



MID-TERM INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION:

## **‘SUPPORT TO THE ECOWAS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING, RELATED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE’ (XAW/Z28) December 2018**

**Countries:** 15 ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania

**Duration:** 1 January 2015 – 31 October 2019

**UNODC Budget:** USD 14,384,294

**Donor:** European Union

**Implementing agencies:** UNODC

**Evaluation team:** Ms. Elca Stigter (lead evaluator), Ms. Linda Amadi (expert)

**Full report:**

[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports/year\\_2018.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports/year_2018.html)

### **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ‘Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa’ and the ECOWAS ‘Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse 2008-2011’ (hereinafter the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan) underpinned the project ‘Support to the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Illicit Drug Trafficking, related Transnational Crime and Drug Abuse’ (XAW/Z28). XAWZ28 has been part of the UNODC Regional Programme (RP) for West Africa 2010-2014 and 2016-2020. The project started on 1 January 2015 for a duration of 46 months. It has now received a no-cost extension until 31 October 2019. XAWZ28 has been implemented by the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa (ROSEN) in Dakar, Senegal, in close cooperation with the Drug Unit, Directorate Gender, Youth, CSOs, Employment and Drug Control of the ECOWAS Commission (hereinafter ECOWAS Drug Unit), seated in Abuja, Nigeria.

The overall **objective** of XAW/Z28 was ‘To contribute to a reduction of drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime in West Africa’. ROSEN was responsible for three of the four outcomes of this EU-funded project: ‘Regional policies and advocacy is informed by evidence-based studies’ (outcome 2); ‘The development and sharing of practices and experiences

[that] enable the emerging of more specialized expertise in drug prevention and treatment in West Africa’ (outcome 3); and, ‘Reformed national institutional and legal frameworks and improved sub-regional, regional and international cooperation’ (outcome 4). The ECOWAS Drug Unit covered outcome 1 on coordination, monitoring and advocacy.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation utilized a mixed-method approach, with a gender-responsive evaluation methodology, comprising a desk review, semi-structured interviews, an online survey of the West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU) and observation. 1 written response and 84 interviews were received/conducted (58 M; 27 F). The survey had a response rate of 82 percent (18 M; 5 F).

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

XAW/Z28 continued to be **highly relevant** considering **the commitment of the international community** in the **UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs in 2016**, and the adoption of the **ECOWAS ‘Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse 2016-2020’**, also in 2016.

XAW/Z28 design was **ambitious** and **lacked clarity on the interpretation of the regional angle**. While the regional approach worked well in epidemiology, regional networks in other areas were not available and/or capitalized on. National and sub-regional activities were therefore supported instead. A comprehensive monitoring framework was not available.

XAW/Z28 was **efficient to some extent** with 42.3 percent of the total budget spent/committed from 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2017. The project was cost-efficient by means of joint implementation with counterparts and cost-sharing with UNODC projects, albeit at some cost of visibility of especially law

enforcement activities. Delays in implementation occurred, mainly due to the project's multi-stakeholder nature and available national capacity. The project team composition was appropriate.

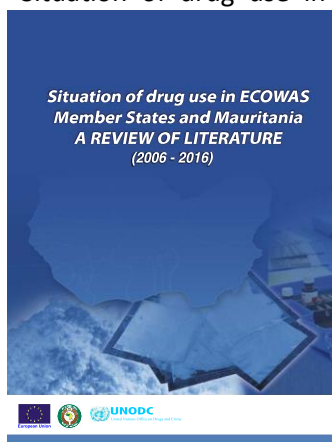


A **key partnership** was with the **ECOWAS Drug Unit**<sup>1</sup>, which contributed to the legitimacy of UNODC's work and the capacity and profile of the ECOWAS Drug Unit. It also supported cooperation between the ECOWAS

Commission and UNODC beyond the project's framework, although a limiting factor for cooperation with the ECOWAS Drug Unit was the presence of only a minority of the UNODC project team in Abuja. XAW/Z28 also supported RP implementation, boosting ROSEN's capacity and visibility in the region

The level of interest, involvement and ownership of **government counterparts** further determined cooperation. A prominent role was given to civil society organizations in national-level Drug Demand Reduction activities.

XAWZ28 was **effective to some extent** in epidemiology and DDR. The desk study 'Situation of drug use in ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania A REVIEW OF LITERATURE (2006-2016))'<sup>2</sup> was published to inform policy development, and data quality had improved since 2015. Regional and national conferences contributed towards specialized expertise in drug treatment.



Ownership of counterparts was **encouraged and supported**, but an overview of **links between XAW/Z28 outputs and UNODC projects under the RP was missing** to identify risks to **sustainability**, and clarify design choices. Without the continued presence of the project team in Abuja after October 2019, the partnership between UNODC and the ECOWAS Commission could be negatively affected in the future.

**Human rights and gender equality** were **mainstreamed to some extent**. Sex-disaggregated data were not systematically collected. 70 percent of

WENDU focal points considered that these areas were adequately mainstreamed in meetings and reporting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Undertake a comprehensive **project revision** with a **revised design including** enhanced logframe and budget allocation;
- Develop a **joint sustainability strategy** with a long-term vision for regional and national activities;
- **Strengthen the institutionalization of partnerships**, project entities and results;
- Revise the current **communication strategy**;
- Develop a **fund-raising strategy** to prioritize limited funding available for epidemiology and DDR;
- Sustain **high-level engagement and enhance advocacy** at international, regional and national levels;
- Explore ways to **extend cooperation with regional networks in the field of criminal justice**
- Ensure **the integration of human rights and gender equality** into all project activities.
- Ensure **more efficiency in managing project administrative processes**;
- Design and implement a **comprehensive monitoring system**.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICE

- **The direct transfer of the objectives and structure of policy** to programmatic documents can lead to an ambitious scope and weak logframe.
- **The regional nature of a project must be adequately clarified** to provide direction and targeted technical assistance with available resources.
- **A common understanding about mutual roles and responsibilities, and bureaucratic procedures and practices amongst technical teams responsible for inter-dependent components of one donor project** needs to be supported.
- **The nature, quality and use of assessments needs** to be adequately discussed and agreed on in light of **data security, target audiences and budget**.
- **WENDU showcased the potential** of a regional network by providing a **platform for training, networking and sharing of good practices and lessons learned**, and supporting **capacity building** and institutionalization of national epidemiology networks.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: ECOWAS Emblem: <http://www.ecowas.int>

<sup>2</sup> Source:

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/westandcentralafrica/ecowasgrants/UNODC-report-druguse-in-ECOWAS.pdf>