



OSCEval News is the evaluation newsletter of the Office of Internal Oversight.

Its aim is to provide insights into the OSCE's work in evaluation, by sharing key evaluation findings and conclusions, as well as new developments regarding the OSCE's overall evaluation culture.

Evaluation is a management tool that contributes to decision-making, strategic planning, and organizational learning.



of OIO and emerging findings

This edition of OSCEval News is dedicated to the  
**Independent Evaluation**

**of the OSCE Trans-National Threats Department's  
Rule of Law and Counter-Terrorism Thematic Portfolio on  
'Strengthening Rule of Law Compliant Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism'**

This evaluation was conducted by an external expert consultant in collaboration with the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) in 2021.

### Introduction

Based on the international legal framework for combatting terrorism globally (including the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy) and the 2012 OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism (PC.DEC/1063), the OSCE provides assistance to its 57 participating States (pS) and 11 Partners for Co-operation (PfC) in implementing their anti-terrorism commitments. In line with its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE promotes dialogue, raises awareness, and builds capacities of governments and civil society actors (incl. women and youth as agents of change) to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

### The OSCE Trans-National Threats Department's Rule of Law and Counter-Terrorism Thematic Portfolio

In this framework, the Rule of Law and Counter-Terrorism portfolio of the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department/ Action against Terrorism Unit (TNTD/ATU) co-operated with OSCE Field Operations (FOs) in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia to deliver a series of twelve national seminars on

'Strengthening Rule of Law Compliant Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism', between 2014 and 2020. These events targeted criminal justice practitioners, security and law enforcement officials, and representatives from central authorities. Each seminar focused on good practices contained in the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum/ Rabat Memorandum (GCTF/RM) that had been identified as most pertinent by the respective OSCE pS/ host authorities for its work in preventing and countering terrorism.



### Evaluation Scope, Purpose and Methodology

This evaluation assessed the relevance and overall achievements of the aforementioned national seminars, and identified lessons learned that may assist TNTD/ATU as it seeks to build its future engagement with OSCE FOs in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The analysis covered the period 2014 - 2020, with a specific focus on 2017 - 2020, and included assistance provided by the OSCE FOs in Albania, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The evaluation team applied a mixed-methods design, rigorous data triangulation and a participatory approach to each phase of the evaluation process.

### Key Evaluation Findings and Conclusions

Data collected for this evaluation shows that **national seminars were relevant for the needs of the beneficiaries**, as they helped raise awareness of international good practices and human rights standards contained in the GCTF/RM. Such standards are essential in the prevention, disruption and prosecution of terrorism in any legal system.

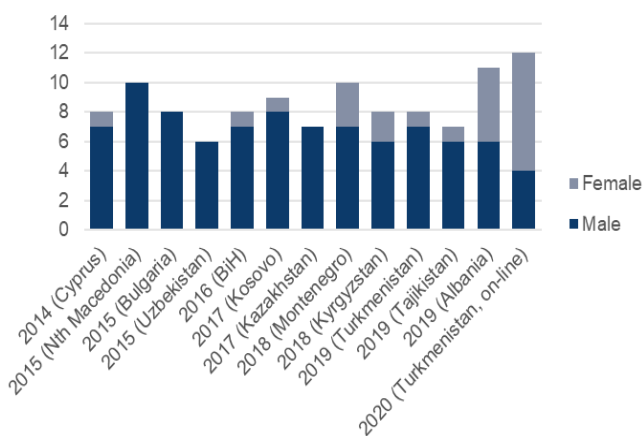
Overall, the intervention has **met its intended immediate outcome of raising awareness**, but no sufficient evidence is available to prove whether it has also contributed to a shift in approach to counter-terrorism by the concerned OSCE pS/ host authorities.

Evidence shows that **TNTD/ATU has been efficient in managing the project**, thus using financial and human resources to good effect (including in-house capacities and knowledge). It has also **built excellent working relationships with partner organizations**, including relevant United Nations agencies, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and regional organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Centre (CIS ATC). Internally, this evaluation identified the need to **strengthen coherence both within TNTD and between TNTD and FOs**, with a view to building upon already existing programming in the Rule of Law and Counter-Terrorism thematic area and, thus, increasing local ownership and the likelihood of achieving sustainable outcomes.

National seminars have certainly been effective as ‘gateway’ events, thus setting the foundation for the need to address terrorism through Rule of Law principles and in compliance with human rights standards. However, a more durable and systemic shift in approach is unlikely to be achieved without continued engagement with stakeholders (including through follow-on activities and detailed handover strategies), which did not happen. Therefore, this evaluation identified **lack of sustainability planning** as the greatest shortcoming of the intervention. This represented a missed opportunity towards achieving broader and longer term benefits for the beneficiaries.

While human rights were fully integrated into the project, evidence showed that **limited consideration was given to gender mainstreaming during project design**. The approach shifted in most recent years, leading to enhanced gender mainstreaming of contents and increased gender parity among experts/speakers, as well as greater engagement of TNTD/ATU’s Gender Focal Point in project delivery.

**Graph I: Gender representation at national seminars (for speakers/experts) between 2014 and 2020**



Project documents disclosed that **the intervention would have benefitted from strengthened M&E practices**. In fact, record keeping proved to be variable and an independent evaluation was initiated only at the end of the project, while internal reviews did not fully address recurring criticisms contained in participant feedback forms.

Overall, this evaluation concluded that the **Rule of Law is a fundamental principle** that underlies all the strategic areas identified in the 2012 OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism, and, consequently, it should be integrated in all of them. As a distinct portfolio, there is a concrete risk that it will continue to be of limited effectiveness.

## Recommendations

This evaluation identified several opportunities for improvement and offered a set of five (5) key recommendations to strengthen TNTD/ATU’s programming, from which the OSCE could also benefit at large.



The key recommendations are:

- ⇒ *To enhance sustainability of future interventions, plan for and discuss post-project follow-up activities and their organizational ‘ownership’ (e.g., a particular national authority, OSCE FO or partner organization) with relevant stakeholders during the project planning phase.*
- ⇒ *Improve record keeping by applying a consistent format and ensuring the collection of sufficient monitoring data (incl. sex-disaggregated data) to enable subsequent review and evaluation.*
- ⇒ *Ensure ongoing internal review of interventions, based on participant feedback and organiser insight, and amend activities in response. In addition, plan for decentralized evaluations at key milestone points, depending on the size and duration of a project.*
- ⇒ *Integrate gender equality perspectives in project design and delivery, including capitalizing on knowledge and resources available in-house. This could be achieved through greater involvement and engagement of the TNTD/ATU Gender Focal Point.*
- ⇒ *Re-assess the value added of having a distinct thematic portfolio on the ‘Rule of Law and Counter-Terrorism’, and consider whether topics such as GCTF/RM, as well as future events on FTFs and returnees, are or could be adequately contained in the TNTD/ATU’s other thematic portfolios.*

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**OSCE Secretariat**

Office of Internal Oversight  
Wallnerstrasse 6  
A-1010 Vienna, Austria  
E-mail: oio@osce.org