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BOMCA
BORDER MANAGEMENT
PROGRAMME IN CENTRAL ASIA

БОМКА
ПРОГРАММА СОДЕЙСТВИЯ
УПРАВЛЕНИЮ ГРАНИЦАМИ В
ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2

April - June 2022



BOMCA 10 IN FOCUS



H.E. Marilyn Josefson,
*Head of Delegation and
Ambassador of the Delegation of
the European Union to Tajikistan*

Dear BOMCA readers,

On behalf of the European Union, I'm pleased to share with you the second issue of the BOMCA Newsletter (Programme on Assistance to Border Management in Central Asia). This newsletter gives you update on Programme's activities and progress across all five Central Asian states.

The ongoing 10th phase of the BOMCA Programme represents very well the spirit of the EU-Central Asia partnership, which aims to promote regional integration in the areas of border management, trade facilitation and improved border cooperation. The European Union is convinced that this kind of strengthened regional cooperation offers the best tools for addressing common challenges, and it is also instrumental in ensuring regional security and stability in Central Asia.

The European Union and Tajikistan has a well established and longstanding cooperation that is guided by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, as well as the European Union's strategy for Central Asia. The EU Delegation to Tajikistan also works within the framework of the new regional multi-annual indicative programme, where one of the main priorities is Integrated Border Management. Tajikistan, which is a frontline country and which shares a substantial long border with Afghanistan, thus plays a key role in regional border management cooperation.

The Integrated Border Management principles, such as exchange of know-how and best practices, both with EU Member States and between the countries of Central Asia, are among the cornerstones of the 10th phase of the EU-funded BOMCA Programme. This Newsletter provides a brief overview of the Programme's recent activities and updates, built upon these fundamental principles.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to express gratitude to the Governments of the Central Asian countries and other BOMCA partners for the constructive cooperation and active participation within the Programme. I thus invite you to follow this BOMCA newsletter, which shall provide updates on a quarterly basis.



Vladimirs Zaguzovs,
BOMCA 10 Deputy Programme Leader

Dear BOMCA partners, beneficiaries and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to present you the second issue of the BOMCA 10 Newsletter, which zooms in the progress of the Programme in the past quarter.

The past quarter builds upon the strong fundament set up during the inception phase. Moreover, we have been accelerating successful implementation of areas started in the 1st quarter.

The global pandemic, which defined most part of the first year of the operational environment, had an influence on the project. Yet designed alternative ways to achieve results – through online and hybrid activities – have significantly minimised negative impact and proven agility of the Programme.

During the 2nd quarter the Programme leaves behind turbulences faced in the region at the beginning of year 2022, which allows to concentrate and gain steady pace of implementation of the core project activities.

Today, the Programme is in its active phase of implementation across all four thematic areas and, I believe, that efforts made by the BOMCA 10 Consortium of implementing partners, led by the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia, contribute to the enhanced resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation through the Programme's support to border security, human rights, and strong emphasis on connectivity, reflecting the principles of the EU strategy for Central Asia. As a result, sets of recommendations in area of border control and investigation, customs legislation and phyto-veto procedures have been established and shared to the beneficiaries.

It's worth to mention that BOMCA team has been working hard on restructuring the programme due to respective changes in its geographical scope and thematic priorities of the interventions. I am fully sure, that permanent consultations with the donor will ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective result.

Thus, let me cordially invite you to learn about BOMCA 10 key updates and achieved progress in the present issue!

ABOUT BOMCA 10

Since its launch in 2003, the **Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA)** funded by the European Union has focused on capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors and the facilitation of trade, improving border management system and eliminating border trafficking across the Central Asia region.

OVERALL
OBJECTIVE

Enhancing security, stability, and sustainable growth in the region, as well as **supporting cross-border cooperation** and improving living conditions for people living in border areas of Central Asia

BUDGET



21 650 050

DURATION



**April 2021 -
September 2025**



COMPONENT 1

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES

SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVE

Adopting international security standards, integration of best practices and/or compliance with integrated border management models where applicable



COMPONENT 2

IMPROVEMENT OF
DETECTION CAPACITIES

SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVE

Enhancing detection, coordination and investigation effectiveness within and between Central Asian countries



COMPONENT 3

FACILITATION OF TRADE

SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVE

Harmonizing institutional, technical and normative practices related to the facilitation of legitimate flows of people and cargo across borders



COMPONENT 4

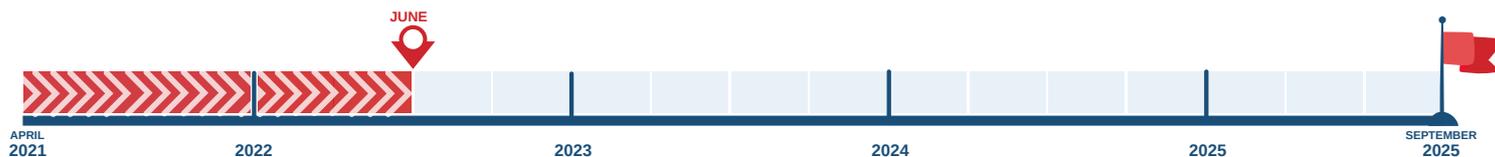
IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-
BORDER COOPERATION

SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVE

Improving living conditions in border areas through local economic development, with a focus on human rights, gender equality and vulnerable groups (such as women, children and victims of human trafficking)

BOMCA 10 PROGRESS IN A NUTSHELL

Project implementation timeline



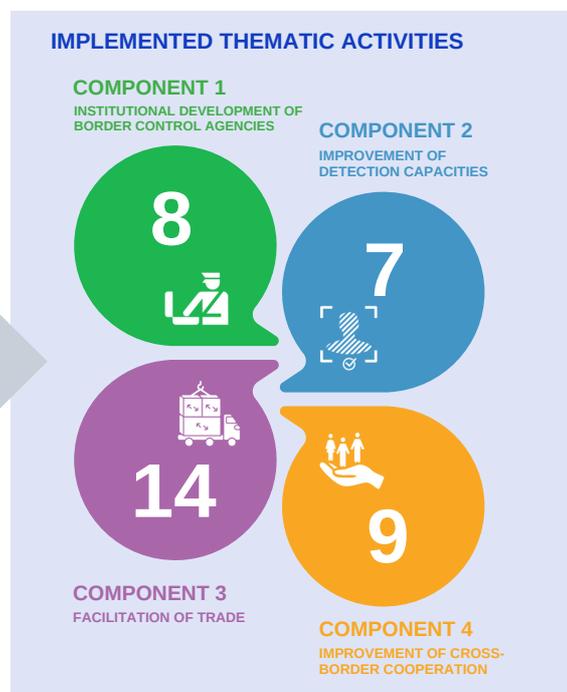
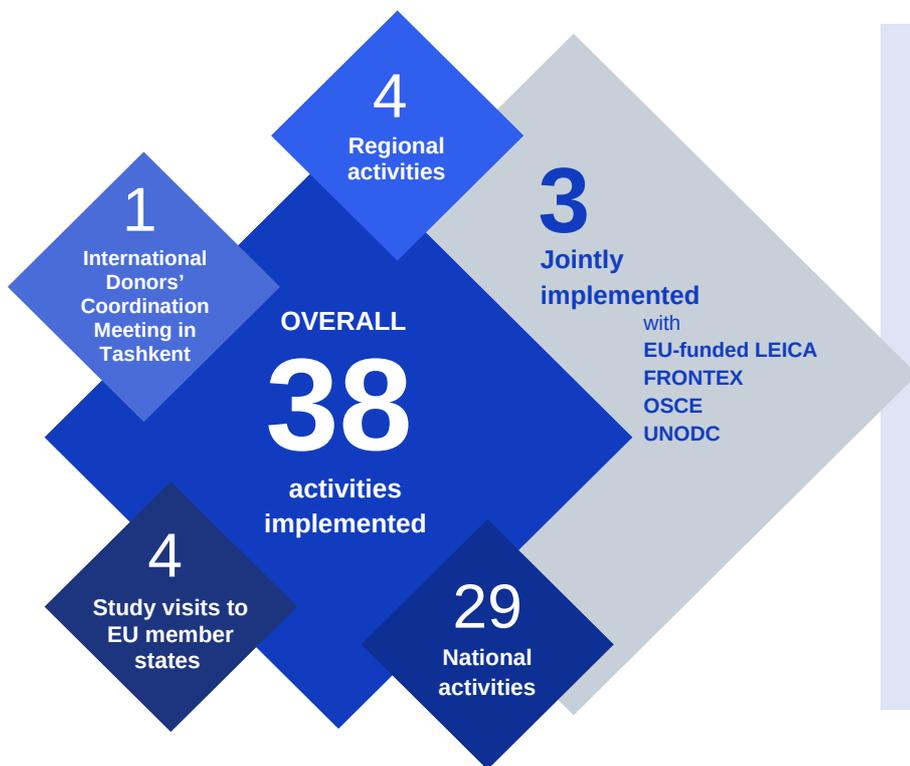
From 1 April till 30 June 2022, the Programme implemented 38 activities in the Central Asian region. These include regional and national activities of different complexity within all four BOMCA components.

On 12 April 2022, in partnership with the government agencies of Uzbekistan, BOMCA has also organised the **International Donors' Coordination Meeting** in Tashkent. It is an important working platform for discussion of the activities completed and challenges faced, to identify potential linkages and maximise the effectiveness of international assistance and efforts made in the country. The participants, including representatives of international, donor and governmental organisations shared their short, mid and long term development plans. The stakeholders paid particular attention to ensure synergies and joint efforts, resulting in mapping avenues for further cooperation.

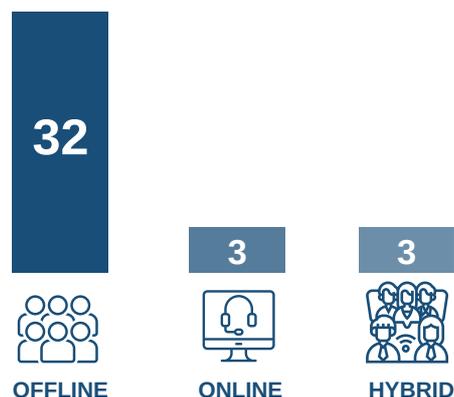
At the same time, the Programme and partners took a note of the needs expressed by the beneficiaries, that will be analysed and incorporated into the ongoing implementation.

The infographics below visually reflect the array of the activities implemented and provides an overview of participation.

Project implementation in the period of April - June 2022



FORMAT OF THE IMPLEMENTED EVENTS



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES ACROSS CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

	206		150
	320		239
	293		

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS



COMPONENT 1 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES



In the past three months, BOMCA has continued working on strengthening the institutional capacities of the Central Asian Border Management Agencies, aiming at adopting international security standards and developing operational frameworks. Thus, to improve methods of border control and upgrade related procedures in all Central Asian countries, the Programme organised a Training of Trainers on profiling and identification technics in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, thus enhancing capacity of border guards in checking travel documents.

To support Uzbekistan in its efforts countering cross-border crime, BOMCA organised the technical assistance mission for the development of the Integrated Border Management (IBM) institutional model in Uzbekistan. The specific recommendations have been developed and shared with the beneficiaries outlining the structure and key elements of IBM Strategy and Action plan. In line with IBM principles, the Central Asian authorities have also strengthened their capacities through the risk analysis workshop, thus receiving detailed information on implementation of the risk management system within the institutional framework.

Acknowledging the importance of the digital tools in the learning process, BOMCA held practical training sessions on implementation of the e-learning methodology in Central Asian border guard training institutions for all five states. It was followed by a study visit to Latvia based on the peer-to-peer learning approach. These efforts have greatly encouraged and supported cooperation among the training institutions in Central Asia and with Latvian Border Guard College.

Committed to the aim of supporting Central Asian countries in building balanced, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships with the EU, BOMCA held a number of activities for the improvement of national capacities in the field of procedures, facilitating rapid and effective return of irregular migrants in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

The component continues building synergies with other organisations and projects through joint events (e.g. with UNOC, LEICA and OSCE).



COMPONENT 2 IMPROVEMENT OF DETECTION CAPACITIES

In April – June 2022, BOMCA supported Central Asian law enforcement and border management agencies in pursuing evidence based investigations, specifically focusing on the detection of cross-border crime.

The heads of investigation units within agencies in all five Central Asian states received recommendations on efficient information exchange and enhanced their capacities in the field of development and improvement of information systems and registers, as well as in ensuring their greater functionality in criminal investigations and control of criminal cases. To support Central Asian law enforcement agencies in the application of best practices, a study visit to Lithuania has been organised contributing to the raised awareness on investigation of different types of cross-border crimes as well as on interagency and international cooperation in this field. The Tajik investigators and crime intelligence officers have further improved their capacity in investigation methods when it comes to smuggling of drugs and precursors.



Acknowledging importance of the intelligence-led policing and law enforcement, the Programme deepened the knowledge of Kazakh criminal intelligence officers in criminal intelligence investigation methods as well as in tackling migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings (THB) and introduced them to EU good practices in this field. The Programme is currently developing standard operating procedures and handbook on THB investigation to further support national beneficiaries in Kazakhstan.

A special emphasis has been laid on raising awareness of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh law enforcement agencies in the area of human rights and gender sensitivity through the national workshops, followed by the provision of a dedicated booklet later this year.

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS



COMPONENT 3 FACILITATION OF TRADE



The past quarter saw a considerable intensification of the Programme's activities leading to the harmonisation of institutional, technical and legislative practices related to the facilitation of legitimate trade flows across Central Asian borders.

Working towards facilitation of the development of customs single windows (SW) and introduction of e-administration, the Programme supported national authorities in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan with the analysis of the existing customs information systems, their integration with other national systems and into SW as well as provided recommendations on the application of the EU best practices. Further, Kyrgyz customs administration officers have learned about different transit procedures and ways on their simplification, thus reducing excessive burdens on trade.

With the technical assistance of the Programme's experts, the sanitary and phyto-sanitary authorities of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan analysed existing trade facilitation measures seeking to identify non-compliance with the provisions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The developed recommendations will serve as guidelines for trade promotion measures.

Aiming at the facilitation of achieving standards set by the WCO and WTO, Kyrgyz custom administration managers and experts enhanced their understanding of innovative principles and methods of risk management and green channels. They have also received a set of recommendations for the improvement of customs risk management systems. The trainers within the Uzbek border management and customs authorities have also further enhanced their capacities when it comes to the vehicles search.

To assist in the further development and improvement of Central Asian educational and training capacity in the area of customs, BOMCA held short term traineeships to Latvia for trainers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in specific fields of customs. Supporting the exchange of the expertise, Central Asian representatives have also delivered guest lectures for Riga Technical University staff and students. In Tajikistan, the management of the Customs Committee Institute of Advanced Training raised their awareness of implementation and development of distance learning concept and technical applications. Sharing best EU practices and aiming at improving competence-based education and professional development of veterinary and phytosanitary personnel in all Central Asian countries, the Programme developed a set of recommendations and put forward a plan for joint EU-CA initiatives.

Drawing on the benefits of inter-agency capacity and mutual cooperation, the Component is strictly devoted to the aspirations for introduction and operation of Customs and Business Advisory Councils in each Central Asian state. Thus, Kyrgyz and Tajik authorities have participated in the consultative meetings that helped to analyse the existing cooperation and to work out the most efficient forms and procedures for future co-operation aiming at facilitation of international trade.



COMPONENT 4 IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

In the past quarter, the main efforts of Component 4 were focused on the endorsement of the developed Action Plans for all five Central Asian countries and the successful launch of the thematic activities.

Thus, addressing priorities shared by the Central Asian partners, the Programme sought to support State Border Service of Kazakhstan in enhancing communication between the service and the general population using digital means.

The Kyrgyz state authorities will be assisted with their efforts aimed at raising awareness on legal and labour migration in border regions. Thus, the training on effective communication, organised in early June in Osh and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, improved skills of the national and local authorities in reaching out to the local population and enhanced cooperation among the agencies.

Referring to the fact that gender equality is high on the agenda of Tajikistan, the Programme will work on actions empowering female leaders in cross-border context. Similarly, Uzbek authorities will receive support in the implementation of gender-related initiatives in the border regions.

Their capacities will also be strengthened in the area of migration research and analysis. The mission to Uzbekistan, that took place during the last week of May helped to identify further areas for cooperation.

Working directly with the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan, Component 4 will share its expertise to raise awareness about the national customs procedures amongst the population in the border regions using modern technologies.

Acknowledging an important role played by NGOs in the cross-border cooperation, this Component pays particular attention to the engagement of civil society organisations and, thus, launched the First Call for Proposals in April 2022. The implemented actions will contribute to improvement of living conditions in border areas. The application process has been supported by several information meetings, in order to address all open questions from the interested organisations. This process ended in late June, initiating the selection process.





BOMCA'S BENEFICIARIES CASCADE RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE IN THE AREA OF DOCUMENT SECURITY IN KYRGYZSTAN



From 6 to 8 June 2022, BOMCA and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held a joint capacity building training session in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, on the risks of profiling and identification of forged documents for officers conducting border checks, to improve their practical skills in authentication of counterfeit travel documents and identifying potentially dangerous persons using operational diagnostics. As document security remains high on the agenda for the national counterparts in Kyrgyzstan, participants have been introduced to the concepts of document protection, types and methods used for forging and falsifying documents, as well as trends in security features etc.

Remarkably, the training was facilitated by Nurlan Jusupbekov, a Kyrgyz national expert, who was previously trained through the BOMCA basic Training of Trainers (ToT) on document security, held in Bishkek earlier this year. Thanks to the practical approach and theoretical foundations of the BOMCA ToT, based on the agenda, developed in accordance with the EU standards and the FRONTEX best practice curricula, participants were equipped with necessary skills to transfer the knowledge further. In particular, Mr. Jusupbekov, one of 16 certified trainers in Kyrgyzstan, proved his competence in designing training agenda, cooperating with the other experts, presenting materials, as well as in providing insightful feedback and support to the colleagues in the field of document security.



THE K-9 CLASSROOM OF THE MILITARY INSTITUTE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC HAS BEEN FURNISHED WITH A NEW AND MODERN EQUIPMENT

The activities of the BOMCA Programme related to the improvement of detection capacities, foreseeing efforts at improving cooperation in the field of cynology. Through the applied methodologies and implemented activities, the Programme is enhancing the capacities of dog training centers under the national agencies dealing with border, customs and internal affairs.

The Military Institute of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic named after Lieutenant General K. Usenbekov is one of the oldest military educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan. Today, there are 9 departments, including the Faculty of Border Activities, which trains border guards. One of the important directions in the work of the department is cynology. To modernise training facilities and contribute to the higher quality of educational process in the area of service cynology, BOMCA has procured the equipment for the faculty classroom. Thus, for conducting theoretical and practical trainings, as well as for the convenience of students and lecturers, BOMCA provided desks, chairs and interactive whiteboard, a LED-projector, a computer, as well as educational and information stands and supplies for dogs' training and handling.

"Today we actively use the interactive board, and other technological devices in the K-9 classroom, which help us to demonstrate the specifics of service dogs' handling to cadets more effectively", - Kadyr Sopuev, Head of the training course for cadets of the Center for Advanced Studies of the Military Institute of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, Border Service of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic.

To date, the BOMCA Programme has invested considerably in enhancement of expertise, infrastructure and equipment resources for the K-9 training units of Kyrgyzstan's border agencies, in order to enhance capacities of the dog handling units. Acknowledging the high importance of the canine units in the detection of cross-border crimes, these efforts will soon be further reinforced with three-month training courses taking place in the dedicated canine training centers in Lithuania and Latvia, as well as through the relevant additional procurement. The activities pursued in the framework of the BOMCA Programme supports national authorities in the effective application of EU standards in the dog handling area, as well as in contributing to the increased capacities in safeguarding and controlling the state borders.





KAZAKH, KYRGYZ AND UZBEK ACADEMIC STAFF LEARNED FROM PEER-TO-PEER TRAINEESHIPS IN LATVIA

In April and May 2022, representatives of the academic training institutions in the area of customs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan visited Latvia for a short-term traineeship. Aiming at the enhancement of qualification and competencies, as well as the development and improvement of educational and training capacities of the training institutions, the participants visited the International Business and Customs Institute of Riga Technical University and the National Customs Board of the State Revenue Service of Latvia.

The participants were introduced to the training system in the framework of the “Customs and Tax Administration” programme of the Riga Technical University and learned about the system in place for improving the professional qualifications of employees of the State Revenue Service of Latvia. They also learned more on the experience of developing customs areas relevant to the specialisation of the participants. Remarkably, representatives of the Central Asian training institutions delivered public lectures for the staff and students of the International Business and Customs Institute of Riga Technical University, sharing Central Asian perspective on best practices. Working closely with the experts from Latvia, participants drafted recommendations for the further development of the professional skills of customs officers. To maximize the outcomes of the activity, they have also agreed to strengthen cooperation with the academic staff of Riga Technical University when it comes to research and development in the relevant customs areas.

“The visits helped participants better understand how the training systems are organised and what of the European training practices can be applied in their institutions”, - Ingrida Gulbe-Otanke, Leader of the Component 3. Facilitation of trade.

With the aim of enhancing the training capacities of all Central Asian training institutions, such traineeships, in a form of tailored peer-to-peer exchanges, will be soon organised for Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.



BOMCA AND GIZ WORK TOGETHER TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT TRADE FACILITATION IN CENTRAL ASIA



Strongly devoted to strengthening of training capacities and enhancement of skills of staff in the Central Asian customs agencies, BOMCA initiated partnership with the project ‘Trade Facilitation Central Asia’ implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Ltd within its 3rd Component. Through signing a Memorandum of Understanding in April 2022, both projects committed to provide further support to the regional economic integration processes by implementing joint trade facilitation efforts in Central Asia.

As a result of the fruitful partnership, seven videos focusing on such topics as intra-agency and inter-agency cooperation in import, export and transit procedures, trade facilitation in the field of inbound and outbound traffic as well as risk management and related areas have been produced. These video materials provide beneficiary countries with an opportunity to get an insight into the customs work of the European Union customs administrations and are a stimulus to advance the work of control services in Border Posts of the Central Asian countries. The videos will further be used to enrich training process by replacing study visits abroad, where it is applicable, as well as to support distance learning activities in situations when there is no internet connection.



At the end of June, the first screening of the videos took place during a Virtual Study Tour in the framework of the Regional Meeting of the National Trade Facilitation Committees of the Central Asian countries in Almaty (Kazakhstan). The participants of the meeting have favourably received the videos expressing strong interest in the topics themselves as well as in the very method of conducting the study tour.

Therefore, both projects greatly contributed to facilitating quick and effective border controls, based on modern risk management techniques in order not to disrupt trade flows in a fast-moving economy through creating a sustainable tool to share EU good practices and strengthening professional skills of the Central Asian Customs staff.

THEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FOCUS IN THE NEXT QUARTER (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022)



Regional workshops



Thematic meetings



Distance learning



National workshops



Exchange of trainers



Other targeted capacity building activities



Training of trainers



Technical assistance



COMPONENT 1

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES

- Training of trainers on identification and profiling techniques
- Exchange of trainers of Central Asian border agencies
- Facilitation of rapid and effective return of irregular migrants
- Facilitation of the distance learning
- Support in the development of risk analysis systems
- Support in delegating functions between Border Guards and Customs agencies



COMPONENT 2

IMPROVEMENT OF DETECTION CAPACITIES

- Facilitation of cooperation within investigation units, prosecutor's offices
- Contributing to the improvement of forensic methods
- Training of Trainers in the field of cynology
- Enhancing cooperation with Interpol
- Enhancing awareness on investigation of cross-border crimes



COMPONENT 3

FACILITATION OF TRADE

- Inter-agency cooperation between Customs and Phytosanitary and veterinary services
- Analysis of the current customs legislation in transit area
- Recognition of anomalies in X-ray images for freight transport on land borders
- Trade promotion in the frame of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+)
- Improvement of customs processes and e-services related to electronic submission and development of Single Windows



COMPONENT 4

IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

- Research and analysis in the area of migration, cross-border and related areas
- Awareness raising on irregular migration, as well as on issues of concern for population affected by migration
- Assistance to vulnerable groups of population affected by migration and border proximity (in particular to children and women left behind by migrants)
- Support to entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship initiatives, of all groups of population and among women, as a special category

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