praised for its stakeholder forums and other initiatives; the practitioner forum on trafficking held there was seen as a *"really good platform for NGOs working on the practitioner side"*. One NGO commented on the strong support provided by UNIAP in terms of regional and national stakeholder meetings and through introductions to key leaders in the sector. There were calls from interviewees in different countries for more substance and joint action in these meetings, one interviewee said for example, *"the working group meetings are boring, no action plans, just updates"*, and another said the meetings were cordial *"but they don't get to the heart of the matter"*. The evaluator observed one stakeholder meeting firsthand and saw that while many important issues were raised in presentations,

there was no follow-on dialogue among Government representatives and others present with regards to an action plan.

98. Information tools include a monthly digest sent by email, quarterly newsletter (hard and soft copies), SIREN and research announcements – hard and soft copy, and other ad hoc activities such as the preparation of glossaries. The digest which pulls together media and other stories on trafficking is seen as very useful but the newsletter appears less well-read, and UNIAP offices say it is difficult obtaining inputs from other agencies for this. A survey to assess the cost-benefit of these tools would be worthwhile e.g. some tools like the newsletter could be replaced with a list serve enabling list recipients to post news of their own activities by themselves.

1.3.2. Linking civil society and Government⁴²

99. The overall feedback from civil society on its relationships with UNIAP is mixed; while there is an appreciation for UNIAP, there are equally concerns about its role. The response from civil society carries particular weight; in the charged atmosphere surrounding discussions about UNIAP, NGOs in particular are unlikely to feel empowered enough to express their views openly. The confidential meetings with the evaluator have therefore led to some unexpected findings. It should be noted that the views of civil society were confirmed through secondary sources also.

100. Relations with civil society vary from country to country depending on the level of civil society development in each context. Civil society groups share the assessment above about UNIAP's stakeholder forums and information activities. In terms of more specific services, in some places, NGOs find UNIAP a helpful bridge to Government. It has facilitated access for one NGO to various Governments in the region which has enabled the widespread dissemination of anti-trafficking awareness-raising programmes through the media. In other cases, faith-based and minority organisations who are uncomfortable with dealing directly with the Government may report trafficking cases through UNIAP. Even in countries where direct contacts are possible, going through UNIAP can be seen as quicker and more effective.

101. NGOs may feel engaged in policy issues through UNIAP, for instance through the COMMIT task force or by commenting on national plans or new laws. The capacity building component depends on whether there is a sub-granting relationship; certain NGOs in one country praised the support and training received from UNIAP. In terms of joint efforts, one NGO partner mentioned a successful collaboration resulting in the integration of trafficking issues into the education system. Another described the synergies achieved through collaborative working with UNIAP stating that it would *“benefit from having UNIAP in all the markets that [we] work in!”*. In one particular case, a victim of trafficking watched an awareness-raising documentary

⁴² UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objectives – *“creation/identification of opportunities for greater interaction and partnership building between civil society and government actors”*.

produced by the NGO in question and called the UNIAP hotline publicised in that TV programme. The individual received help and advice from UNIAP to escape the trafficking situation, and was eventually led UNIAP to assist the repatriation of ten men from Cambodia.

102. There are also opposing views. Some NGOs say UNIAP should do more to link them with policy issues, *“UNIAP should inform more on its activities with government and policy level and not just do trainings”*. Another added,

“UNIAP should have more joint forums...NGOs would like to be more involved in strategies, we would like more frequent fora to discuss matters”,

and went on to recommend the creation of more networks on various issues at national as well as regional level.

103. Other concerns echo what is said by UN agencies. UNIAP is sometimes seen as a barrier between civil society and Government, a *“gatekeeper”*,⁴³ who has the power to *“block approvals”*. NGOs in different countries also raised concerns that UNIAP was taking on work that NGOs are better placed to do, for instance in provincial areas. This matter is discussed further under cross-cutting issues ‘UNIAP’s role in implementation’ [see para. 128-135].

104. NGOs in various countries criticised the quality of training in terms of teaching styles (lecturing rather than interactivity), content (lack of expert inputs), and structure (too long). It was not always clear if participants were referring to training programmes for NGOs or making observations on training provided to Government officials. One interviewee gave a rounded assessment saying that training should be based on proper needs assessment to ensure people were receiving the training they needed; better methods should be used; and that there should be follow-up/coaching to ensure implementation.

105. Overall, UNIAP’s work with civil society organisations seems to be on an ad hoc basis; a strategy paper or contextual analysis of the state of civil society development in a given country would facilitate a more strategic developmental approach. The issues raised here highlight again the conflict of interest in UNIAP’s function in serving governments, alongside those in the wider counter-trafficking sector who may have opposing interests. It is noteworthy that the 2009 mid-term evaluation also picked up on mixed views among civil society organisations in terms of the degree to which UNIAP was relevant to their work⁴⁴.

1.3.3. Other sub-objectives and activities

106. The project document cited various other lower level objectives on **monitoring, partnership**⁴⁵ and **service provision**⁴⁶ on which ad hoc activities may take place. Nothing much

⁴³ The Governments of Myanmar and Viet Nam queried this finding at the evaluation debrief. The evaluation points out that these concerns are raised in a non-specific way and examples of UNIAP playing a facilitative role in different countries are also integrated into the text in an anonymous way.

⁴⁴ 2009 UNIAP mid-term evaluation, pg. 32

⁴⁵ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objectives – *“Strengthening approaches to monitoring and evaluation throughout the anti-trafficking sector”*; *“Avoiding overlaps and duplications”*; *“Promoting venues for greater partnership among different anti-trafficking”*.

has been done to build the M+E capacity of the counter-trafficking sector; a missed opportunity as there was/is much need for a review of what works or doesn't work in trafficking interventions. One UNIAP country office reports that it is planning to do M&E training for the anti-trafficking sector and has carried out two courses already. The evaluation was not able to find sufficient information to say whether donors are or are not aligning themselves to COMMIT plans. Some interviewees commented that UNIAP has not facilitated optimal resources allocation from donors to the wider community as it has been too concentrated on seeking funds for itself. UNIAP contends that it is in no position to do so as it often lacks sufficient funds itself.

107. The project has been active in garnering **media** attention, through frequent appearances on television and in the press. The recent SOM/IMM in Hanoi, February 2012 saw the participation of 60 media outlets including coverage from the BBC and CNN. In 2011, UNIAP had eight key press pieces on CNN, PressTV, IRIN, Time magazine, New York Times and Byron Clark blog⁴⁷. These particular media activities came about under the 'Worst offenders project' initiated under objective 4 which sees media strategies as a way of increasing the incentive to Governments to address these complex cases⁴⁸. The project has mobilised press attention which is not always easy to do and helped ensure that issues in the region, and the activities of the UN, are not left out of major media campaigns e.g. CNN Freedom Project. Some stakeholders criticise the way UNIAP presents itself as an independent UN entity in these interviews (although UNIAP does in fact name UN agencies in some of these briefings) and that its position on Thailand is unbalanced⁴⁹. Such issues could be addressed by having clearer internal UN protocols prepared in advance on talking points and authorisation procedures to ensure that media work supports the overarching purpose of the project, which is to foster inter-governmental cooperation.

⁴⁶ UNIAP PD 2006, Sub-objectives – UNIAP as service provider – facilitation of inter-agency coordination meetings and networking at the national and regional level and joint priority setting”; facilitation of multi-agency strategic planning exercises at national and regional level; development and maintenance of an extensive up-to-date inventory of GMS anti-trafficking interventions and partners.

⁴⁷ UNIAP, SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual Progress Report 2011, October 2010-September 2011. Pg 8.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ CNN clip, Thai Slave Fisherman, 4 April 2011

1.4. Objective 4

“Special Projects - To continue to play a catalytic role in the anti-trafficking response by identifying and supporting special projects to address new and emerging issues and opportunities” [UNIAP Project Document 2006]

Box 5

Key finding

The project is partially effective in meeting objective 4. There is little awareness amongst most stakeholders as to what this objective is about. The projects are appreciated by the beneficiaries and donors of these specific activities. UNIAP’s approach to special projects has not served its overall coordination function however; critics say it has gone too far into implementation and filled gaps that others are better placed to fill.

108. The project document defines special projects as,

“generally small-scale initiatives in areas not being addressed by other agencies, or in some instances, requiring a multi-agency response” with a focus on “bridging gaps; exploring new approaches; bringing in new actors; and building new linkages, particularly across borders”. “Such initiatives are then intended to be picked up by partner agencies with specialised technical expertise, with a view to eventual consolidation and institutionalisation of successful approaches through mechanisms such as COMMIT”.

109. UNIAP’s four main special projects are:

- **Ethics and human rights in counter-trafficking project** is intended to introduce ethical checks for anti-trafficking research in the UN system. An ethics guide was produced, which is now being integrated into the Regional Training Programme ToT.
- **Shelter self-improvement project.** UNIAP identified the need for a practical tool, peer review and improvement system to supplement the longer manuals and handbooks on shelters that already existed. The project was launched in Viet Nam and is now being implemented in China.
- **Support to under-served victim populations:** This support is provided to grants through NGOs, which are \$30-50k in size each, for programme periods of usually around 18 months. They cover gaps in services to under-served victim populations such as people working on Thai fishing boats to domestic slaves to child labourers in factories. These are groups where the governments mandated to protect them are not recognizing or providing assistance to them.
- **SIREN/Worst Offenders project**⁵⁰: SIREN is UNIAP’s surveillance and data reporting system on human trafficking issues. Key data sources include interviews with victims, deportees and vulnerable populations, sentinel surveillance, and intelligence from

⁵⁰ UNIAP, SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual Progress Report 2011, October 2010-September 2011

grassroots partners and community informants. The Worst Offenders project *“uses this information to develop a rich intelligence picture of the most exploitative trafficking flows”* which it takes to local/specialist law enforcement for investigative action, in the hope of leading to the successful prosecution of traffickers and exploiters.

110. UNIAP has identified relevant opportunities on the whole, albeit some reports about the duplication of existing activities e.g. hotlines or community micro-finance projects. A Government official in one country complained that UNIAP’s ethics training was overlapping with elements of training provided by others.

111. UNIAP has done some good quality work e.g. beneficiaries find the shelter self-improvement programme useful and say it has helped them change the approach of shelter staff – the training has enabled the transfer of some basic social work skills enabling the treatment of victims in a more humane manner. There is imminent scale up across Government shelters in China and a likely expansion to other countries. It’s also worth pointing out that some Government counterparts involved in these initiatives reported finding UNIAP staff more conducive to work with, as they took a more open, consultative approach which met their needs whereas other agencies sometimes came across as *“too bossy”*. Donors who fund this work such as USAID and USDOS are very happy with the outcomes.

112. Critics say, however, that this approach to special projects does not serve the overall coordination function required of UNIAP, and also envisaged under this objective, *“initiatives are then intended to be picked up by partner agencies with specialised technical expertise”*. After identifying a gap, UNIAP should first see if there is a suitable agency to fill this gap rather than go to implementation itself, for instance one UN Stakeholder who gave a very measured assessment of UNIAP’s performance and was not directly affected by UNIAP’s activities under objective 4, nevertheless commented that,

“UNIAP is not gap finding but gap filling, it should find and see what others are doing on it – UNIAP should identify gaps and then find providers”.

One NGO added that it would rather have other organisations take on special projects as UNIAP’s relationship with Government can compromise implementation.

113. As these comments suggest the special projects raise questions from different parts of the counter-trafficking community in terms of overlaps. Where the special project ideas concern improving working practices and technical knowledge e.g. ethics training or shelter self-improvement, UNIAP might have taken the approach of trying to integrate its methodologies into work already being done by others in order to enhance the sector e.g. training on working with victims, or shelter management, instead of seeing them as brand new initiatives. In the case of the other two projects (‘underserved populations’ and ‘SIREN/Worst offenders’), questions arise as to whether UNIAP’s role is to implement itself or to focus on building the capacity of civil society to do this work. This is discussed later in this section under ‘Cross-cutting issues – UNIAP role in implementation’ [see para. 128 – 135].

114. UNIAP's shelter self-improvement project initiated by the regional office has been a particular bone of contention. UNIAP says its approach is fundamentally different to the work of others and not duplication. It tried to engage inter-agency stakeholders in this initiative,

"[we] took this tool and the new program TOR to the inter-agency community to rally joint efforts, but none came."

This TOR, a May 2008 concept note, *"encourages inter-agency partners to contribute technical and financial support"* exhorting, *"Together we can improve shelter conditions in the GMS, in a relatively short period of time!"*.

115. UN agencies say this is typical of UNIAP; it doesn't come at an early enough stage and work in a collaborative way to see how others can build on existing work but instead arrives with pre-prepared ideas and lobbies for contributions, sometimes with donor and Government agreement in place, all of which reduce the possibility of genuine cooperation and partnership. Such concerns appear to have some foundation; the TOR in question is a well-developed document, and an advanced proposal for funding had already been submitted to a donor⁵¹ by the time the TOR was circulated. In one country, UNIAP says the local office of one agency was initially receptive. Elsewhere, UNIAP says it is reacting to a Government request though others say its role should be about helping the sector respond together rather than pursuing projects individually.

116. Under Phase II, this objective was pursued differently as funds were used to support pilot work by UN and NGO stakeholders e.g. UNESCO/ADB on ethnic minorities; Save the Children on safe migration; and the ILO for the Sub-regional advisory committee (SURAC) looking at the relationship between labour migration/protection and trafficking. UNIAP in this phase says it is not feasible to pass on funds to others due to multiple overheads and administrative barriers.

117. On the question of UNIAP's sub-grants to local NGOs, some interviewees questioned the choice of grantees and the transparency of the selection process. UNIAP has a defined grant selection procedure, the decision-making process involves three rounds of formal review; UNIAP country staff; UNIAP regional staff plus one external stakeholder (UNESCO and in the past IOM and ARTIP); and final approval by UNDP's civil society grant-making committee. Processes are in place but the inclusion of more external stakeholders in the decision-making process at national level would help enhance credibility, as under the UNDP/Global Environment Facility Small Grants Scheme for example. Sub-granting within the context of a civil society strategy for each country, and with an emphasis on capacity building and strengthening the sector would also make for a more sustainable developmental approach rather than one focused on delivering UNIAP's project plans.

118. There are four different modalities for making grants to other organisations: as partners; implementers; recipients of grants; or consultants for professional services. Grants are made in some countries using modalities which enable funds to be passed without a formal application and decision-making process as local CSOs are unregistered and lack the capacity to make formal application, *"they can't deal with the UNDP finance system so we just give them 2000*

⁵¹ UNIAP technical proposal to USAID/Viet Nam (2nd revision by request) dated 22 May 2008

dollars or so for training". UNDP allows for a waiver of financial applications for small grants below US\$ 2500. Elsewhere, one stakeholder credited UNIAP with *"opening doors for local NGOs who would not pass the standards of other organisations"*.

1.5. Cross-cutting issues

1.5.1. Fusion of objectives

119. UNIAP's model of work sees each activity serve different objectives⁵². For example, work with under-served victims under objective 4, also provides material for research under objective 3, and simultaneously serves COMMIT under objective 1. A cross-section of stakeholders express concerns that UNIAP is justifying non-COMMIT activities (objectives 3-4) under COMMIT (objective 1) to divert questions about the legitimacy of acting alone e.g. training and capacity building activities initiated by UNIAP reportedly without adequate coordination under objective 4 are morphed into activities under objective 1 which are carried out under the authority of Governments. The project's internal logframe 2009 appears to confirm this trend as it now integrates field visits and consultations under objective 1 which should be about policy and advisory level work. UNIAP's shelter project has also moved from objective 4 to become part of the COMMIT plan.

120. Questions are raised about transparency and accounting practices. The project has developed procedures to better disaggregate costs and to clarify that double-counting is not involved i.e. staff claim DSA and travel costs but not staff time when supporting implementation under objective 1. UNIAP says it inherited a rudimentary system of accounting and has done much since 2007 to disaggregate the budget into separate lines for different countries and objectives. A UNDP inter-office memorandum dated 13 December 2010 documents various concerns about UNIAP project budget planning and in particular persistent cost sharing deficits, the memo notes that feedback and guidance has been given to UNIAP on many occasions

"But the issue seems to remain unchanged and it always ends up with the reversal of expenditure juggling funds from one donor to another...".

121. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to make a determination on financial management but it can give a programmatic perspective. While project administration tries to improve the transparency of financial reporting, there is only so much it can do while the overall approach appears to roll everything together in a confusing and complex way. Staffing, budget and activities are enmeshed in the delivery of project objectives i.e. instead of having staff specifically dedicated to working on particular objectives - staff assigned specifically for objective 1 COMMIT for example - a number of staff positions simultaneously work on all objectives. The budgets become conflated as noted by UNDP administration and activities cross-refer.

⁵² See for example, UNIAP Proposal, "Supporting the COMMIT Process and COMMIT 3rd Sub-Regional Plan of Action, 7 January 2011 Revision, pg 9

122. UNIAP finds this *“internally very consistent”* as it sees research and action at the grassroots level (under objectives 3 and 4) feed directly into policy-making under COMMIT (1). While this may fit the project’s own vision, working at the grassroots level with victims, while at the same time, linking directly to policy makers through COMMIT, the model is undesirable from an administrative and programmatic point of view.

123. Oversight and accountability are made difficult when the distinctions between objectives are not maintained. Furthermore, it is no more necessary to fuse the project’s research and special projects (objectives 3 and 4) with objective 1 than it is to fuse activities by others - most UN/NGO activity is designed to feed into policy-making, not only UNIAP’s – and it could be seen as limiting to establish priorities under objective 1 based on UNIAP’s experience alone rather than a full scan of the sector. A further concern, especially for objective 1, is that in such a model, the chance of objectives being reached in a self-contained, sustainable and financially independent way becomes reduced since they always become interdependent with the achievement of other objectives. Fundamentally this approach may work on another project but is not suitable for UNIAP which has a special responsibility to enable the whole sector to work in a holistic way. A strategy based on UNIAP identifying grassroots needs and feeding them into policy-making comes across as too insular for this purpose.

1.5.2. Prioritising COMMIT

124. UNIAP does not appear to be maintaining the level of priority on the COMMIT process as required by the project document. The emphasis of the project document is very clear,

“The core purposes of UNIAP during Phase III will be to ensure that COMMIT can move forward and realise its full potential”.

The 70:30 principle was agreed in terms of the breakdown of the project’s time and resources between COMMIT and non-COMMIT activities. The project says this breakdown is maintained in financial terms e.g. 2006-2010 – 60% went on objective 1; 1% on objective 2; 11% on objective 3; 19% on objective 4⁵³. It is difficult to see how the project can say this with much certainty given the issues raised earlier about the lack of clarity in budgets (see para. 47).

125. This breakdown does not seem observed in other ways. Firstly, in terms of staff time, interviews with UNIAP staff about their own jobs and their perception of the overall project workload suggest the ratio is not maintained, with some commenting that the breakdown in terms of time spent was more likely 50:50 in practice. The staff organigram and job descriptions also show a heavy emphasis on objectives 2-4 and especially 3-4: aside from management and administrative functions which presumably cover all objectives, other posts such as cross-border case coordinators, field operations coordinator, information officers, etc. would appear to have a significant focus on non-COMMIT.

⁵³ UNIAP Phase III (2007-2013) Mid-phase review, dated 2010, pg 44.

126. The focus on COMMIT is also decreased when the project places greater emphasis on non-COMMIT objectives in the way it accounts for itself. This is important as it gives a signal as to UNIAP's own priorities. There are numerous examples of this e.g. UNIAP's own mid-phase review devotes 22 pages to objectives 2-4 but only 7 pages on COMMIT; and the project's revised logframe 2009 has more outputs under non-COMMIT objectives as compared to COMMIT. A very recent example is UNIAP's proposal for the third SPA which lists COMMIT as one of six initiatives (the others come under objectives 3 and 4) and then goes on to merge them further (as discussed above):

*"COMMIT, SIREN, and Support to Under-served Victim Populations, are UNIAP's three main programs and constitute over 80% of UNIAP's total program efforts. They support and feed into each other"*⁵⁴.

127. It is acknowledged that the balance will vary from country to country, and that with unpredictable funding flows, the exact ratio is very difficult to maintain. There are no timesheets to prove the case one way or the other. However, it is reasonable to conclude that while the core focus of the project still remains on Objective 1/COMMIT, the desired 70:30 ratio has not been sufficiently maintained due to the increasing emphasis on objectives 3 and 4.

1.5.3. UNIAP role in implementation

128. A cross-section of stakeholders express confusion about UNIAP's role and the extent to which it is supposed to be a coordination/policy body as opposed to an implementation function. Implementation is defined as anything that goes beyond management and coordination according to the project document, which speaks of implementation in high level terms as related to regional trainings and advising on national plans,

*"while UNIAP is not generally an implementing body, it will play a role in the implementation of (or in supporting the implementation of) other SPA activities, where these have a clear inter-agency focus or relate to the project's other areas of focus, or where UNIAP has specific relevant in-house technical expertise. The major examples of this are the Regional Training Programme and National Plans".*⁵⁵

129. Given this definition, UNIAP's role in implementation as opposed to management and coordination is extensive simply through its standard training and research activities. There are few questions about UNIAP's role in supporting implementation under objective 1 in terms of policy development and capacity building. The main concern is that UNIAP takes it one step further and deals with victims of trafficking through work carried out under objectives 3 and 4 (e.g. Worst offenders project). UN agencies, NGOs and some UNIAP staff express reservations about such activities e.g. investigating cases, going on raids, direct assistance to victims etc., as one interviewee put it,

"its role and responsibilities are not clear...it should be inter-agency...a coordinator not an implementer...it acts like an implementer".

⁵⁴ UNIAP Proposal, "Supporting the COMMIT Process and COMMIT 3rd Sub-Regional Plan of Action, 7 January 2011 Revision, pg 8-9

⁵⁵ UNIAP Project document Phase III, 2006, pg 18

Another expressed concerns about the participation of UNIAP staff in raids said

“we feel uncomfortable, we don’t know what UNIAP is going to do next – we don’t know what vision there is for this phase, they just seem to jump on issues”.

Others queried the point of UNIAP participation and the risks involved for all concerned.

130. UNIAP says its direct contacts with victims take place in the course of research, monitoring activities, and ad hoc requests for emergency assistance e.g. repatriating victims. Its research and monitoring functions account for some of this perceived ‘implementation’. In one location UNIAP staff reported monitoring around 50% of the caseload of NGO partners which involves re-assessing needs and making referrals – monitoring on such a scale is actually redoing the work of local partners – and the question must be asked if there are so many mistakes, why UNIAP is not focusing on partner capacity building rather than taking over the tasks itself.

131. In addition, UNIAP’s ‘case work’ activities involve extensive hands on work with individual cases including *“assistance with police work”*⁵⁶. In one trafficking case for example, UNIAP along with its NGO partners reports that it provided extensive assistance to the police authorities,

“from the collection of evidence for the arrest warrant (done almost entirely by X NGO) to victim screening at the police station (done almost entirely by UNIAP and X NGO), and constantly checking in on the progress of case development...victim protection and care...”.

UNIAP concludes that,

*“hundreds if not thousands of man-hours were invested by UNIAP and (X and X NGO) to keep this case moving, yet the case was ultimately foiled by witness tampering and threats”.*⁵⁷

132. Some project job descriptions explicitly allow for direct assistance to victims,

“through ...community visits, and/or other appropriate means, reach and assist .. male, female, adult and child victims of trafficking and exploitation in ... hotspots, primarily in the provinces along the ...run a 24-hr nationwide ...anti-trafficking hotline in ...to help

⁵⁶ UNIAP’s case work is described as follows in the ‘SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual progress report 2011, October 2010 – September 2011; pg 8’. “UNIAP’s role in developing these cases and supporting police investigation and action has been as follows:

- Receiving case information from an informant, victim, relative of victim, or grassroots partner, primarily through the UNIAP Burmese-language hotline or from NGOs;
- Translation of initial information into English and Thai; Follow-up fieldwork, arranging a meeting with the victim or informant and conducting a more thorough interview in a safe place, in their local language;
- Case write-up and packaging, for presentation to Thai authorities;
- Assistance with police work [introducing victims to investigators (with their informed consent); language interpretation;
- Assistance with victim screening interviews and documentation; coordination between police, shelter staff, and NGO staff (with capacity building integrated through informing international standards of procedure)];
- Assistance through the court process – following up with victims between hearings (in shelter or at home), court watch, prosecutorial strategizing with lawyers;
- Leveraging UNIAP’s COMMIT relationships to put struggling cases on the table and increase cross ministry accountability and coordination”.

⁵⁷ UNIAP, SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual progress report 2011, October 2010 – September 2011

*link more trafficking victims and vulnerable persons with the information and referral assistance they need*⁵⁸.

UNIAP's 24-hour hotline for Burmese migrant communities in Thailand is based in UNIAP's regional office in Bangkok.

133. UNIAP appears to have over-reached the implementation role allowed by the project document to the confusion of others working in the counter-trafficking sector. NGO stakeholders, echoed comments often heard from UN stakeholders about *"mandate creep"*, and felt UNIAP was even encroaching on their work,

"NGOs do not appreciate the role of UNIAP doing work on ground, UNIAP should stick at policy level and do technical support for governments and not act like an NGO".

Another added,

"UNIAP should try to be more like a supporting agency to teach how to do the work...it needs to do more to support others than being an actor.....to encourage local agencies to do the work".

134. Critics say this detracts time and attention from UNIAP's policy function⁵⁹. That it undermines coordination in the counter-trafficking community – trafficking is not an issue that can be tackled by any one organisation or project alone - a division of labour and a respect for the roles of different organisations is important – as one NGO put it,

"there needs to be a division of labour...division of roles...UNIAP should look after the big picture....do more on setting the agenda for policy-making...and perhaps have cooperation via case conferences".

There are also concerns that it undermines the responses of others – one interviewee gave the example of a situation where it felt UNIAP's intervention had undermined the likelihood of a successful outcome. In addition, some activities are highly specialised e.g. meeting informants in order to receive information⁶⁰ carries heavy security risks for all concerned. While the project has a policy of ensuring the informed consent of victims in any legal action, ethical questions may be asked about running a hotline⁶¹ which enables the gathering of information for research and prosecution if UNIAP *"finds it difficult to offer appropriate assistance"* on matters that people are calling about e.g. *"nationality verification, labour rights, migrant rights as well as health and social issues"*⁶².

135. The project's justification for this hands-on work is two-fold. Firstly, that it needs this direct contact with victims to understand the problem and to feed this learning into evidence-

⁵⁸ UNIAP cross-border case coordinator job description

⁵⁹ The Government of Myanmar expressed appreciation for UNIAP assisting in addressing specific cases. While the evaluation notes that this may be helpful on an individual basis, the aim of the evaluation is to consider how such activities fit with UNIAP's overall role and strategy.

⁶⁰ SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual progress report 2011, October 2010 – September 2011; pg 8

⁶¹ The Myanmar-language hotline in Thailand *"was established in 2009 in response to the need to provide information to people from Myanmar in Thailand about the migrant registration and nationality verification processes, as well as a way to report trafficking and exploitation"*. UNIAP 2007-2013 Mid-phase review dated 2010, pg. 34

⁶² SIREN/Worst Offenders Project, Annual progress report 2011, October 2010 – September 2011; pg 7

based policy on trafficking; and secondly, that victims need immediate help and it is inhumane to ignore them. Not everyone has a problem with UNIAP doing implementation, some, albeit a minority, say this leads to useful in-depth information about trafficking routes and the trafficking experience, and that it's useful for UNIAP to learn the issues first hand. Some can't see the harm in helping out victims in need e.g. airfares for repatriations. Others, including trafficking specialists refer to such activities as *"charitable giving with little strategic value"*.

1.5.4. Strengthening technical capacity

136. There was a conscious effort in this phase to deepen the technical implementation of the COMMIT process. This is a sound approach and most in the counter-trafficking community would agree that this gives teeth to COMMIT and sets it apart from other inter-governmental mechanisms which are little more than talking shops. Indeed many would like policy implementation by Governments to go further.

137. The debate is about where this technical expertise should come from. The project approach has been to build this capacity in-house by creating a dedicated technical unit. It seeks supplementary support from outside as necessary and available either from other agencies or from external consultants (although the latter is not considered an efficient modality). The regional trainings are an example of how the project involves other players. UNIAP says it was better able to rely on other agencies at regional level until around 2008 when a number of longstanding technical advisers left. It has since tried to address this technical gap at regional level e.g. paying for staff of other agencies to go on training courses. In the absence of available technical support, it says it has no option but to meet technical needs in-house.

138. However, other stakeholders see things differently and do not find UNIAP's approach so facilitative or open to involving others. In terms of UN agencies, it does not appear to have fully respected specialised roles or given leadership over particular COMMIT areas. For instance, the project might have taken the approach early on of negotiating with each agency to take responsibility for leading on technical support for each stream of work under COMMIT and for ensuring that services were delivered (even if they did not deliver them all themselves). According to long-time observers, this approach was more in evidence in Phase II rather than Phase III. Other players such as NGOs also call for more capacity building of the sector on technical issues as noted earlier. Some UNIAP staff members voice the concern that they do not feel trusted to handle technical issues and wish UNIAP management would teach them how to do things instead.

139. UNIAP's approach seems to involve taking charge of the provision of technical advice under COMMIT itself, either by delivering technical inputs or by organising how these should happen. There was a conscious desire to move the project away from the coordination approach of Phase II to a more technically based one in Phase III; UNIAP did *"not just [want] administration and management staff focusing on coordination with little to offer in terms of technical assistance"*. This is despite the fact that the evaluation of Phase II found the

coordination approach successful. There is also a view among staff that UNIAP should embody a technical role which covered all 4 P's, 'Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Policy',

"by having national and regional staff who were expert in 4Ps and could understand how a piece of information from a victim could feed into prevention, prosecution and policy ...[this leads to] synergies and efficiencies...[which] are difficult to achieve when the work of the Ps are silo'ed into different agencies rather than in one service providing unit [underline added]. Years of anti-trafficking programming within these silos have demonstrated the loss of information, efficiency and effectiveness that comes with this silo'ed model, even with frequent inter-agency meetings. It is not the tendency of agencies to share strategic information to help their partners improve their program effectiveness (and thus competitiveness for donor funding)."

140. The inference from this is that UNIAP sees a technical role for itself encompassing all dimensions of trafficking in 'one service providing unit' as it were. The approach to technical know-how is somewhat exclusive; this comes across in the way UNIAP talks about which individuals it can and cannot "use" to support its events and the rather utilitarian vision of collaboration which characterises this phase which sees the as,

"develop[ing] a sense of community but not by having every organisation there – not everything has to be done in a collaborative way – the focus has to be on getting people with technical skills – it may mean getting someone from an organisation or it may not. It is so easy to waste time meeting, there has to be a reason for bringing people together".

141. Such an approach is not empowering of individuals or the sector as a whole and does not help disseminate technical expertise. UNIAP's mandate to work on the 4 P's can be interpreted differently. Rather than seeing itself as a provider or organiser of technical advice on all aspects of trafficking, it could see its role as developing connectivity between these components at a systemic level. This does not mean it should work on all aspects directly - this risks UNIAP working in its own silo on the 4Ps by itself – inefficient given the small size of UNIAP as opposed to the potential gains of effective coordination across the sector. It is also unfeasible for a small project to be on top of such a wide range of technical areas and can perhaps account for the criticisms of UNIAP not always being abreast of the latest policies and standards in specialised fields.

142. Meeting the technical needs of a broad-ranging issue such as trafficking was always going to be a challenge. A more open and consultative approach on how these needs might have been met could have alleviated pressure on UNIAP and empowered and engaged other stakeholders too. Ideas might have included, for instance, more written guidance and tools, more responsibility to UNIAP staff, building the capacity of peer support (e.g. lead focal points for certain technical issues within Governments), identifying leads within the anti-trafficking sector on different subject areas (UN, NGOs, donors), ensuring annual plans are realistic and deliverable, developing and training a cadre of short-term consultants etc. Related issues are also discussed under UNIAP role in implementation and under discussion on objective 1.

1.5.5. Scope

143. The scope of UNIAP is questioned when it seems to absorb more and more activities into the COMMIT process, and consequently its own remit. UNIAP started this process in 2008,

“to incorporate UN non-COMMIT projects...(names of other agencies..) into COMMIT workplans and to have these activities ‘count’ as COMMIT”

with the intention of trying to coordinate all activities under one roof.

144. However, the scope of the COMMIT work plan and consequently UNIAP’s COMMIT related activity, should be determined by the relationship of COMMIT to national anti-trafficking structures i.e. in four countries, COMMIT is subordinate to the main national anti-trafficking structures, in one country it is superior, and in one country it is at the same level. In countries where it is subordinate to an overarching structure at national level, it is inappropriate to draw activities into regional plans which go beyond the specific function assigned to COMMIT at national level.

145. Somewhat related to this are complaints from various quarters about UNIAP over claiming results. The Thai Government⁶³ says that activities taking place outside the scope of COMMIT are included in UNIAP reports and that minor support provided by UNIAP e.g. translations end up getting listed as a UNIAP activity. UN and NGOs raised similar concerns. One NGO said UNIAP took the credit for work involving several organisations. Stakeholders also point out that the success of COMMIT is due to the contributions of many actors, not least the Governments themselves, but that the credit is too often heaped on UNIAP alone. UNIAP on the other hand, also says it is not credited by others for its work.

1.5.6. Project coherence

146. At its heart, the project is trying to serve competing interests. As noted at various points, there is a conflict of interest between objective 1 serving Governments and the remaining objectives which require serving other constituencies which are quite likely to have different interests especially as their roles to varying degrees involve holding Governments to account. This dualism comes out in various ways when UNIAP itself appears to support and facilitate the criticism of Governments or when it is seen as coming between the relations of UN agencies/NGOs and Governments. As one stakeholder put it, *“the conflict they’ve got is between serving Governments and UN rights-based approaches”*.

147. Albeit that the project design is in dire need of an update, some degree of conflict will always be there as long as the UN has an involvement. The international community’s support to the COMMIT process is premised on the basis that inter-governmental cooperation is an important way of tackling the problem of trafficking and ultimately making a difference to victims’ lives. The role of the UN, as guardian of various international human rights treaties, therefore helps to bring some sense accountability to this process. However, the way in which

⁶³ Royal Thai Government letter to UN Resident Coordinator dated 28 September 2007

this authority is handled requires considerable political dexterity, and this is where the project has fallen down in this phase.

148. Under objective 1, in its function as COMMIT secretariat, the project is able to work with Governments, quietly influencing behind the scenes, nudging them in the direction of best practice. The project recognises this approach well, for instance, in its M+E of SPA. At country level, some offices have been particularly effective in this quiet behind-the-scenes diplomacy, for instance in opening up participation in COMMIT taskforces to international organisations. In this phase, the project has simultaneously gone for a more robust approach through its research and advocacy activities carried out under objectives 3 and 4. This has caused a particular problem in the project's relationship with the Government of Thailand which sees itself as the target of much of this activity. While a human rights strategy based on public exposure has an important place in combating human rights abuses, it has to be asked whether UNIAP, in its role as COMMIT secretariat, can take on such a role.

149. The primary function of the project is to support the COMMIT process. This requires maintaining a sense of equilibrium between all parties in order to foster dialogue and collaboration. Both sending and receiving countries are essential to this forum. While there may be different responsibilities on both sides to tackle human rights concerns e.g. exploitation in destination areas as compared to socio-economic or minority/ethnic rights in places of origin, UNIAP as the COMMIT secretariat cannot be partisan. Falling out with one Government to the degree that it has, would not appear an option. Activities should be carried out in a way that emphasises neutrality and multilateralism in line with UN development policy,⁶⁴ and be mindful of the broader human rights/political context in which the project is operating.

150. The key point is that the project has embarked on two conflicting strategies: the first and key strategy from the point of view of the project document is to combat trafficking by fostering inter-governmental cooperation; the second strategy developed by UNIAP itself, is to combat trafficking through a human rights investigation and public advocacy approach. Both are valid but they are not reconcilable especially in one small project where the same individuals are endeavouring to execute both approaches. The UN system has its mechanisms e.g. the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Rapporteurs, Human rights Treaty bodies etc. to enable it to raise issues which its other programmes may not be able to do.

151. UNIAP's involvement in implementation would appear to have worked to its disadvantage. Had it taken a more hands off approach and seen its role under objectives 2-4 as more supporting and developing the anti-trafficking sector, it could have enabled other organisations to directly take on this advocacy with Governments. But by becoming involved in all

⁶⁴⁶⁴ This is emphasized in key UN policy documents such as "Agenda for Development" 1994 which under Part III, Section B 'The role of the UN in Development' para. 238 states that *"An important feature of the United Nations is its operational activities for development in the field. Their fundamental characteristics should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary, and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the needs of the developing countries in a flexible manner."* <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/unrole.htm>

dimensions, it has detracted from the ability of other players to take on this role, while at the same time being unable to fulfil its own function to optimum effect.

152. All in all, the political dimensions of the project have not been handled well. Even supporters say the *“the political aspects have been insensitively handled in this phase”*, critics go as far as to call it *“political mismanagement”*. The 2009 mid-term evaluation was already flagging up that political dimensions needed more attention⁶⁵. Questions arise as to the strategic choices made by the project in this phase. While it has delivered important results for Governments and donors alike on discreet aspects of the project, the overall purpose of strengthening COMMIT seems undermined. Evaluation interviews indicate that the vast majority of stakeholders still consider this to be the most important part of the project; if so, there is a critical need to bring COMMIT centre stage once again.

2. Impact⁶⁶

Box 6

Key finding

There is considerable anecdotal evidence of the project’s impact but it is beyond the scope of this evaluation report to make a full determination on impact.

153. There is considerable anecdotal evidence of the project’s impact. In response to questions of impact, interviewees frequently cited UNIAP’s role in the development of laws and policies, cross-border MOUs etc; capacity building of Government officials; raising the awareness and profile of the issue; and increasing the knowledge base on the prevalence and characteristics of trafficking. Attribution is always difficult to determine when discussing changes at this level both in terms of the role of other actors and achievements arising from previous phases but given that UNIAP’s contribution, alongside that of other agencies, was acknowledged by leading Government officials responsible for the work of trafficking in their countries, it can take some credit for positive developments in counter-trafficking work in the region.

154. Some of the challenges in making a real difference on the ground are also evident. UNIAP’s case work under the Worst Offenders Project, despite intensive efforts by UNIAP and its partners, is disappointing. UNIAP’s conclusion on the 14 cases identified by it during 2010-11 concludes,

“essentially, most key cases are investigated since UNIAP provides assistance in this area, and victims are often rescued, but less than half of these cases see arrests, and when they do occur the suspects are almost immediately released on bail, sometimes

⁶⁵ UNIAP Mid-term evaluation 2009, pg 34, section 3.3.2.3.

⁶⁶ *“Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”* OECD/DAC Glossary, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

without even being interviewed. Even fewer cases are filed and no establishments have been closed...”⁶⁷.

155. Government representatives from two countries asked the evaluation to probe the extent to which UNIAP and/or COMMIT has received global recognition. The evaluation reviewed documents submitted by the project as examples of wider recognition.

- **UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons especially women and children report to the UN General Assembly in May 2010** – this is a descriptive report which looks at regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms across the world. It is based on written inputs received from ten mechanisms and notes that several others were contacted for information but did not reply. COMMIT especially, and UNIAP to a lesser extent are mentioned several times. Other initiatives in Asia are also discussed namely, ASEAN, ARTIP (its predecessor ARCPPT) and SAARC. The Special Rapporteur’s report is not an independent value judgement on the merits of different mechanisms and simply makes a comparative analysis based on information provided by the organisations concerned. As a follow-on to this report, UNIAP staff were invited to participate in a consultation in West Africa in October 2010 alongside technical experts from eight other regional mechanisms.
- **UNODC, Evaluation of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN-GIFT), May 2011** – this is a review of the inter-agency effort under UN-GIFT. It refers to UNIAP more often than COMMIT and highlights it as the major example of formalised inter-agency cooperation at regional level. It discusses the strengths and challenges of UNIAP’s inter-agency work in order to draw lessons for GIFT but it is solely reliant on the 2009 UNIAP mid-term evaluation and appears to have no other source for its conclusions.
- **USDOS, Global Trafficking in Persons Report, 2010** – GTIP funds UNIAP’s SIREN project which is highlighted in the 2010 GTIP report in a section on evidence-based research. This section briefly describes the methodology and refers to SIREN’s analysis informing law enforcement agencies on the prevalence of trafficking in multiple countries. The report also profiles research initiatives by five other organisations including IOM, Nexus Institute and three universities. GTIP itself is an initiative of the US Government and not globally owned in the same way as the previous two.

156. On the point of global recognition, it can be said that UNIAP and COMMIT have both come to global attention but there is no independent global assessment on the merits of either. It is worth noting that key UNIAP staff as individuals are recognised among peers of counter-trafficking specialists for their expertise in this field.

157. In summary, this evaluation is unable to make a full determination of impact; this would require an in-depth study which takes into account baseline information at the start of this phase and the role and contribution of other factors and actors. The 2009 mid-term evaluation

⁶⁷ UNIAP, SIREN/Worst offenders project, Annual Progress Report 2011, October 2010 – September 2011

did not assess impact at all due to the challenges of attribution. Some Government representatives expressed disappointment that UNIAP itself has not carried out an impact assessment despite requests at COMMIT meetings over the years. An impact assessment framework was developed in 2007 and has been piloted in Myanmar in 2009. The impact assessment is due to take place in 2012. The project says it has delayed this assessment because it wants time for impacts to become visible. No other regional project by any agency has carried out a full impact study either so UNIAP is not alone in this respect.

3. Sustainability⁶⁸

Box 7

Key finding

The project has achieved partial sustainability of benefits. The prospects for sustaining COMMIT activities at national level are promising as national mechanisms, action plans, capacity building activities and budgetary support are in place. However, as the COMMIT process is essentially about inter-governmental cooperation, sub-regional support is a *sine non qua* – without it COMMIT cannot operate. The sub-regional support arrangements are overly dependent on UNIAP and lack sustainability. Little attention has been paid to the sustainability of other project components.

158. In terms of objective one, support to Governments/COMMIT, prospects for sustainability⁶⁹ of benefits at the national level are good in most countries. All countries have national COMMIT taskforces: four of which allow the participation of the international community, one does not, and one allows occasional participation. These COMMIT taskforces fit within a broader landscape which includes national plans on trafficking in five out of six countries, and broader structures on trafficking in all six countries. UNIAP was not usually involved in the establishment of these national mechanisms but they are an important buttress to the COMMIT framework which has been directly supported by the project.

159. In terms of specific project activities coming under objective one, interviewees mentioned sustainable benefits arising from training; physical infrastructure such as databases, hotlines, websites; and laws and policies e.g. anti-trafficking laws, national plans of actions. Interviewees see some advances at national level, in one country UNIAP carried out 80 per cent of the work done under the annual work plan, the Government has now increased ownership and UNIAP only covers 30 per cent.

⁶⁸ “Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable”. Definition given in *DAC Summary of key norms and standards*, available from: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

⁶⁹ The Governments of Viet Nam and Lao PDR emphasised important progress in their national contexts in terms of sustainability. The evaluator clarified the conclusion on sustainability following these interventions to better disaggregate the difference between sustainable aspects at national as compared to regional level.

160. While the national COMMIT processes are gaining some strength, given that COMMIT is about inter-governmental cooperation, a functioning sub-regional COMMIT mechanism is a *sine non qua*. At this level, components are much less sustainable and stakeholders agree that the COMMIT process is not ready to go it alone and dependency on UNIAP is heavy (see further discussion under 'Efficiency'). Support is still needed in terms of resources, technical knowledge, logistical support (e.g. translations given language barriers); and mediation given the differing levels of political commitment. Stakeholders of all types are concerned about sustainability. One NGO said the relationship between the Government and UNIAP,

"needed to change in the next phase.... when the Government looks at UNIAP as a donor, it weakens Government. We realise that one day there won't be UNIAP and we can't do anything."

The interviewee went on to urge UNIAP to consider,

"how to delegate the role and responsibility to Government, with the aim of the Government hosting the COMMIT secretariat itself. UNIAP can't be in each country".

Another stakeholder commenting on exit strategies said it was *"commonsense that the ownership of the project should be in country themselves."* Government officials also urged for more efforts to build ownership and capacity to manage the process. The turbulence in the governance structures of UNIAP in recent times has made people aware of the vulnerability of COMMIT and its dependency on the project. UNIAP has focused on capacity building from a technical perspective. But critics say it works in an open-ended undemanding way with project beneficiaries and needs to have an overall vision for building national and sub-regional ownership.

161. Sustainability does not appear to be much considered in terms of other project components either. Under objective 3, the coordination activities undertaken by UNIAP and in particular stakeholder forums could potentially be sustainable by making links with other country level networks e.g. Government or UN, however, this has not yet been pursued. The research activities are carried out by the project, with the support of consultants, research institutes and local NGOs. UNIAP has conducted training programmes in Laos and Cambodia which disseminate and teach methodologies to government and NGO officers. As the discussion under objective three noted, there are calls for the project to be more inclusive of key stakeholders as well as calls from research specialists for the greater dissemination of UNIAP methodologies so that others can learn and replicate.

162. Special projects under objective 4 are intended to be small-scale pilots which are scaled up through larger agencies. The prospects for the shelter self-improvement project are good as the initiative is being integrated into Government plans. A training of trainers package is being developed for the ethics training to help disseminate that further. The other two special projects, 'Worst offenders' and 'Underserved victims' involve sub-granting NGOs. The main message from those is that UNIAP is so involved in the delivery itself, that it does not give enough space or help to NGOs to develop. UNIAP's relationships with NGOs appear to be about the delivery of its own objectives rather than building local capacity. There are some examples

where UNIAP's support is appreciated but on the whole, a more developmental methodology aimed at passing on techniques and learning to others would foster greater sustainability.

163. The project in itself does not need to be sustainable as an entity; it will be a developmental success when it no longer has a role. However, it should have a sustainability plan showing the phase out plan for each of the four components but as it works in an increasingly congealed way, the termination of any one set of activities is likely to become a threat to others. An exit strategy was called for in the end of Phase II evaluation in 2006 and the Phase III mid-term evaluation in 2009 but still not prepared and deferred for consideration until the outcome of this evaluation.

4. Relevance⁷⁰

Box 8

Key finding

The project is highly relevant. The COMMIT process and support to Governments action remains the top priority. The research work fills critical gaps in knowledge. The remaining project components, particularly coordination, both within the UN, and among national players, have diminished in relevance over time as other structures and institutions have become better placed to play those roles.

164. There is across the board agreement that the project is relevant in terms of the context – trafficking is a critical issue for the region and a project supporting Governments to coordinate and cooperate across the region is very important. It serves to address key international human rights treaties and commitments on counter-trafficking. Some stakeholders stress that the project is relevant in principle but not in the way it is implemented in practice as discussed under 'effectiveness'.

165. The context has evolved since the project started in 1998/1999 and the ways in which it is important have changed. Objective 1 is the most relevant component of the project. COMMIT was not even foreseen when the project started but has increasingly gained in importance. Governments are showing increasing commitment to the process e.g. by deploying their own resources, so some support is necessary to keep up the momentum. While this is not an evaluation of COMMIT, it is worth noting that interviewees gave the process much importance, it was widely recognised as a *"great process which should continue"*.

⁷⁰ "The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor", Definition given in *DAC Summary of key norms and standards*, available from: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

166. Conversely, objective 2, the original purpose of the project, has diminished in relevance. As the UN reform process has gained in strength over the last decade, some stakeholders take the view that there are other forums for UN agencies to coordinate amongst themselves. In addition, the number of regional programmes by UN and INGOs has reduced over the years as agencies turn their focus away from pure trafficking to other aspects such as forced labour or broader child protection concerns.

167. Objective 3 and particularly the research component continues to have relevance, gaps in knowledge have made few advances since the project was incepted, there remains a dearth of quality research and the project is able to fill a critical gap. Support to the counter-trafficking community at national level has also reduced as countries establish national committees and other forums for exchange. The relevance of objective 4 is contested in terms of the way it is interpreted in this phase; the identification of gaps is useful but it is disputed whether UNIAP is the most appropriate actor to fill these gaps.

5. Efficiency⁷¹

Box 9

Key finding

The project's management and governance structures are dysfunctional, unable to provide the adequate control and guidance needed to keep the project on track, and in dire need of reform.

168. The evaluation considers questions of efficiency in terms of the overall functioning of management, governance and administrative structures rather than narrow questions of cost-efficiency.

5.1. Governance

5.1.2. Governing bodies

169. The project is governed by a number of overlapping structures with ill-defined roles and responsibilities, and no clear decision-making authority. There is general consensus on the need for reform. The governing structures comprise of the following:

⁷¹ "Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is the economic term which is used to assess the extent to which aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted". Definition given in DAC Summary of key norms and standards, available from: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

Project Management Board

- Chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator Thailand and comprised of representatives from UN agencies, Governments, donors and civil society.
- Meets 4 times a year, in principle, for 90 minutes.
- Has a TOR and attendees include one person from ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNODC, UNESCO, UNDP (UNRC – chair), two representatives each from Governments and donors (rotation every 12 months), one representative from the NGO community and the UNCT (rotation every 12 months); UNIAP (resource person) and a note taker.
- TOR does not specify a voting or decision-making procedure. It is unclear what authority this body has since the UN RC Thailand, as the Principal Project Recipient (PPR) appears endowed with ultimate authority over the project.
- Representational arrangement is problematic if there are disagreements within the stakeholder group or if the representatives do not consult or pass on information to other members. As such, all six Governments now believe they should be represented on the PMB. Article 32 of the COMMIT agreement appoints UNIAP as the Secretariat of COMMIT which Governments say gives them the authority to make decisions affecting UNIAP work in relation to COMMIT but not in relation to non-COMMIT aspects. The representativeness of other stakeholders – donors, NGOs and the UNCT can also be an issue. This is particularly the case for NGOs; given the inherent challenge in representing a large and unquantifiable constituency they can only really speak for themselves.
- An Informal UN group began meeting in February 2010 for a period as an offshoot of the PMB. It comprised of IOM, ILO, UNODC and UNRC. The group intended to offer a *“frank exchange and ideas and perceptions about UNIAP’s inter-agency collaboration”* and meet around 6 times/year to reinforce the *“One UN concept”*. There are no minutes of these meetings. It no longer meets.

Project Steering Committee

- Meets once a year for three hours in May (connected to the COMMIT Taskforce meetings).
- Has no TOR.
- Open invitation to all donors, regional civil society partners, UN partners, and Government representatives. Between 75 and 100 people usually attend.

There are other meetings linked to UNIAP but not part of its governing structure. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) (every three years Inter-ministerial meeting - IMM) is a COMMIT meeting supported by UNIAP. There are also regional Interagency meetings which have a UN and civil society emphasis with no governments. They are held 5-7 times a year – usually at a regional technical level (no directors) and the hosting is rotated.

5.1.3. Governance Crisis

170. Matters came to a head in late 2010 over disagreements on the future of the project. The UNRC Thailand, Chair of the PMB, made an announcement at the COMMIT Taskforce meeting on 10th September 2010 that the project would end at the end of 2011,

"[the] project cannot run for an indefinite period. The UN would like the project to end on 31 December 2011. The COMMIT Taskforce will have to decide what mechanism or structure will replace it".⁷²

The Thai Government further suggested that after 2011,

"the role of Secretariat of COMMIT could be transferred to a UN agency such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNODC could build COMMIT into its Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons."

A few months before this announcement, on 31 May 2010, the PMB had agreed the project would be extended till the end of 2011 with an evaluation carried out in the meantime as a basis for further decisions. There was no wording at that May 2010 meeting to suggest that the project would end entirely.

171. Governments were therefore taken unawares by this decision at the September 2010 COMMIT Taskforce meeting. There ensued a discussion which fused talk of ending UNIAP with the future of COMMIT and delaying the SPA. The discussions appear muddled on paper but those present suggest a hidden agenda at work which was to delay the next SPA until UNIAP had ceased to be secretariat at the end of 2011. Whatever the case, the distinction between UNIAP, a project with an inbuilt life expectancy, and COMMIT, an inter-governmental process whose duration is determined by the Governments themselves, was completely lost. The decision to end the project was therefore perceived as a threat to both.

172. The outcry continued after the meeting. Five of the six Governments (all except Thailand) wrote a letter of protest stating their support for UNIAP,

"we...are deeply concerned about the recently released decision in relation to the termination of UNIAP's operations at the end of 2011".

At a later stage, the Thai Government expressed concerns that it had not been consulted by the other Governments over this,

"[it] agreed that the sustainability of COMMIT is an important issue. ... expressed surprise that Thailand was not informed about the letter submitted by other COMMIT Governments and that Thailand was not asked to sign it"⁷³,

and sent a follow-up letter to the UNRC. Donors also joined in and said,

"they were shocked to learn that an announcement had been made at the COMMIT Taskforce meeting that the project would end in 2012"⁷⁴.

New Zealand AID submitted a letter calling for a review. The US Government said it was a,

"strong supporter of UNIAP as it currently functions, and in firm opposition to any move that would dissolve this entity".⁷⁵

[See annex 5 for all four letters from donors and Governments in chronological order).

The PMB meeting on 15 December 2010 decided to extend the project till the end of 2013.

⁷² COMMIT Taskforce Meeting minutes 9-10th September 2010

⁷³ PMB minutes, 1 October 2010

⁷⁴ PMB minutes, 1 October 2010

⁷⁵ US Statement read at UNIAP Board Meeting, October 1, 2010. The RTG notes that the original statement made at the PMB did not carry a USG letterhead or signature and that a statement with those elements was received later by the RTG in December 2010.

173. Clearly this represents a serious breakdown in relations and the actions of certain members of all stakeholder groups are perceived by others to have contributed to a feeling of disunity and distrust through a range of alleged actions:

- UN stakeholders along with the Thai Government were said to have had private discussions about ending the project which excluded other stakeholders and failed to take account of their views.
- Donors and Governments on this and other occasions were reported to have applied inappropriate pressure on organisations to show support for the project. This pressure included threats to withhold funding⁷⁶.
- Five Governments wrote a letter supporting the project without informing or consulting the Thai Government signifying a breakdown in unity between Governments.
- UNIAP was suspected of lobbying and playing the stakeholders off against each other.

174. Debates became heated in this period and positions hardened. The PMB appears to have arrived at an impasse; taking a long time to reach agreement on anything and becoming inappropriately focused on micro management such as staffing, contracts and benefits. This evaluation was delayed and it was not possible to get a consistent story in evaluation interviews on who did or did not want it to go ahead. One interviewee expressed the despair felt by many at the current governance arrangements *“none of discussions are on trafficking – it’s so depressing”*.

175. While the actions of donors and Governments in 2010 helped save the project from premature closure and without a proper phase out plan, the concern now is that the pendulum has swung too far the other way in the sense that necessary changes to the project are stalled until the end of 2013. The project continued to fundraise while the question of its future was up in the air in 2009/10 in order to fit in with donor funding cycles. UNIAP says it often had donor agreements going beyond the life of the project⁷⁷. Given the uncertainty surrounding the project future in 2010, the UNRC was reluctant to sign further agreements and sought assurances from the project that all donor funding could be returned should the project not continue beyond the end 2011 extension date agreed by the PMB. The project prepared a note to the file to this effect⁷⁸. It appeared later that these funding agreements were not easy to renege without putting donor funding in jeopardy,

“US Department of State’s Office to monitor and combat trafficking in persons is currently supporting two UNIAP projects one which will/is projected to run through 2013 – through UNDP, totalling \$1.25 million.....If UNIAP were to be disbanded, our current

⁷⁶ Information from various reliable sources – not from any UN agency.

⁷⁷ UNIAP email to evaluator dated 30 January 2011 gives examples: NZ agreement for unearmarked funding was signed in Sep 2009 was until Dec 2011, when the project was extended until Nov 2010 only; Sida’s contribution for unearmarked funding was for 2009-2011, when at the time the project life was extended until Nov 2010 only; GTIP funding for earmarked projects was committed in June and September 2010 until April and September 2013.

⁷⁸ UNIAP RMO Note to the file, 7 September 2010.

projects would be in jeopardy; the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons would then need to re-assess how best to use these funds".⁷⁹

The project was extended until the end of 2013.

176. Reflecting on such developments, some interviewees expressed the concern that the project was becoming *"highly donor driven.... and that ownership should lie with people on the ground and not those who put in the money"*. It is important to note that as of late 2010, most donors and Governments were aligned about the need to preserve the project as it was so it was not simply a donor agenda. However, donor commitments⁸⁰ require special consideration as they impose legal obligations which cannot automatically be changed. Unearmarked donor funding for the whole project or for the main part (COMMIT) is not an issue, if donors are flexible, such funding can be carried over to another phase. Earmarked funding on the other hand commits the project to functioning in a particular way and prevents changes until the end of 2013. In this regard, the earmarked contributions solicited by the project and signed by the UNRC and donors in 2010/11 are unfortunate, especially as they largely concern objectives 3 and 4, which are not essential to the delivery of the main part of the project, objective 1/COMMIT.

5.2. Management structure

177. The fundamental problem is that the project is in something of a management vacuum. It is a UNDP project pretending not to be a UNDP project in order to appear 'inter-agency'. The project is situated under UNDP Thailand country office with the Resident Coordinator/Resident Representative (in her/his capacity as RC) acting as the Principal Project Recipient. UNDP provides administrative support, and bears legal and fiduciary responsibility for the project, despite the fact it has no seat on the PMB or any decision-making power according to a UNDP internal review carried out in June 2011. The participation of the UNRC and the UNIAP regional project manager on the PMB is not seen as adequate representation of UNDP interests since both functions execute the project wearing an inter-agency hat.

178. It is classed as a UNDP directly executed (DEX) project. UNDP receives a 7% administrative fee⁸¹ which goes to indirect costs incurred by UNDP headquarters and country offices in providing General Management Support services. This encompasses a variety of general oversight and management functions but all direct costs of implementation unequivocally linked to the project have to be borne by the project itself. This percentage is broken down and apportioned between different parts of the organisation as follows: UNDP Thailand – 71.43%; UNDP HQ Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific – 9.57%; UNDP HQ central – 19.00%. It is estimated that UNDP Thailand received around US\$100,000 per annum.

⁷⁹ US Government statement circulated at UNIAP PMB on 1 October 2010.

⁸⁰ Main donors providing unearmarked funding for whole project or COMMIT are NZ Aid, Norway, Sida, Ausaid. Main donors providing earmarked funding largely for objectives 3 and 4 are USDOS, USAID for Viet Nam, and ANESVAD. See table 2, chapter 2 for more details.

⁸¹ Email UNIAP to evaluator dated 30 January 2012.

179. The UNDP country offices in the other five countries do not receive any percentage of this fee. However, all five UNDP country offices and the UNDP APRC (which provides administrative support to the project rather than UNDP Thailand) charge Implementation Support Services costs – a standard price list for services to UN agencies and programmes which covers any administrative service such as vehicle registration, staff recruitment, hotel reservations for instance can be charged at \$6-15 each. UNDP believes that the administrative side works well but the evaluation found delays and problems caused by the ambiguity of UNIAP's status and relationship to UNDP. In one country, UNIAP had to wait two months to obtain an endorsement from UNDP giving it the legal backing needed for registering with the authorities. In another, UNDP administration questioned whether UNIAP was entitled to use the same internet server as UNDP.

180. The UNRC/RR position comes under UNDP but plays a dual role, the person occupying this position wears two hats - Resident Representative of the UNDP office in Thailand, and Resident Coordinator of the UN system in Thailand. The UNRC and UNDP RR are usually one and the same person and thus a UNDP employee. In the absence of a permanent UNRC, the UNRC a.i. is a voluntary position which is taken up by a head of one of the UN agencies making up the UN country team in addition to their usual job and on a temporary basis. This arrangement was set up in an earlier phase of the project so as to give precedence to the inter-agency character of the project – this is why UNDP has been asked to take a back seat despite being accountable for the project. In addition, at the time of set up there was no regional coordination mechanism for the UN and the RC in Thailand, being at the centre of a regional UN hub seemed best placed to play a coordinating role. While the initial structure was not a completely random choice, it has proved too loose and awkward as the years have gone on.

5.2.1. Regional level

181. The UNRC for Thailand is a coordinating and representative function and is not designed for a day to day project management role. The UNRC has authority over the project but cannot line manage effectively on a daily basis making for a weak system of oversight and accountability. The UNRC/RR also has no authority over other UNRC/RR in the five other countries that the project is operating in.

182. Interviews and documentary review suggest that the UNRC did not exercise much control over the project from the start of Phase III. Critics say the project was perceived as a financial benefit to the UNDP Thailand country office; project funding delivered an administrative fee and was also used on one occasion to misrepresent the office's own fundraising success and the scale of its activities⁸².

183. Complaints from external parties about the conduct of the project mainly started to surface in 2009/2010, although there had been letters as far back as 2007. This caused the

⁸² For instance, 2008 UNDP Thailand brochure is alleged to incorrectly include over US\$2 million of UNIAP regional funding under the heading of 'Democratic Governance' activities in Thailand.

UNRC to become more involved but by then it was too late to assert control, resulting in something of an over-reaction in the announcement to end the project prematurely. Thus issues that could have been handled through standard and diligent line management early on were left to fester until they exploded onto the scene in 2010. It was not that there was no administrative oversight at all e.g. in 2007 UNDP had carried out a grievance investigation; and the PMB reviewed some key decisions, for instance, on staffing structure. But a sound understanding of the project born out of an ongoing engagement was missing and thus the opportunity to pick up and halt activities which subsequently spiralled into complaints. As such the project was allowed to develop with a good degree of autonomy e.g. self-authorising external publications and donor reports, mandating its own media appearances, conceiving its own project proposals etc.

184. Naturally, UNIAP regional project management must also bear its share of responsibility for the current state of affairs. The lack of higher level management oversight had pros and cons for the project; while it suffered from a lack of support and direction, it also had considerable freedom to adopt its own approach, and according to accounts, was resistant to being put under greater scrutiny when this started to happen in 2010. While the evaluation recognizes the duties of higher level management, it would not abnegate UNIAP RPM from responsibility to its superiors and stakeholders to ensure relevant issues are raised or to pass decisions upwards to senior management as appropriate. This duty arises both from the management function itself, and also from relevant UN Codes of Conduct. The project assumed responsibility for a number of decisions e.g. self-authorising publications, authorizing media appearances, taking on security risks such as involving staff in raids and dealing with informants, developing proposals etc. These ought to have been deferred to higher level management or governing structures if the project was unsure of assuming this responsibility itself.

5.2.2. Country level

185. At country level the project is even more loosely connected to the UN system as a freewheeling project, *“floating on its own”* not rooted in any agency or having any formal oversight at country level. The regional office is responsible for the line management of country staff. The relationship between the project and the UNRC/RR in each of the countries is weak for the most part, there is no formal institutional arrangement - some have no contact with the projects, others engage with it when problems arise. Occasionally there are UNRCs who have a strong interest in the project but this depends on personal interest and for the most part, UNRCs express confusion over their role and responsibility for UNIAP.

186. As a project and not an agency, the project is not formally integrated into the UN country team. In some places it is seen as so disengaged from the UN system that it is simply called *“IAP”*⁸³. One country level UN stakeholder said,

“the problem is there is no local supervision, no coordination, no sharing of information. As the name suggests it is inter-agency – it could be anchored with the Resident

⁸³ UN Factsheet combating human trafficking in Viet Nam.

Coordinator or any other UN agency. There is a need to have some direct reporting line locallythere is a need to link work UNIAP is doing to the UN framework”.

187. UNIAP country staff members say they feel alienated from the UN country team. It was disquieting to hear them speak of themselves as outcasts, *“We’re not allowed to join the UNCT, we’re seen as too junior, like a little potato that doesn’t even have the rank to observe”* or a sentiment expressed in various countries, *“we feel like second class citizens and to survive we need to please everyone rather like being a step son or step daughter”*. On never been invited to meetings by UN agencies, one UNIAP staff said, *“I feel if we had “bluer blood” we would be taken seriously”*.

5.3. Staff management

188. Country offices are line managed by the regional project manager and supported by the technical team in Bangkok. Country staff report finding the regional manager supportive. There are daily contacts between the offices but these contacts are not structured so the level of contact varies, some have more contacts than others, and meetings during visits to Bangkok are scheduled on an as needed basis. Performance appraisals are sometimes done by email.

189. Technical support from Bangkok is praised for its quality but country offices report delays and suggest it would be better if the technical team did not travel so much around the region and focus on giving timely advice from the regional office instead. Not all trips are considered necessary, either because there are no suitable meetings to attend or because country staff feel they could handle things themselves if they are taught how.

190. The whole UNIAP team meets quarterly around the time of COMMIT meetings, during this time national project coordinators spend half a day with the regional manager and half a day meeting among themselves. UNIAP has developed its own operations manual to guide country offices, although there may be more scope for the regional team to identify and disseminate good practices across offices, especially concerning day to day operations.

191. The country offices often find themselves in an *“invidious position”* as one UN stakeholder put it, caught in crossfire between Governments, UN stakeholders, the regional office and sometimes themselves - with salvos flying in all directions. Two offices particularly seem to suffer. The UNIAP Thai office finds itself caught up in disagreements between UNIAP Regional and the Thai authorities. It has seen two scalps claimed in this phase – the project is now on its third Thai national project coordinator. The presence of the regional office in Thailand is an aggravating factor. A variety of stakeholders say they find it inappropriate for the regional office to assume direct contact with Thai stakeholders or to engage in direct action in Thailand without working through the UNIAP Thai country office. UNIAP Viet Nam is caught in another dynamic; an ongoing argument between One UN and UNIAP regional concerning UNIAP research and special projects (objectives 3 and 4), which shows little sign of resolution.

192. Evidently much of the discontent at national level is emanating from policies and decisions made by UNIAP regional. However, there are some cases of local disagreements. In such instances, the regional project manager appears unable from the vantage of regional post, and the lack of in-country presence to act as an arbiter when disputes arise or to give an independent steer to resolve issues.

193. The question of nationality in relation to project posts also comes up. One issue is whether the country coordinators should be international positions. The project and Governments both have a preference for nationals in these posts. Nationality as such is not an issue; the national programme coordinators are perfectly capable of managing the projects. The problem is rather that the project is not situated in a proper management structure at country level. The issue of nationality also comes up in relation to regional management posts; with questions over whether it would be better to have people from the region, and non-Americans to be blunt, in key positions. This comment was made by various interviewees, including a supporter of the current team and also reported by UNIAP RPM. Two concerns are raised and in fact neither are specifically to do with nationality per se even though they are often couched in such terms. Firstly, the notion that a person from the region may be more familiar with and adaptable to the cultural context. This seems not to be an issue; the current team enjoys good relations with five of the six COMMIT Governments. The second relates to concerns about close relations between the project and the US Government and thus the possibility of undue influence. This appears to have more foundation. According to internal UNDP records, the US Government has made representations by telephone conference and in person in 2010 to the UNRC about the contractual situation of regional management staff. There are also records of an email correspondence from the US State department to UNDP Washington/New York expressing concerns about possible changes to UNIAP. UN standards lay out the responsibilities of staff to be independent from Governments⁸⁴.

Staffing issues

194. There are a number of issues concerning staffing structure and responsibilities. The evaluation has not made an exhaustive assessment of these but can note the following. The job descriptions on the whole are poorly aligned to the project document e.g. key job descriptions emphasise 'advocacy' but say nothing about the diplomatic skills that would be required to support an inter-governmental process⁸⁵. A donor added for instance that the project lacks some key specialism, *"UNIAP need[s] more development specialists ...aware of harmonization and alignment...transparency"*. Because the job descriptions are inherently weak, and also due to the way the project has subsequently evolved, there are various examples of staff doing more than their job description, or doing less than they were hired to do – both of which are negative in terms of job satisfaction, skills building and future career development.

195. Staff say these issues have been raised with regional project management which has not responded to their concerns. A couple of revised job descriptions are awaiting approval by UNDP, but under the present circumstances, with the project as a whole being off kilter, it is

⁸⁴ UN Standards of conduct for the international civil service.

⁸⁵ Regional Project Manager Terms of Reference

difficult to see how new terms of references could be approved without a full staff review which would take time and cause further delays. It might be better under the circumstances to keep going with the current job descriptions, try and re-align people's jobs as much as possible pending a proper restructure in the next phase of the project.

196. Another issue raised by interviewees is that the project seems too top heavy as compared to other UN projects; there are three management posts in the regional office, two international positions are at the same P4 post level. One issue raised as far back as 2007 and which continues till today, is the lack of internal coordination within the project, the absence of a proper hierarchy and protocols for seeking clearances and copying the regional project manager on external correspondences.

197. The present uncertainty over the project future and difficult relations with stakeholders has put staff under personal stress especially with the accompanying disruptions to contractual status. The vagaries of the UNDP administrative rules means that key regional management staff have seen their incomes decline and over the years have been on contracts which have not be subject to steps or increases etc. Such job insecurity is unfortunately all too common in the UN system and in this context has been considerably exacerbated by continuing question marks over the life of the project itself. In terms of national staff, some have existed on staff service contracts for example, for 10 years, with no increases, steps, medical cover, pension or fixed term opportunities, according to country level meetings. The lack of formal connection with the UN system may also inhibit other career development opportunities.

198. Issues concerning staff conduct were raised by both insiders and outsiders and were referred to UNDP management by the evaluation. UNIAP staff members also express concerns about the behaviour of external parties. There may be issues on all sides to some extent and the need to put relations back on a more professional footing. However, as this is an evaluation of UNIAP, it is bound to observe that while questions of strategy have been at the heart of UNIAP's struggles with other stakeholders, the conduct of its staff has at times served to aggravate matters.

5.4. Project design, monitoring and evaluation

199. The project design has not kept up with the changing purposes of the project. The project began in 1998/99 specifically with the aim of promoting cooperation between UN agencies. Funds became available from the Ted Turner Foundation, initially there was no subject area, just the idea of fostering inter-agency cooperation, and then the idea of collaborating on anti-trafficking came along.

200. COMMIT appeared in 2004/5 and although not envisaged in the design, the project was flexible enough to help this process give birth. As time has gone on, COMMIT has grown in prominence and taken on more and more of the project's time. By the time the third phase was designed in 2006, it was evident that COMMIT had become the core purpose, the final evaluation of Phase II noted,

“While initially the egg was laid into the UN nest, the chick in time has outgrown its nest. Now its main constituents are the six GMS countries, rather than the UN agencies, and this means that the COMMIT has become the anti-HT process at sub-regional level”⁸⁶.

201. Thus over time, even though the entire purpose of the project changed, the design, management and governance structures were never adapted, making for something of an odd set-up. As one trafficking specialist said when commenting on awkward design of the project and its different components, *“it’s like a camel married to a giraffe”*. Clearly, if one were planning a project to support an intergovernmental process from scratch it would not look like UNIAP. The project’s positioning and view of itself continues to be affected by these outdated ideas. UNIAP often uses the word ‘neutrality’ to describe itself⁸⁷ as meaning being neutral from the UN. But this is a misunderstanding of its role and a hangover from a time when the project was just about inter-agency coordination. At this stage in UNIAP’s life, it does not need to see itself as neutral from the UN, it is part of it, but it does need to be neutral and impartial in its relationships with Governments in order to facilitate its role of inter-governmental dialogue.

202. In terms of the actual project document of 2006, UNIAP describes it as *“vague”* and finds room for manoeuvre in what the project is supposed to be about. UNIAP also says it received ambiguous verbal messages from the board on what the project should be about, that they wanted UNIAP to do ‘implementation’ and ‘work on all 4 objectives’. UNIAP says these factors justify its interpretation of the project strategy in this phase. This view is counteracted by other evaluation interviews which suggest that stakeholders did try to steer the project back to the direction provided by the project document but that the team was unwilling to listen.

203. In the absence of any additional written information supporting the project’s interpretation of the Phase III strategy, the evaluation can only go back to the project document. While that document is imprecise and repetitive in places, it is plain in its key ideas e.g. the project has the core purpose of serving COMMIT; it has a policy/coordination function as opposed to an implementation function; and it is about service to other actors in the counter-trafficking community.

204. The project document was developed in 2006 after the end of Phase II evaluation in March of that year and agreed by stakeholders by around July 2006. The new team started work in December 2006 and appears to have brought with it a different vision for tackling human trafficking. The project document emphasizes the goal of the project to make an impact on trafficking through the *“advancement of a more cohesive, strategic and incisive response”* through various approaches aimed at convening and bringing players together, cooperation, coordination, cooperation, facilitation and services to the sector.

⁸⁶ UNIAP Phase II end of project evaluation, March 2006

⁸⁷ UNIAP, Call for proposals, grants to non-government organizations: support to underserved victim populations, Jan-Feb 2010

205. The team's emphasis was on a more action-oriented approach building the evidence base, technical skills, and tackling exploitation,

"it was about having the appropriate information, skilled people and targeted interventions. Identifying what the comparative advantage was of each part of the sector – UN, Government, and trying to ensure that activities affect people on the ground",

through a *"cyclic approach"* which involves understanding issues on the ground, doing data collection and then influencing the higher level, *"[this] enables us to effectively and practically address human trafficking"*.

206. Both approaches are designed to have an impact on trafficking, but they are strategically and operationally different. As a project based on 'consensual agreement' and building on an approach adopted in Phase II, which had been found effective by the independent evaluation of that phase⁸⁸, the new team were not free to develop the project in line with its own vision unless new agreements were solicited from stakeholders. The urgency in the new team's response was noted by a strong supporter of the project, who observed that the previous UNIAP team were more careful about process, *"this team is too fast, process is sacrificed"*.

207. If UNIAP saw inherent contradictions in the project document these ought to have been clarified at the outset through a revised project document or at least through an approved revision to the logframe. The 2009 mid-term evaluation noted that this was an issue *"changes in the way the PDD [project document] is being interpreted also seem to have raised some communication challenges"* and went on to quote individuals who say the project document needed amending to reflect these changes⁸⁹.

208. Instead the UNIAP team dealt with 'ambiguities' operationally by developing its own annual plans and indicators. The project's results and resources framework and original logframe are slightly inconsistent with the narrative text of the project document; largely similar nonetheless they needed tightening up. When the logframe was eventually revised in 2009, it began to deviate more significantly from the original. For instance, inter-agency engagement with COMMIT/SPA listed under objective 1 in the original logframe disappears altogether (despite the fact that UNIAP continues doing this work). Ironically while inter-agency engagement disappears, 'Private sector engagement with COMMIT' is added as an output under objective 1. Another key change is that multiple direct activities are integrated into the logframe, including under Objective 1 which is supposed to be reserved for COMMIT policy issues. As the 2009 revised logframe was not approved either by the UNRC or the PMB, it was not used as a basis for analysis by this evaluation.

209. The project document and subsequent 2009 mid-term evaluation recommended that UNIAP develop an M+E plan and hire an M+E specialist. This was not done and ought to have been prioritized. The sense of urgency was perhaps not there, since UNIAP was doing well in reporting to a number of donors, for instance one donor representative commented,

⁸⁸ UNIAP Final evaluation Phase II, 3 March 2006

⁸⁹ UNIAP Mid-term evaluation Phase III, March 2009, pg 19, section 3.2.1.

“in terms of reporting and achieving agreed upon results, UNIAP reported for UNIAP and COMMIT extremely well and achieved the results it planned with us.”

Although it should be noted that other donors called for improved results-based reporting. In any case donor reports with their discreet focus on specific components could not pick up on the underlying tension which was derailing the project i.e. that it was going off course in some important respects - which would likely have been picked up had an M+E specialist been in place to track developments.

5.5. Cost-effectiveness

210. This report is not in a position to make a full judgement on cost-effectiveness. The project says, and some donors agree, that it is able to work in a more efficient way than other UN projects. It is certainly the case that UNIAP is staffed by a hardworking dedicated team, so individual tasks will undoubtedly be carried out with maximum efficiency.

211. Whether the overall project structure is as efficient and streamlined as it might be is a matter of debate. The project constantly struggles to fundraise with some 40% of the regional manager's time allocated to this function. The team has grown in this phase, with the workload split in such a way that staff work across objectives. This makes it a challenge to keep the whole team afloat the whole time. The workload could be organised differently, for example, by designating a minimum number of key posts to do with management and administration, and to service objective 1. These core posts could then be prioritised for support by unrestricted funds. The work on objectives 2-4 could be carried out on a more flexible and ad hoc basis depending on the availability of earmarked funding. This would reduce the pressure to constantly fundraise but it would mean that core staff could not work across all objectives.

212. Stakeholders also say that the project has adopted an inefficient fund-raising model by seeking donor funding for specific activities (i.e. research and special projects) rather than mobilizing resources for a larger, more comprehensive project. UNDP internal records also express concerns about the lack of a proper resource mobilisation strategy. The project says that Phase III started with near-empty coffers and an unrealistic budget plan inherited from Phase II which included allocations for personnel and indirect costs but no funds for actual implementation. UNIAP emphasises that the project was not initially funded, and the fundraising environment was difficult, particularly for comprehensive programming. UNIAP has had to constantly catch-up on fund-raising and was in fact successful at this. These issues again suggest a formal project revision early on would have helped settle the project on a more manageable path for this phase.

5.6. Alternative management arrangements

213. The net effect of the current management arrangements is that the project has lacked adequate oversight and accountability and also support and direction. The pretence that this is not a UNDP project for the sake of showing its inter-agency character has meant UNDP being unable to fulfil its legal, fiduciary and moral responsibility towards the project adequately. The management combination of the UNRC plus PMB has been woefully inadequate in keeping the

project on track in line with the intentions laid out in the 2006 project document. At the height of the disagreements in the governing bodies about the project's future, alternative options for UNIAP were considered which were further explored by the evaluation. Governments expressed a range of views in evaluation meetings from those who would not consider any option other than UNIAP, to those who were open to the idea and finally those who were actively seeking alternatives.

214. Firstly, making COMMIT a secretariat in its own right immediately is not an option. It will be ready when it is operationally self-sufficient and when proper channels of communication between COMMIT and the development community have been firmly established. The UN plays an important role in bringing accountability to the COMMIT process as noted earlier. Moreover, as the UN system has nurtured COMMIT from its inception, as well as accepting an administrative fee, it has a responsibility to make sure COMMIT can stand on its own two feet before it walks away. **As such although a couple of non-UN entities were proposed, the evaluation did not find either of the following to be appropriate options for the time being:**

ASEAN – was proposed as a possible structure. The drawbacks are that it does not cover all COMMIT governments (China is not a member) and lacks the technical assistance and implementation capacity to take on the project. Unsuccessful attempts to situate the ARTIP project in the SOM structure of ASEAN was cited as a warning and interviewees voiced scepticism about this being a potential solution.

NGOs – the inherent conflict of interest in NGOs serving Governments and facilitating an inter-governmental process makes this an untenable alternative.

Within the UN system, there are the following options:

ESCAP – this is the logical home for the COMMIT part of the project, an acceptable solution for regional level coordination, and with a strong emphasis on socio-economic issues under the current ESCAP leadership. However, it has no capacity for implementation at national level to cover UNIAP country level activities. Some stakeholders were doubtful about the effectiveness of ESCAP as an organisation. **Nonetheless, it was a popular potential option among certain Governments, and in due course, once the COMMIT process has achieved sufficient independence at both regional and national levels, there could be a set up whereby regional COMMIT is housed in ESCAP with a direct line to national COMMIT structures in home ministries.** ESCAP already hosts such initiatives, for example, the Biwako Millennium Framework on the rights of persons with disability in Asia and the Pacific

<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/> and
<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/bmf/summary.html>

What is worth highlighting is that a combination of a regional hub for COMMIT in a regional organisation, like ESCAP but not necessarily so, combined with fully functioning COMMIT secretariat in home ministries is a viable model to strive towards in the future.

Specialised agencies – IOM, UNODC⁹⁰ and UNICEF are potential options but their mandates on trafficking tend not to be broad enough to cover the span of UNIAP's work, they are not present or operational on trafficking in all countries; and partnerships with governments are also not established in each country.

UNOPS – can only administer programmes but does not have the capacity to manage programmes or service an inter-governmental forum like COMMIT.

Hybrid – an arrangement involving different agencies in different countries could be considered but this is likely to involve high levels of coordination that would appear unachievable. There are also administrative and financial impediments since UN rules apply differently and multiple overheads would eat into the project budget making it less cost-effective. Matching countries with agencies would also be a divisive business.

UNDP – Is currently the keeper of the project, albeit in a low key role. Placing the project in a stronger management structure, under the UNDP APRC for example, is an option. UNDP has a mandate broad enough to cover almost any development activity and has traditionally taken on the role of administrator in the UN system. The project could fit under UNDP's 'governance and human rights' portfolio although trafficking itself is not one of the organisation's strategic priorities and it lacks technical expertise. Some might see this as bringing a "*new player*" on the scene but UNDP is unlikely to be a serious contender in the trafficking field – the organisation clearly has other priorities; UNDP's budget from global funds on health and environmental issues for example amounts to US\$ billions⁹¹. It is also a neutral player having been somewhat detached from recent disputes. It also bears the legal responsibility for the project and ought to have the opportunity to discharge its responsibilities better and equally offer more for the administration charges it receives. Donors and governments have expressed support for this option in previous meetings and to the evaluator.

The APRC⁹² is the best management option under UNDP for the following reasons:

- The project would come under a clear management structure with a chain of command going all the way to the Regional Bureau for Asia/Pacific in UNDP New York. While the UNDP Thailand UNRR/RC also reports to this post, the RC 'inter-agency' hat gives greater discretion and means less direct accountability.
- Although based in Bangkok, it does not have a specific responsibility to the Government of Thailand (unlike the UNRC) and has equal relations with all six countries;
- It has an established framework of cooperation with UNDP country offices in all six countries. UNDP operates a decentralised structure and so although the APRC does not have authority over them; it has a modality of working with them. In addition, there are always options for dividing the management responsibilities between the UNDP country offices and APRC in different ways.

⁹⁰ The Government of Thailand at the evaluation debrief referred to UNODC as an option. This option is discussed here.

⁹¹ UNDP, 'Evaluation of UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations', forthcoming.

⁹² The Government of China requested further details about UNDP APRC at the evaluation debrief. This information is provided in annex 6. Additional information is available on request.

- It already manages regional programmes including joint programmes e.g. Joint UN Initiative on Mobility and HIV/AIDS in SE Asia.

5.5. Historical perspectives

215. There were varying management arrangements historically. The project when it initially started in 1998/99 was housed in ministries with Government officials devoting part of their time to running the project. Government officials were not paid for this work and as such the level of support was variable. UNIAP then moved to become a project independent of Governments and the current structure of six country offices under the 'leadership' of the UNRC Thailand was created. The system worked for a time while the initiating UNRC was in place but never functioned properly thereafter. UNOPS was once the administrator before that role got taken over by UNDP. Other agencies have sometimes funded posts, e.g. in Myanmar at one point, UNFPA and UNICEF funded an international post. The PMB was created during the design of phase III to act as a buffer between the regional programme manager and the UNRC since relations between the two former incumbents of these posts had become difficult in phase II. The management arrangements have been adapted on an ad hoc basis over time to suit the requirements of individuals; but there has never been a proper alignment of the project based on institutional need.

216. The disruption seen in recent times has echoes in the past. The issues emerging now are cyclical as the same fault lines which have been in the project for years are still there. Although the conflict seems highly personalised to current staff; the role has always had its challenges. Phase II ended in 2006 with Governments and donors similarly being concerned about the future of the project and the situation of project staff. The current structure creates a heavy sense of dependency among stakeholders on a small project and particular individuals; a factor which could be mitigated by housing the project properly in a large organisation as this would give a greater sense of security and continuity.

217. Previous evaluations and management reviews dating back several years have picked up on the issues identified in this evaluation and made pertinent recommendations to address them. But there has always been a lack of follow-up:

- **Separate out the COMMIT function from other responsibilities** – this was suggested by the *2007 Management review* as there was a perceived conflict of interest between UNIAP's different functions. This idea had come up in the 2006 re-design but dismissed as impracticable. The regional project manager recommended, and this was accepted by the PMB, that the decision should be postponed by a year but the date for discussion never came⁹³. The issue of separating COMMIT from other activities has come to haunt the project again.
- **Hire an M+E specialist** – this was recommended in two evaluations – by the *2006 Final evaluation Phase II and 2009 Mid-term evaluation Phase III*. UNIAP's tracking matrix for the 2009 evaluation lists this *"as an ongoing process"* but such a person was never

⁹³ PMB 7 March 2008 and 6 June 2008.

hired. The failure to take this up has meant that discrepancies between the original project design and UNIAP's interpretation were never tackled head on.

- **Develop an exit strategy** – this was recommended in two evaluations – the **2006 Final evaluation Phase II and 2009 Mid-term evaluation Phase III**. This has still not been done, and the UNIAP 2009 tracking matrix defers the issue of a *“realistic exit strategy”* for the end of project evaluation to be carried out in 2011 i.e. this evaluation. Postponing consideration of this was unnecessary in the view of this evaluation.
- **Move the project to the UNDP APRC** - the **2009 Mid-term evaluation Phase III** suggested the management arrangements were inappropriate and advised considering a move to APRC. This suggestion had been raised in previous years also according to interviewees. The 2009 UNIAP tracking matrix shows that UNIAP preference was at that point to stay as an inter-agency project, *“not considered part of any given agency”* and *“has no plans to act on this unless [it] hears otherwise”*.
- **Clarify the governance structures and decision-making processes** – two evaluations recommended this - the **2006 Final evaluation Phase II and 2009 Mid-term evaluation Phase III**. UNIAP's 2009 tracking matrix suggests some measures were taken in response concerning the role and membership of the PMB and minute-taking but they did not get to the heart of the matter.
- **Change the name of the project** - the **2006 Final evaluation Phase II** noted that the project had outlived its inter-agency birthplace, the ‘chick had flown the nest’ and that the name should be changed to at least better reflect its core purpose as a project supporting an inter-governmental process. This idea was rejected during the design stage of phase II on the basis that the UNIAP brand would be diminished.

218. Had these recommendations been followed, it is inconceivable that the present crisis could have unfolded since many underlying tensions would have been resolved. Lip service seems to have been paid to successive evaluations and reviews. The mid-term evaluation completed in March 2009, was summarily discussed in June 2009 and not taken up again until a year and a half later in December 2010 when it became clear that management arrangements were hopeless. The 2009 mid-term evaluation, a maligned document⁹⁴, in fact contains a number of pertinent observations buried in the text which were never paid due heed, either by UNIAP or its governing structures. It is also noted that this evaluation was resisted. One donor described the whole episode as *“a terrible case of mismanagement by UN system”*.

6. Future

219. One final finding from the evaluation research concerns the views of stakeholders on the future of the project. Now more than a year after serious disagreements among project

⁹⁴ The 2009 mid-term evaluation is considered to have a number of limitations: purported bias of one of the evaluator's having taken on work for UNIAP; it only visited 3 countries (Lao PDR , Cambodia and Thailand); much was done through questionnaire self-assessments completed by UNIAP staff; and limited coverage of regional or inter-agency stakeholders. Nonetheless, it contains a number of important recommendations that were not adopted, and furthermore picks up on a number of the burgeoning tensions discussed in this report.

stakeholders on the future of the project, the evaluation did not find such polarised positions in the privacy of evaluation interviews. There is widespread consensus that the project should continue but with significant modifications. In response to evaluation questions about the future of the project, no-one thought it should end entirely, virtually a 100% thought it should continue but with modifications, a handful felt there should be a new project to continue its key functions. The difference between the latter two is academic and turns on the degree to which change is possible in the existing project. Only one or two argued it should continue without alteration, and even they were willing to concede that some adaptations were necessary. Overall there was unanimity that the project should continue but with changes.

Chapter 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Conclusions

220. The key findings on the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, impact, sustainability, relevance and efficiency are as follows:

Effectiveness

221. The effectiveness of the project varies with each of its four key objectives:

- **Objective 1** - The project is largely effective in meeting objective 1. It is highly rated for its support to participating Governments, excepting one, in consolidating and deepening their efforts to combat trafficking, and in strengthening bilateral cooperation with nearby countries. UNIAP's work on this objective is well-regarded by the majority of stakeholders. There are areas for improvement, and a particular concern that the project is not supporting all Governments in the equal and unified way needed to best foster regional cooperation.
- **Objective 2** – The project is largely ineffective in meeting objective 2. Although there are joint events and activities, UN agencies in all but one country, tend to find the project of limited service to them. Most interviewees acknowledge UNIAP's information meetings, its achievements on other objectives and cordial relations with UNIAP country staff. But disagreements are frequently mentioned. UNIAP's interpretation of its role and lack of sufficient coordination with the UN system is criticised. There are various underlying causes for this tension.
- **Objective 3** – The project is partially effective in meeting objective 3. UNIAP has provided useful services to the wider anti-trafficking sector. Its research efforts are seen as high quality but raise serious issues of process management which require attention. UNIAP has provided a forum for information exchange but other services have received less attention, and civil society feedback is mixed.
- **Objective 4** – The project is partially effective in meeting objective 4. There is little awareness amongst most stakeholders as to what this objective is about. The projects are appreciated by the beneficiaries and donors of these specific activities. UNIAP's approach to special projects has not served its overall coordination function however; critics say it has gone too far into implementation and filled gaps that others are better placed to fill.

It is worth recalling that Objective 1 is the main part of the project and occupies the majority of the project's time and resources. As such when considering overall effectiveness, due weight must be given to the fact that the project has executed its main function in terms of serving Governments/COMMIT effectively.

Impact - There is considerable anecdotal evidence of the project's impact but it is beyond the scope of this evaluation report to make a full determination on impact.

Sustainability – there is partial sustainability of benefits. The prospects for sustaining COMMIT activities at national level are promising as national mechanisms, action plans, capacity building activities and budgetary support are in place. However, as the COMMIT process is essentially about inter-governmental cooperation, sub-regional support is a *sine non qua* – without it COMMIT cannot operate. The sub-regional support arrangements are overly dependent on UNIAP and lack sustainability. Little attention has been paid to the sustainability of other project components.

Relevance - The project is highly relevant. The COMMIT process and support to Government action remains the top priority. The research work fills critical gaps in knowledge. The remaining project components, particularly coordination, both within the UN, and among national players, have diminished in relevance over time as other structures and institutions have become better placed to play those roles.

Efficiency - The project's management and governance structures are dysfunctional, unable to provide the adequate control and guidance needed to keep the project on track, and in dire need of reform.

222. The reason why some objectives have been served well and others have not has to do with the project's interpretation of what these objectives meant and the approach required. An assessment of the way the project has been executed as compared to what was intended by the project document shows some important differences. The project document was an expression of consensus among stakeholders at the time this phase started in 2006/7 and execution has deviated from these commitments in three respects:

- UNIAP was envisaged as a policy/coordination project but has increasingly taken on the role of implementer;
- It was intended to be a service provider and support to others working in the sector but has assumed a role as a separate entity which exists to lead and organise others;
- The core priority on COMMIT, in terms of 70% focus of the project's time and resources, has not been fully maintained due to a growing emphasis on objectives 3 and 4.

223. This deviation from what UNIAP was expected to do has led to disagreements between UNIAP and others over its role and activities. UNIAP's research work under objective 3 has yielded critical findings which have strained its relations with one Government in particular. Its implementation activities under both objectives 3 and 4 have overlapped with the role of the UN agencies and NGOs, with one interviewee summing up a commonly held view of UNIAP as *"a coordination project which is not coordinating well."* In addition, the role of service provider to the UN as envisaged under objective 2 has not been fulfilled, rather the project has seen itself as one apart from the UN with the mandate to lead, organise or lobby other parts of the UN system. The increasing emphasis on objectives 3 and 4 has inevitably come at the cost of objective 1 which is intended to be the core purpose of the project.

224. These dynamics have also infected relationships with and between other key parties and put a strain on the COMMIT process as a whole. Having one Government highly dissatisfied with the project, and the other five highly satisfied has inevitably meant that the regional focus has to some extent turned to disagreements over UNIAP instead of joint efforts to combat trafficking. The split between the Governments over the future of the project in late 2010 highlights this. Likewise the tensions between the project and UN agencies have spilled over into relations with Governments and donors alike.

225. Although the project has served individual Governments and donors very well and with high quality services, the overall machine does not work – it is beset with contradictions which are pulling stakeholders in different directions. The project has embarked on two conflicting strategies: the first and key strategy from the point of view of the project document is to combat trafficking by fostering inter-governmental cooperation (objective 1); the second strategy developed by UNIAP itself and executed through objectives 3 and 4, is to combat trafficking through a human rights investigation and public advocacy approach. Both strategies are a valid response to human trafficking but it is questionable if UNIAP as secretariat to COMMIT, can take on the latter and still be impartial enough *vis-a-vis* different Governments to maintain the sense of parity and equanimity needed to keep inter-governmental dialogue flowing. All project strategies need to pull together to serve the key purpose which is to combat human trafficking through improved inter-governmental collaboration. Moreover, in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, all stakeholders should work in a harmonised and aligned way that fosters national and regional ownership.

226. Despite this, UNIAP has done relevant and cutting edge work in this phase under these new initiatives and approaches prompted no doubt by a genuine commitment to support victims of trafficking. The issue is that it has not really done what it was supposed to do in the way it was supposed to do it. Given that the approach laid out in the project document had been endorsed by various constituencies in 2006 as important for a systemic counter-trafficking response, UNIAP was not free to go down a somewhat different route without securing the agreement of all concerned.

227. All sides bear some responsibility for this, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the management and governance structures of the project which have been inadequate in providing sufficient oversight, direction or indeed support to ensure that the project keeps on track. There was a particular failure in day to day line management and supervision. Early intervention to check that the project was developing as agreed by stakeholders would have helped avoid an escalation of problems. Naturally UNIAP project management must also share responsibility for the strategic choices made of its own volition and without due consultation with other players or requests for authorisation from a higher level.

228. There are deeper issues and inherent tensions also. The problem is not unique to this stage in UNIAP's history or to the current cast of characters. UNIAP has been creaking for many years under an awkward and inappropriate project design which has long been in need of change. The project was set up with one intention in 1998/1999, UN inter-agency cooperation,

this was superseded when COMMIT came on the scene in 2004, and that has now become the central priority. The design has never kept up with these developments. Recurring problems over concurrent phases and recommendations for resolving them in various management reviews and evaluations have not been taken up.

229. The evaluation concludes that the project delivers very well on discreet aspects, and that in this, as in previous phases, it has important achievements in terms of sustaining COMMIT, a globally known inter-governmental process on trafficking, as well as other pioneering quality work. However, the project as a whole does not work in a unified and coherent manner; while there have been gains in terms of visible outputs and outcomes, there have also been losses, perhaps less tangible but no less important (certainly from the point of view of the original project document) in terms of sectoral cohesion, coordination, confidence building and collaborative working within the counter-trafficking community.

230. Stakeholders tend to have a very segmented vision of the project; seeing their part of the pie and being happy or unhappy with it as the case may be. Those who are served well may perceive the findings of the evaluation as rather negative. Equally, those who are unhappy with the project will be disappointed if their specific complaints are not confirmed. In this divisive and divided picture, there is no ready-made analysis for this evaluation to draw on but a responsibility to look at the big picture and to see how all the pieces fit together.

231. These different and polarised visions of the project have forced stakeholders into extreme positions, either wanting the project to end abruptly or to continue indefinitely with no change at all resulting in the governance crisis of 2010. The reality is somewhere in the middle. The project components need to be brought to fruition. What has been achieved so far over successive phases is important and any kind of premature and unplanned end would undo the investment put in by many – Governments, donors, UN, civil society, and UNIAP. Nevertheless there is a pressing need to evolve the project to another stage.

232. The recommendations made by this evaluation directly relate to the key findings namely that the project design is outdated and the project has outgrown its inter-agency component; it essentially exists to support an inter-governmental process and must be re-designed with this in mind. The project also requires closer supervision and management support than it has received in the past. The recommendations give priority to the views of Governments as beneficiaries, and the UN as manager, since it bears the responsibility for execution of the project. They also take account of the situation of UNIAP staff and obligations to meet donor commitments.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Recommendations to PMB/COMMIT Governments

233. Recommendation 1 – Project continues with significant changes

- a) **The project should continue beyond the end of 2013 but with significant changes as are discussed in the recommendations below.**

Commentary: *Stakeholders to decide which project components should go forward* at the design state. COMMIT/services to Government will obviously need to continue but as for the other aspects, it depends on what is agreed and what can be successfully phased out before then. The ***timing of a further phase post 2013 should not coincide with the start/end of SPA or other key COMMIT events to avoid future crises*** with the project terminating at critical times for COMMIT. The new phase should be timed to end either a year before or after the end of SPA 4.

234. Recommendation 2 - Objectives to be revised

- a) **There should be two objectives instead of four:**
- Services to COMMIT/Governments including the engagement of the development community with COMMIT. This should have top priority.
 - Services to the broader counter-trafficking community e.g. some level of coordination as needed in a given context of UN, NGOs, donors etc.; research; civil society capacity building etc. This brings together elements under existing objectives 2-4 as necessary.

Commentary: In the next phase the ***focus on COMMIT/Governments should be at least 70:30 in favour of COMMIT if not more*** given the loss of other activities. This objective should continue to be interpreted in a broad way and not simply as a secretariat function which involves organizing meetings. The UN coordination function has outlived its usefulness, and the lack of buy-in from UN stakeholders means the inter-agency title has little legitimacy. With advances in the UN reform process in the last decade there are ***other means for the UN to coordinate itself***. At regional level there is the Thematic Working Group on Migration and Human Trafficking co-chaired by ESCAP and IOM or the UN Development Group Asia-Pacific structure (chaired by the UNDP Regional Director) which oversees the work of UN Country Team's in the region. At national level there is the UN Country Team Framework. It should be noted that ***any substitute mechanisms should include the wider counter-trafficking community*** – NGOs both international and local, as well as donors, experts, private sector etc. Other project functions which are seen of use in the new phase design discussions should be carried forward.

235. Recommendation 3 - Objectives implemented separately

- a) A firewall⁹⁵ needs to exist between these two project objectives with a clear demarcation of staff, budgets, and activities.

Commentary: *Otherwise, the second objective risks jeopardising the first* (as has happened in recent times). One part of the project should service Governments/COMMIT (new objective 1); the other serves the broader counter-trafficking purposes (new objective 2). This was recommended in the 2007 management review but not taken up. Under the **current structure UNIAP and COMMIT are wedded for life**. The first step must be to separate these functions so that COMMIT can operate as a self-contained unit within the project. This will enable it to become portable and to move to another organisation like ESCAP or ASEAN if that is what is desired. **Recent events have shown the fusion between COMMIT and UNIAP is a threat to the sustainability of COMMIT**. The need to “wean” ⁹⁶COMMIT off UNIAP is recognised but the dependency works both ways, UNIAP also needs COMMIT to justify its raison d’être but in line with good development practice, the aim of a project is not to exist in perpetuity but to reach a stage where it is no longer needed.

- b) The separation should allow the COMMIT/Government function to be serviced by an autonomous unit.

Commentary: there may be some minor cross-over in terms of support services or oversight but the **main functions should be stand-alone. Part of the growing autonomy of COMMIT, will mean the need to formalise channels for the development community** to engage with the COMMIT process directly for the provision of financial, political and technical support instead of seeing UNIAP as the conduit and interface between the two.

236. Recommendation 4 - Inter-agency character to change

- a) The project should retain an inter-agency service function (as shown by the two objectives above) but it should no longer be under inter-agency management.

Commentary: **Being classed as inter-agency has put the project in something of a management vacuum**. This does not mean that the project has less obligation to coordinate itself with others; indeed likelihood of the project being better coordinated will increase if placed in a stronger UN structure. The **inter-agency dimension has always been a challenge historically**, and has now outlived its usefulness. A project without authority has little prospects for coordination. There doesn’t seem to be any

⁹⁵ The Government of Viet Nam raised concerns that a firewall between the two objectives would mean inter-agency support would not be forthcoming for objective 1. The evaluation clarifies that this is not the case as international support is integrated into objective 1 (both in the current objective 1 and the proposed new objective 1 as noted above).

⁹⁶ PMB [1 Oct 2010]

will on the part of donors or the UN to set up a new permanent institution or funding mechanism with authority to coordinate activities.

237. Recommendation 5 - Name of the project to change

- a) **The name will need to change since it comprises the words ‘inter-agency’.**

Commentary: If the *project loses its inter-agency character, then the name should change. The title needs to better reflect the core priority of the project* which is to ‘support inter-governmental processes on trafficking’. There could be a title based around this core function or something that reflects the relationship to COMMIT e.g. the COMMIT project or UN-COMMIT would be better (though the later has some negative connotations in English). The 2006 end of Phase II evaluation suggested a change in name for the same reason. This *may have the side benefit of enabling COMMIT to have better brand recognition*; some say it falls under UNIAP’s shadow to some extent. The title should in any case follow the COMMIT process and any subsequent changes that happen to it in years to come e.g. expansion of other members etc. While changing the name may lead to *some loss of ‘brand’ recognition for UNIAP, it is an unavoidable consequence of changing the objectives*. The acronym is weak anyway, ‘UNIAP’ by itself does not even refer to the word trafficking (this comes later in the title).

238. Recommendation 6 - Management structure to change

- a) **It is recommended that the project comes under one organisation rather than inter-agency management and stays with UNDP for the time being under a stronger management structure in the UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC).**

Commentary: *If the inter-agency character is removed, then the project can squarely sit under one organisation*. UNDP already bears the legal and fiduciary responsibilities for this project but has not exercised it in the normal way partly because the ‘inter-agency’ nature of the project required a hands-off approach. *UNDP keeping the project is the best option for now in terms of safeguarding the investment to date and for the sake of continuity*. Trying to move it now risks loss of momentum while another organisation works out how to manage it. Placing it under UNDP APRC is not an indefinite option; paras. 213-214 discuss various alternatives but also suggest that these can only come into play once the support to Governments/COMMIT component is separate, stable and portable enough to move elsewhere. *UNDP has a broad enough mandate to accommodate the project* and a portfolio on governance and human rights under which it can be placed. While it does not have expertise on trafficking, this can be overcome by ensuring technical and advisory support. UNDP is also a neutral player having been something of an ‘absent parent’ in the project’s life so far, and provides an opportunity for a fresh start. The *project can fit into the existing regional programme of UNDP APRC* which gives it an established line of engagement with country offices. The specific mechanics of the relationship between the regional offices and country

offices can be worked out. The other advantage is that this situates in a proper command structure. This was last recommended by the 2009 Phase III mid-term evaluation and supported by donors.

239. Recommendation 7 - Governance structure to change

- a) **Full management responsibility should pass to UNDP APRC and the project management board and project advisory committee should be reconstituted to form an advisory board.**

Commentary: If the *inter-agency character is removed, joint responsibilities for governing the project should also go*. There are existing models of boards for similar regional projects run by the UNDP APRC.

240. Recommendation 8 - Changes to take place as soon as is feasible

- a) **Changes should happen as soon as possible taking into account a number of issues.**

Commentary: There are a number of factors which influence when the next phase can start:

- Evolution and *reshaping of the project into another phase will take careful planning;*
- Project has an *extension until 2013 and a number of commitments* are already in place;
- Project *objectives at present are so integrated in terms of staffing, funding and activities that it will take time and a new phase to untangle* these elements.

- b) **From now till end 2013 should be considered a transitional phase in which preparations take place for a seamless move from this phase to the next.**

Commentary: Ideally a *new phase should start in a year i.e. early 2013*.

- This is *enough time to re-design* the project and put in place the next phase project.
- This would mean that the *new phase would be in place in time for beginning the planning process for SPA 4 (SPA 3 runs out at the end of 2013)*. Leaving the changeover until the end of 2013 complicates matters as it runs into the planning and implementation of SPA 4.
- However, it *may not be feasible to bring in changes earlier than end 2013 due to existing commitments*. Unearmarked⁹⁷ donor funding which applies to all project components or to COMMIT/Objective 1 is not an issue if donors agree to a variation. The main issue is the earmarked⁹⁸ donor funding which involves various donors and expires at different times in 2013. It is not appropriate to carry this over to another

⁹⁷ NZ AID, Norway, Sida, AUSAID – see table 2, chapter 2

⁹⁸ USDOS, USAID for Viet Nam, ANESVAD – see table 2, chapter 2

phase as it makes a commitment to continue project components which stakeholders may not wish to continue. Secondly, changes to these agreements will require consultations not only with donors, but with beneficiaries and sub-grantees as well (UNIAP has signed sub-grants based on the donor agreements which also expire in the course of 2013).

- c) Stakeholders to allow UNDP to work out the specific date for transition sometime in 2013.**

241. Recommendation 9 - Interim arrangements to be put in place for the transitional phase

- a) UNDP to appoint a dedicated part-time manager with strong management experience to line manage UNIAP with immediate effect.**

Commentary: i.e. someone for the Regional Project Manager to report to. Line management responsibilities to include day to day oversight, approvals, staff and performance management, management of external relations (problems), management of the transition of the project from one part of UNDP to another, leading the design of the next phase post 2013 etc.

- e) The line manager can be seated in UNDP APRC if it takes over the project with immediate effect. If this is not an option, the line manager will be situated in the UNRC Thailand office, as now, reporting to the UNRC.**

Commentary: If it passes to UNDP APRC, it would become the Principal Project Recipient and the current governing bodies (PMB, PSC) would be disbanded and reformed into an advisory board comprised of Governments, donors, UN agencies and civil society. There are many *pros to giving UNDP APRC immediate responsibility* for the project and cons to leaving it as it is under the UNRC system.

- It puts the project under stronger management control in a clear line of authority that goes to UNDP RBAP in New York and with one agency clearly responsible and accountable for the project.
- It solves the intractable problem of what to do with the existing dysfunctional governance bodies.
- It also puts the project in a neutral position vis-a-vis all six Governments as the UNDP APRC is not specifically answerable to any one Government.

Leaving it is under the current UNRC system is a risk.

- The UNRC has been overseeing the project because of the coordination mandate of the RC position which means that the inter-agency dimension and decision-making would continue to linger.
- The UNRC is accredited to the Government of Thailand only. The function is therefore answerable to one Government but has no basis for interacting with the Governments in the other five countries.

- Overall the risks are numerous given the fact that a new UNRC is coming in (the post is currently vacant and occupied on a temporary basis), the ambiguity of the role, the lack of a clear command structure above the UNRC, and especially at this critical point in the project's history when key decisions will need to be taken.
- It will be up to stakeholders to decide if they are willing to give UNDP APRC full management responsibility – there can be no half-way house i.e. UNDP APRC would not be advised, and may not agree, to take on the project with the current governing structures as instead of being a potential solution to the problem, it risks becoming embroiled in it.

- f) Stakeholders to decide on the design of the new phase. UNDP will facilitate the process: it will consult the counter-trafficking community and place particular emphasis on ensuring any proposed design meets the requirements of intended beneficiaries (Governments) and the organisation designated to manage and implement the project post 2013. This applies to both scenarios: whether the project stays with the UNRC or if it moves to UNDP APRC with immediate effect.**

Commentary: while the evaluation recommends passing management responsibility to UNDP APRC till the end of 2013 it is crucial to note that all decisions on what happens thereafter will be in the hands of key project stakeholders.

- g) Stakeholders to monitor the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations contained in this evaluation report. This applies to both scenarios: whether the project stays with the UNRC or if it moves to UNDP APRC with immediate effect.**

Commentary: If PMB/COMMIT Governments agree to being reconstituted into an advisory board with immediate effect, stakeholders and UNDP/APRC may wish to negotiate an acceptable solution concerning for instance, the way in which UNDP APRC will report on the implementation of its action plan and follow-up to the evaluation recommendations during the transitional period or how stakeholders can raise concerns with UNDP if any arise. If the project stays where it is, the UNRC would normally account in the usual way to PMB.

- h) If the project stays with the UNRC until the current phase is over, UNDP should be given a seat on the PMB in order to have a say in decision-making about the project.**

Commentary: UNDP bears the legal and fiduciary responsibility for this project despite the fact that it has no decision-making power. The participation of the UNRC or the UNIAP project manager in the PMB is not sufficient representation of UNDP's interests since both functions have inter-agency responsibilities. This was emphasised in UNDP's internal review in June 2011 of its role in the implementation of UNIAP.

2.2. Recommendations to UNDP for interim period

242. Recommendation 10 - Appointment of interim part-time line manager to oversee the project with immediate effect until end of phase III

a) UNDP to make the appointment of a line manager a priority.

Commentary: The decision on where that manager sits will depend on whether the PMB want to pass responsibility to APRC or to leave it with the UNRC's office until this phase is over. But the need for a line manager will still exist and UNDP is urged to make this a priority. There are *many outstanding issues which need resolving*, and any planning for the next phase needs to start soon. The position will require a person with *strong and senior management experience* simply because the situation has become very complex in terms of external relations, and programme management. The evaluation notes that there is some ambivalence in UNDP about owning this project, especially as it does not fit the core strategic priorities of the organisation. Nonetheless, UNDP has taken it on for over 10 years, and *has a responsibility to ensure that the remainder of this phase passes smoothly and that the project is appropriately re-designed and transits to a new phase* (whether that is in UNDP or in another organisation depending on what decisions stakeholders take during the new phase redesign).

243. Recommendation 11 - UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific in New York to take charge of all key decisions

a) UNDP RBAP to approve all management and funding decisions until Phase III is over and/or until currently vacant top management posts in the region are permanently filled.

Commentary: The *management lacuna into which this project has fallen over the years is well-documented in this report*. Actions taken by the UNRC, wearing an 'inter-agency' hat particularly lack accountability. As the UNDP RBAP is the ultimate line of authority for both the UNDP RC/RR Thailand and the UNDP APRC, it is urged to take a more interventionist approach for a period until top management posts are stabilised. The evaluation notes that the posts of top managers for both the UNDP country office in Thailand and the UNDP APRC are vacant and currently occupied by temporary officials. Other key positions such as the APRC Chief of Operations are newly occupied. This *risks leaving decisions on this complex state of affairs to newcomers with the possibility of mistakes of the past being repeated*. RBAP should at least assume authority until the posts are filled and the incumbents are sufficiently abreast of the situation. It is also worth recalling that *while the project may be low budget in relative terms, it is high octane*. Incepted in 2004 in the previous phase, it supports a inter-ministerial process which senior UNDP officials themselves acknowledge is a *"remarkable achievement"*. The evaluation for its part *avoids any micro-recommendations on how UNDP should*

handle this issue so as to give UNDP free rein to manage matters in accordance with its standard management and administrative procedures.

244. Recommendation 12 - Prepare a management response and action plan until the end of Phase III

- a) **UNDP to prepare a management plan covering steps required to successfully conclude this phase of the project and transit to the next as well as follow-up to issues arising in this evaluation.**

The evaluation makes a number of recommendations which are necessary and feasible for the interim phase and which should be carried through in any design of the next phase. . It will also be necessary for UNDP to review the evaluation report and identify other actions and follow-up which is not referred to here. The UNDP line manager will be overall responsible for overseeing that agreed recommendations are implemented by UNDP or UNIAP project staff as appropriate. Recommendations are as follows:

a) Communications

- i. Establish an approval process for UNIAP external communications and in particular publications and donor reports. [para. 63-67]
- ii. Ensure all communications by the UNIAP regional office with national stakeholders are done in conjunction with the UNIAP country office in all six countries. [para. 62]
- iii. Establish protocols for both internal and external email communications stating which emails need prior authorization and from whom, who has to be copied etc. [para. 169]
- iv. Establish protocols for passing official requests between Governments and the wider counter-trafficking community (for instance ensuring messages are conveyed in a transparent way and which shows full ownership by Government authorities of decisions made] [para. 49]
- v. Establish a UNDP process for vetting and releasing politically sensitive material including research reports. [para. 63]
- vi. Put in place a review and approval process for UNIAP media appearances (with the support of UNDP Communications) i.e. review past appearances and develop agreed talking points on this basis; establish approval process for interacting with media; review appearances post-facto to check conformity with agreed approach etc. [para. 80]

b) Research and information

- i. Ensure that UNDP retains intellectual property rights and is not required to provide information to external parties in a selective way, reviewing existing practices and agreements accordingly. [para. 65-66]]

- ii. Carry out SIREN research in a more collaborative way i.e. involve wider stakeholders in carrying out and peer reviewing the research. [para. 68]
- iii. Develop a guide on research methods to disseminate the project's research methodologies e.g. identification of research priorities, research design, obstacles and solutions etc. for sharing with the wider counter-trafficking community both in the region and further afield. [para. 69]
- iv. Establish protocols for the use and sharing of research findings. [para. 65-66]
[For example, the protocol should make a distinction between findings that are released publicly to one and all (not always essential to ask concerned Governments for their views, and if comments are solicited this should be within defined time limits and expectations) as compared to findings shared in a selective way (permissions to be sought)]
- v. Better explicate the different research methods and disaggregate data sources – e.g. surveys, legal case work, NGO reports etc. so that decisions can be taken on which forms of research are acceptable under this and future phases. [para. 99-106]
[The issues raised in this report does not mean the end of SIREN, a valued commodity in the anti-trafficking community, but it does mean clearer parameters around how research is carried out and published in accordance with UN rules and the intended role of the project e.g. information collected through surveys and research studies is appropriate; data collected through hands-on legal case work by UNIAP is inappropriate given its role - instead UNIAP should work with NGOs to teach them how to collect the data and then gather information from them; the research cannot be released selectively to third parties].
- vi. Survey and review UNIAP information tools to see their usage and to consider more cost-effective options. [para. 71]
- vii. Ensure current and future project proposals/documents are put before PMB or any other advisory or governance structure that takes its place, for review. [Para. 91-93]

c) Technical activities

- i. Ensure advice on technical standards from UN agencies dealing with specialised areas is taken on board and integrated into the project's work. [para. 37]
- ii. Change technical approach to focus more on empowering others to take the lead in delivering technical knowledge e.g. training UNIAP staff to carry out tasks which are currently done by the regional technical team and by greater engagement of other UN agencies in technical areas under COMMIT, if feasible. within the remainder of this phase. [para. 107-113]
- iii. Review training for NGOs and Governments to address quality issues. [para. 77]

d) COMMIT administration

- i. Improve the planning process for COMMIT/Project meetings and other events including setting to and abiding by deadlines for sending invites, circulating documents, translations etc. [para. 38]
- ii. Restore emphasis on COMMIT in terms of 70:30 ratio in terms of staff time and project's

activities as far as possible within current donor commitments but at the very least change the emphasis given to COMMIT and non-COMMIT in descriptions of the project. [para. 95-98]

e) Inter-agency component

- i. Any new ideas or initiatives emerging from the project should be put for consultation to UN agencies at a very initial stage in order to develop a genuinely joint approach but with the requirement of a timely response on the part of agencies so as not to hinder project initiatives. [para. 88]
- ii. Decisions on any further sub-grants or awards to NGOs, research institutes etc. should be made involving the participation of a wider cross-section of the counter-trafficking community. [para. 90]

f) Monitoring and evaluation

- i. Develop standardised M+E tools to assess typical activities under COMMIT national plans [para. 32]
- ii. Ensure regional team's feedback to country offices on the pre-requisition process is timely and fits with national COMMIT task-force decision-making timelines. [para. 32]
- iii. Complete the impact assessment as requested by Governments before the conclusion of Phase III and as early as possible so as to feed into the re-design of the next phase V. [para. 128]
- iv. Revise logframe and realign it to the extent feasible with original project document at least to rectify significant deviations in 2009 version [para. 178.]

g) Administration

- i. Review and address existing staffing issues to the extent possible in this phase [para. 167-171]
- ii. Check current sub-granting to civil society in all countries is compliant with UNDP procedures. [para. 91]

h) Dispute resolution

- i. UNDP line manager should be responsible for handling problems between the project and other stakeholders (UN agencies, Governments etc.); this includes complaints from stakeholders about UNIAP, as well as vice versa. [para. 27 and 44]
- ii. Call on other UN agencies to rationalise their communications with UNIAP e.g. ensure offices in the region channel complaints through the regional office of agencies for taking up through the UNDP line manager; similarly requests for assistance from offices outside the region should go to the regional office of respected agencies first and then be passed on to the UNDP line manager. [para. 52 and 171]

i) Design of next phase

- i. To be led and carried out by line manager, and draw on external and independent inputs as necessary including solid management expertise to develop organisational arrangements, staffing structures, job descriptions etc.

- ii. The process and decision-making should be consultative and involve the wider counter-trafficking community. It should involve all PMB stakeholders (with key priority given to the main beneficiaries of the next phase (Governments) and the organisation charged with management responsibility for the next phase.
- iii. The design phase will clarify what components will continue beyond the end of 2013 and which will be phased out in the interim phase. The ***re-design plan should consider sustainability and exit strategy for all components***, while this may not happen in the next phase, the project needs to be progressing towards sustainability rather than treading water. This project has important components which deserve to be sustained – this cannot be said for all development projects where too often discussions of sustainability are academic. Nor is the sustainability plan difficult to conceive and should not have been put off till now. The evaluation suggests the following sustainability plan for each component of the project:
 - Services COMMIT/Governments (objective 1) should be structured so as to function as an autonomous unit within the project so that it is free in due course to be independent or part of another organisation as Governments wish.
 - Research (objective 3) the longer term vision for this should be to go global and be moved to an independent body which is not constrained by its relations with Governments. The design stage can consider options (which may not happen in the next phase of the project) but as ideas the evaluation can suggest (i) Within the UN system options - Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights or the UN University; (ii) External bodies could be academic institutes or think-tanks or human rights NGOs like Human Rights Watch.
 - Coordination (objective 2 and 3). This can be phased out and move in two directions (i) passed over to extended UN working group mechanisms (which also involve NGOs, donors and other players); (ii) merged with existing national structures on trafficking. These bodies should also pick up residual information functions.
 - Special projects – these are in essence pilot projects of a short-lived nature which could be done by any organisation, UN agency or NGO and the function itself does not require a sustainability plan.

[Para. 34]

j) Other matters

There are various issues which come up which merit a recommendation but which are not feasible to address immediately and are left for consideration in the next phase design document, for example:

Coordination – it is difficult to know what to suggest to improve coordination as UNIAP appears set on a course for the remainder of phase III which will perpetuate the conflict with other organisations, in particular because of planned and funded activities under objectives 3 and 4. The evaluation could suggest that UNIAP follows the example of its Lao PDR country office but there the magic recipe is a combination of a service-oriented approach by the country office and secondly, inaction on objectives 3 and 4 due to a lack of Government permissions.

Research – consider recommendations pertaining to UNIAP’s approach to research e.g. that it should do more research on programming (M+E, what works), that it should promote the dissemination of the research done by others etc. are left for discussion at the design stage.

M+E – M+E specialist can be hired at the design stage both to prepare a plan for the next phase but also advise on improvements in the interim period.

Overall approach – many ideas in the report about working in a more sustainable, developmental way for instance with civil society and national stakeholders should be explored.

k) Timeframe for follow-up to recommendations

Timeframe	Recommendation Number	Action/Decision
Immediate		
	Rec. 10	UNDP - Takes steps to start recruiting part-time line manager
	Rec. 11	UNDP - RBAP to establish internal authority over all decisions taken with immediate effect, including arrangements for 19 th March meeting
19 March 2012 PMB		
	Rec. 1	PMB/Governments - Is there agreement that the project should continue after the end of 2013 subject to a re-design?
	Rec 2 -7	PMB/Governments - Is UNDP authorised to re-design the new phase on the basis of an initial agreement that the design should be along the lines of recommendations 2-7? Further consultations and final decisions to be taken at the design stage
	Rec. 8	PMB/Governments - Is UNDP authorised as part of its management and action plan to consider milestones for transition including the most appropriate date for transition in 2013?
	Rec. 9	PMB/Governments - Should the project immediately transfer to UNDP APRC or should it stay with UNRC until the next phase? - If it moves to UNDP APRC, is there agreement that the PMB and PSC will be dissolved and reconstituted into an advisory board? - If it does not move to UNDP APRC immediately, is there agreement that UNDP should have a seat on the PMB in order

to have a say in decision-making?		
By end June 2012		
	Rec. 12	UNDP Management response and action plan completed by line manager
Design stage – UNDP to determine date	Rec 2-7 and 12	UNDP Design stage to take into account all recommendations

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is a sorry state of affairs from the point of view of an outsider coming in to see what has come to pass. The positions of the stakeholders appear caricatured but the picture is not so simple – the reality is that all sides are responsible for what has taken place:

- UNIAP for not appreciating that it was the custodian of long and carefully conceived consensual process in which it could not supplant its own views on what the anti-trafficking sector needed without prior consultation with other stakeholders;
- UN for failing to line manage effectively and then letting the matter explode in an unseemly way;
- Governments and donors for rightly stepping in to rescue but then going too far the other way in appearing to stall much needed change.

The project has de facto had another phase from 2010 – 2013 but without essential revisions which would have allowed it to progress and in turn facilitate the strengthening of COMMIT and other mechanisms on counter-trafficking. Stakeholders have a shared responsibility now to help this process move forward in a constructive way.