

LEARN BETTER, TOGETHER

INDEPENDENT META-SYNTHESIS UNDER THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was adopted by the UN General Assembly by consensus on 8 September 2006. This strategy is a global instrument, which seeks to enhance national, regional, and international efforts to counter terrorism. The General Assembly reviews the Strategy every two years, making it a living document attuned to Member States' counterterrorism priorities. In addition, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact was established to enhance coordination and coherence of the efforts of the UN system in line with the SG's report A/73/866 to better assess the results and encourage peer learning, this study was commissioned to aggregate and synthesize the results of evaluation and other oversight reports produced under the aegis of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It sought to better inform policy formulation and decision-making in the context of the 2030 Agenda, which requires information beyond individual projects and programmes, to inform decision-making at the highest political levels and contribute to accountability and learning.

MAIN FINDINGS

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy seeks to help achieve **three main specific objectives**. The first objective, which pertains to Pillar I, seeks to minimize the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Objective two seeks to strengthen the infrastructure and systems to prevent and combat terrorism (Pillars II & III). Objective three seeks to increase respect for human rights and rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism (Pillar IV). The synthesis found adequate qualitative evidence to suggest that the compact agencies were contributing to achieving most of the outcomes undergirding the achievement of these objectives.

Implementation: UNODC, UNOCT and UNICRI in the framework of the Sub-Group on Evaluation of the Inter-agency Working Group on Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

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Further information:
www.un.org/counterterrorism

Full report available as of 30th April:
www.unodc.org/evaluation
www.un.org/counterterrorism/
www.unicri.it

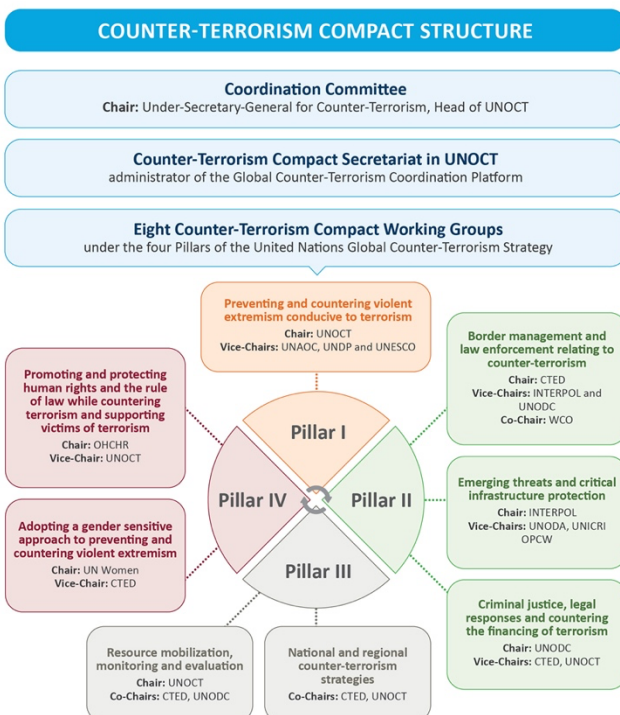


Figure 1. Counter-Terrorism Compact Structure

It was apparent that, to support the achievement of **objective one**, there was (1) an increased capacity for successful prevention and peaceful resolution of unresolved conflicts, (2) a reduction in incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts, (3) some reduction in marginalization and victimization, (4) an increase in national systems of assistance to support victims of terrorism and their families.

In advancement of the **second objective**, there was some evidence to suggest (1) an increased international cooperation among Member States towards prevention and reduction of terrorism, (2) an increased number of MS who joined and implemented United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the three protocols supplementing it, (3) an increased number of MS who take appropriate measures to protect asylum for legitimate reasons, while guarding against its abuse for terrorist activity, (4) some strengthening of regional and subregional organizations on counter-terrorism mechanisms, and (5) an increase in Member States implementing the comprehensive international standards on Money-Laundering, fair, transparent, and humanitarian international travel and transport practices that are also effective at curbing opportunities for terrorism.

In support of the **third objective** and other outcomes promoting human rights and the larger development agenda, there was limited evidence available in the data collected by the synthesis team. There was also not enough information to assess the degree to which these outcomes were being achieved.

Overall, the synthesis identified large gaps in availability of evidence that require more information to make a conclusive determination (e.g., inculcating a culture of peace, justice, rule of law and human rights in targeted countries, social rehabilitation and reintegration, or even on what constitutes as terrorism). Thus, the synthesis concluded the need for a full-fledged evaluation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as well as for building evaluation capacity on work related to preventing and countering extremist violence.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The study has identified a range of **lessons learned**, including the following:

Funding model: The project-based funding model emerged as one of the most significant challenges to adopting a strategic and programmatic approach to counter-terrorism.

Beneficiaries and participants as co-creators: Involving targeted beneficiaries (rights holders) throughout the process was identified as an important issue.

Field staff as co-developers: Field staff should ideally be empowered to drive the design and implementation processes based on their intimate knowledge of local culture and context.

Anticipate resistance to change: Despite good intentions to include women (as well as youth and other marginalized groups), projects often underestimate social resistance to their participation.

Environment and risk management: There is growing recognition of the role environment and climate change plays in disasters and radicalization.

In terms of **good practices**, selected examples include:

Multi-dimensional approaches that combined context-specific technical assistance, capacity-building, mentorship, community empowerment, unity forums, advocacy groups, attention to religious and cultural elements, and use of multimedia messaging incorporating theatre and radio were found to be most effective at achieving their intended goals.

Partnerships: The successful examples that stood out invariably involved leveraging partnerships to achieve either a larger or a wider impact or both. Partnering with civil society organizations, academia, private sector, and others was found to accelerate achievement of intended results.

Evidence-based programming: The best designed programmes start with robust research, pay upfront attention to implementation plans including on continuous data collection for monitoring, pursue a long-term strategy, and adjust as needed to stay on track.

METHODOLOGY

The study followed a mixed-method, inclusive and participatory approach with triangulation to arrive at as credible, reliable, and unbiased findings as possible. It was carried out under the aegis of the RMME WG and its Sub-Group on Evaluation consisting of UNODC, UNOCT and UNICRI representatives. The findings were analyzed using a Theory of Change developed and validated in the inception phase. This process was complemented with a survey and interviews of the key informants, to the extent feasible. The methodological approach, draft and final report were peer reviewed and independently assessed by two external reviewers to assess the validity and utility of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Full-fledged evaluation: It is recommended that the Sub-Group on Evaluation, in coordination and cooperation with all Compact entities, should raise resources and conduct a full-fledged, independent evaluation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Knowledge platform: It is recommended to identify, leverage, or build on already available systems (e.g., UNOCT's "Connect & Learn" platform) for sharing knowledge for disseminating relevant evaluation and oversight results to the Global CT Compact entities.

Evaluation capacity and common M&E Framework: It is recommended to **(a)** strengthen evaluation knowledge and capacities of internal and external stakeholders as well as **(b)** develop a common M&E framework for the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy for identifying and measuring results and impact of the work conducted by Compact entities.

Policy dialogue: It is recommended to contribute to equipping the international community and donor States with the knowledge base necessary for engaging in sustained and open policy dialogue on what constitutes terrorism and counter-terrorism and how best to reconcile counter-terrorism and humanitarian actions.

Grounded research: It is recommended that Compact entities should build on existing research and partner with research sectors of the UN and beyond to study what works and what does not to stimulate critical thinking and produce new understandings and approaches on contemporary violence, asymmetrical conflicts, and peacebuilding.

Human rights: It is recommended to identify concrete measures for strengthening technical assistance to Member States, increase resources and capacity of Compact entities for effective mainstreaming of human rights and fully consider the support provided by Compact entities in the full-fledged evaluation to strengthen human rights.