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REVIEW OF FINDINGS FROM EUROPEAN EVALUATIONS OF COUNTER TERRORISM CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION. *This briefing note provides the main findings of a literature review of evaluations of counter terrorism capacity building programs implemented by European countries. The review was commissioned by the International Assistance Evaluation Division (PRA) of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in mid-2019. It draws from evaluations, reviews and other documentation that is available from open sources and it is intended to feed into an upcoming evaluation of GAC's Counter Terrorism Capacity Building Program (CTCBP).*

The review was asked to identify lessons and good practice within the six thematic areas priorities by the CTCBP. These are: (1) Border and Transportation Security; (2) Legislative Assistance; (3) Law Enforcement, Security, Military and Intelligence; (4) Combatting Financing of Terrorism; (5) Critical Infrastructure Protection; and (6) Countering Improvised Explosive Devices. The review was also asked to have a geographical focus on capacity building programs in the Sahel, the Maghreb and the Middle East and programs undertaken by the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. Given the paucity of relevant information available on these efforts from open sources, the geographical focus was expanded to include other areas (such as South East Asia) where relevant and additionally has been supplemented with input from multilateral organizations (notably the European Union and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, UNODC). The Review Team's findings are summarized in the sections below and in more detail in the main report.

Box 1: Key messages emerging from the literature review

- o There are few evaluations of bilateral counter terrorism capacity building programs available on open sources. From a learning perspective, the products available in knowledge-banks, such as the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), compensate for this weakness, as do evaluations of counter terrorism initiatives financed by multilateral agencies, mainly the European Union.

- o There is significant variation amongst the thematic areas assessed where documentation is available on open sources. There was most documentation on law enforcement, criminal justice, and Anti-Money Laundering / Counter Terrorist Financing and less on border security and counter terrorism legislation, while some (such as Countering Improvised Explosive Devices) were not represented at all.

- o The counter terrorism capacity building initiatives assessed by the evaluations are found by the evaluations to be relevant and a range of results is highlighted, particularly at output level. Examples include improved technical capacity to implement counter terrorism legislation, provide local training, and strengthened inter-agency cooperation.

- o The evaluations find that effectiveness is promoted through training needs analysis, the use of trainers with the required technical and contextual understanding, correct targeting of participants, and follow up.

- o Few of the evaluations assessed the approach taken to gender and human rights. We conclude that there is a need to include examination of unintended results as a standard practice in counter terrorism program design and evaluation.

- o The quality of results-based monitoring of counter terrorism capacity building is often regarded by the evaluations as weak and not fit for purpose. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes should therefore be strengthened.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW. The review sought to answer the following six key questions:

Question 1: To what extent has similar programming by other countries responded to evolving needs and opportunities for counter-terrorism capacity building, especially in the Sahel?

All of the literature examined by the Review Team found the CT interventions concerned to have a high degree of relevance, with an essential pre-condition for this being a robust context analysis and participatory design process. The evaluations recommend that this be a "whole of system" approach so that the capacities, interests and needs of different actors and the connectivity between them are highlighted and taken into account in program design and implementation. Adopting a political economy lens and theory of change approach during design would be useful in these respects, irrespective of the thematic area concerned. Other factors aiding relevance include flexibility and adaptability so that longer term

initiatives have the opportunity to flex and meet emerging needs. In relation to the Sahel, evaluations highlighted the need for flexibility to respond to the evolving context (increasingly unstable). They also noted the increasing donor interest in the past five years or so that requires harmonisation of counter terrorism programming to promote overall coherence and avoid duplication and/or gaps.

Question 2: To what extent has similar programming by other countries delivered desired results? This is essentially an issue of effectiveness – have the programs been effective in achieving their goals?

The review found that the documentation presents a picture of mixed levels of effectiveness. It is generally vague in terms of impacts and outcomes and somewhat less so in relation to outputs, thereby echoing the widespread observation that identifying the results of counter terrorism (as with preventing/countering violent extremism) is difficult. The documentation also points to

weaknesses in the approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning as being partly to blame for this; projects did not necessarily have measurable baselines and indicators against which to measure and monitor change. This points to the need to strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning frameworks, especially at outcome level.

Question 3: Does similar programming by other countries apply a gender analysis lens to program design and the achievement of desired results?

The review found that few counter terrorism evaluations include gender considerations and, in those that do (mainly European Union evaluations), gender is not assessed in detail. Lessons from wider development practice emphasize that meaningful approaches to gender involve more than simply increasing the number of women participants in training courses. They also concern empowerment and integration of gender perspectives into actual practice.

Question 4: What are the lessons learned and good practices for improving the effectiveness and the achievement of longer-term outcomes for this kind of programming?

The review points to a large number of good practices and lessons from counter terrorism which, at a generic level, mirror findings from similar studies of preventing / countering violent extremism as well as development practice. These include robust context analysis (including conflict sensitivity), tailoring of designs imported from elsewhere to fit the context, the importance of generating ownership amongst beneficiaries through participatory processes, sufficient and informed project management, a focus on coherence and coordination to reduce silo thinking through inter-disciplinary processes, practical and applicable approaches and techniques etc.

Question 5: What have been some of the unanticipated impacts from this kind of programming?

The review found that very little of the documentation reviewed took a systematic approach to addressing unanticipated impacts,

although some were identified (such as the growth in inter-agency cooperation as a consequence of the European Union's Sahel engagements). This diverges from Rand Europe's 2018 study of counter terrorism evaluations (2018), which found that half of the evaluations had sought to capture potential unintended effects of initiatives. Of these, it was found that evaluations of counter terrorism initiatives placed greater emphasis on investigating unintended effects than those looking at preventing / countering violent extremism specific initiatives. Our findings reinforce the European Union Global Evaluation's recommendation that counter terrorism (and preventing / countering violent extremism) evaluations should examine unintended consequences as a matter of course and the application of Do No Harm in particular.

Question 6: Does similar programming by other countries include sustainability considerations? Where possible, what factors have contributed to the sustainability of results especially after funding ended?

The review found that the evaluations studied tended not to assess the degree to which results have been sustained after project exit. Nonetheless, the literature did come with a number of useful observations for how sustainability can be optimised. Many of the sources emphasized the importance of embedding knowledge and skills within beneficiary institutions; for example, through Training of Trainers approaches, which can ameliorate the common problem of trained personnel being rotated away from the jobs for which they have been trained. Sustainability can also be enhanced through investing in local ownership; for example, by involving beneficiaries in project design, strengthening coordination units, and through improving cross-agency cooperation. Predictable funding and the longevity and cohesion of support (not one-off activities) also appear relevant.

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