



The programme is funded by the European Union



BOMCA
BORDER MANAGEMENT
PROGRAMME IN CENTRAL ASIA

БОМКА
ПРОГРАММА СОДЕЙСТВИЯ
УПРАВЛЕНИЮ ГРАНИЦАМИ В
ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ



State Border Guard
Republic of Latvia

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5

January - March 2023



MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
HUNGARY



Food and Veterinary Service
Republic of Latvia



State Border Guard Service
Republic of Lithuania



International Centre for
Migration Policy Development



State Revenue Service
Republic of Latvia



RIGA TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY



Border Guard
Republic of Poland



Central Directorate for
Immigration and Border Police
Italian Republic

BOMCA 10 IN FOCUS

Dear BOMCA Newsletter readers,

I am happy to welcome you on behalf of the European Union and introduce the next release of the newsletter of the EU funded Programme - the Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA 10). This issue will inform you about Programme's progress across Central Asia at the first quarter of 2023.

First of all, it is worth to note that the European Union supports Turkmenistan's initiatives aiming at improving the business environment, regulatory framework and investment possibilities. Increasing security and stability in the region by fostering sustainable economic development through integrated border management are also important aspects in implementation of the above-mentioned initiatives.

Secondly, as BOMCA 10 Programme receives strong support and interest from Turkmen national partners in the joint implementation of planned activities, we can see the effective feedback and results from the national beneficiaries. For example, our state partners in Turkmenistan: the State Frontier Service, the State Migration Service, the State Customs Service, present their readiness to support the implementation of programme activities and seek the support of BOMCA in enhancing their capacities.

Thirdly, Turkmenistan has a favorable geographical location in the region for the transit of people, services and goods. Considering this fact, the Government of Turkmenistan actively supports initiatives and projects related to the development of transit corridors. BOMCA Programme with its regional approach and various components also supports the efforts linked with the development of transit corridors.

2023 is the year of the 20th anniversary of BOMCA. In the past two decades, BOMCA as the largest flagship EU-funded Programme in Central Asia has been on the forefront of bringing innovative ideas and best practices of EU MSs in the field of border management into the region. I believe that this cooperation will continue to be instrumental in ensuring security and stability in the region. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express gratitude to the national partners in Central Asia for their continuous commitment to BOMCA objectives and joined work towards its implementation.



H.E. Diego Ruiz Alonso,
Head of the EU Delegation to
Turkmenistan



Ms. Ekaterina Belukova,
Component 4 Leader
("Improvement of Cross-Border Cooperation")

We are also pleased to have reached a major milestone in the work with the NGOs. The completion of the 1st call for proposals for NGOs working in the Central Asian border regions was marked with the selection of the projects to be implemented in the next 6 to 12 months that would bring benefit to the border communities. As the projects are about to start, we will bring you an update on the first progress in the next issue of the Newsletter.

I hope you will enjoy reading the 5th issue of the Newsletter and learning more about our progress in each of the four thematic areas achieved thanks to the team efforts and commitment of the national counterparts.

ABOUT BOMCA 10

Since its launch in 2003, the various phases of the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) funded by the European Union with the contribution of Latvia and Lithuania have focused on capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors and the facilitation of trade, improving border management systems and eliminating drug 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)

Dear friends of the BOMCA 10 Programme,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the next issue of our Newsletter that contains the highlights of the implementation progress under each of the four thematic Components.

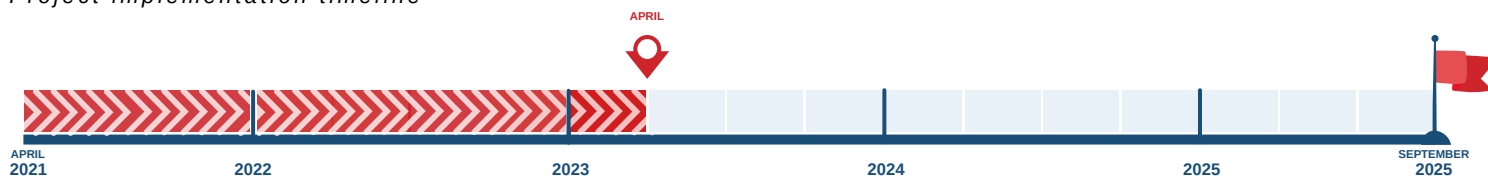
The Component 4, led by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, is dedicated to improved cross-border cooperation with the aim of creating better living conditions for border communities in Central Asia. This quarter we focused on the implementation of the activities and initiatives set in the national Action Plans tailor-made for each country annually.

While in Kyrgyzstan the development process for the Study on circular migration trends in the Fergana Valley started, in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the conducted activities were dedicated to the topic of gender policies and the role of women in development of border regions. We have been further supporting Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in their efforts to develop technological tools to provide up-to-date information to residents of the border areas and travellers.

We have also continued working on the topic of communication in the border regions. The recent joint cross-border activity between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, being an interactive communications workshop for the local border areas authorities of the two countries included the successful application of the already piloted training methodology. More joint cross-border activities will be organised later this year.

BOMCA 10 PROGRESS IN A NUTSHELL

Project implementation timeline



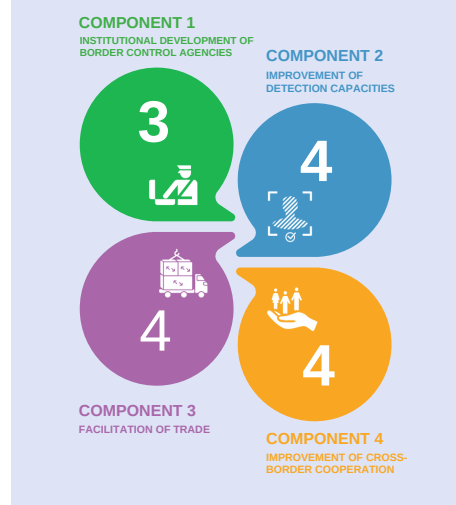
From January 1 till March 31, the Programme implemented 15 activities in the Central Asian region. These include regional, national activities and study visit to EU-member state country in the framework of implementation of different goals within all four BOMCA 10 components.

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

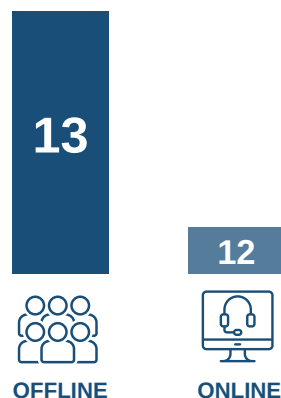
Project implementation in the period of January - March 2023



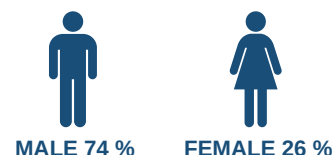
IMPLEMENTED THEMATIC ACTIVITIES



FORMAT OF THE IMPLEMENTED EVENTS



GENDER



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES ACROSS CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

	101		30
	48		102
	75	TOTAL:	323

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

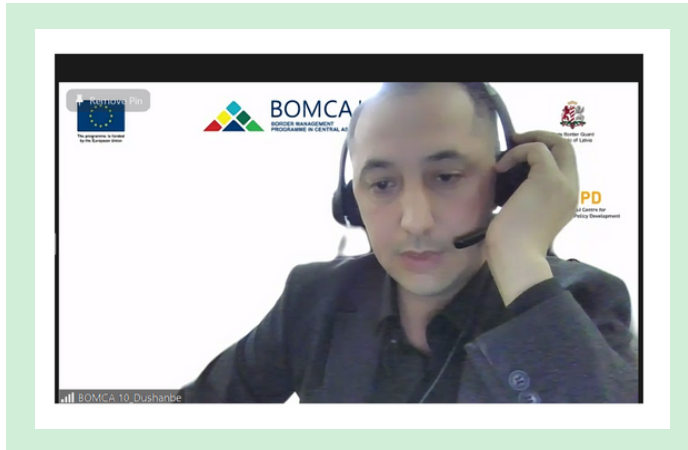


COMPONENT 1 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES

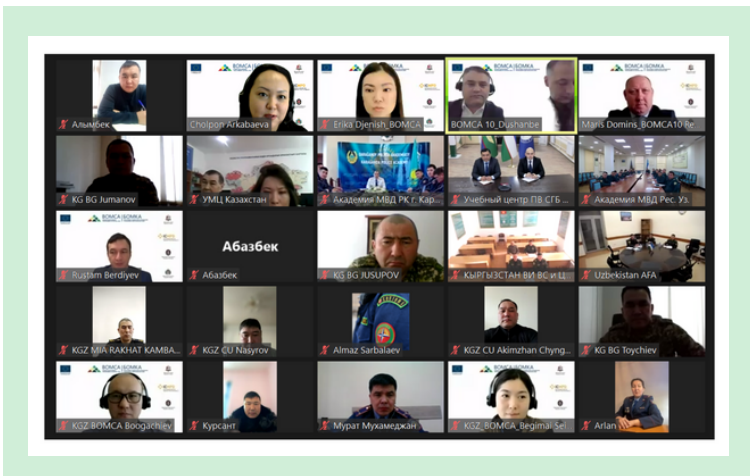
In the past quarter BOMCA in the framework of Component 1 continued a series of activities dedicated to the development of regional cooperation and sharing regional expertise and best approaches. Two online training sessions agreed earlier by the Consortium of the training institutions as a part of the regional cooperation were held in the beginning of 2023.

The first online training was led by the Tajik Border Troops training expert who shared national experience on tackling irregular migration from Afghanistan with particular focus on modus operandi, methods and experiences in addressing such developments. A special emphasis was made on the extensive cooperation among the law enforcement agencies.

The second online activity provided a platform for the Uzbek Border Troops to deliver the training in methodology and modern approaches of verification of document authenticity and detection of forged documents to the colleagues from the Central Asian region.



In March, BOMCA programme jointly with UNODC organised study visit to European Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX and Border Guard of the Republic of Poland. The main idea of the study visit was to familiarise the high ranking border guard officials of five Central Asian countries with EU approach in implementation of integrated border management (IBM), with the focus on comprehensive cooperation between agencies and institutions, get acquainted with the established risk analysis systems at EU and national levels, Crisis management including invented technical solutions for addressing attempts of large scale migrant flows across EU external borders has been described in details.



COMPONENT 2 IMPROVEMENT OF DETECTION CAPACITIES

In January – March 2023, Component 2 continued to support law enforcement agencies in evidence-based investigations, specifically dealing with the detection and investigation of cross-border crimes.

Throughout the last quarter, BOMCA experts completed a series of national workshops on cooperation with Interpol in all Central Asian countries. These training sessions raised awareness of Interpol by presenting participants with the principles of cooperation with Interpol, Interpol database, the different types of Interpol alerts, as well as the legislation that enables the use of the Interpol database in border control. In addition, participants were introduced to training opportunities available through the Interpol Virtual Academy – an advanced online platform for capacity building and training of law enforcement officers from all Interpol member countries. Following the national workshop, all CA countries received Recommendations on cooperation between Law Enforcement Agencies of CA counties and Interpol, the use of Interpol databases at border control, connection to the Interpol information system, and the creation of National information networks.



BOMCA experts continued to conduct workshops for crime intelligence officers and investigators of cross-border crimes such as human trafficking and smuggling to improve detection capacity in those cross-border crimes. These activities aim to increase participants' awareness of global, UN, and EU legal frameworks and modern joint investigation methods, as well as to familiarize them with the EU approach and new methods of investigating human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The BOMCA project's Component 2 foresees providing CA countries with a Handbook to train instructors in combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking after the national workshops for investigators.



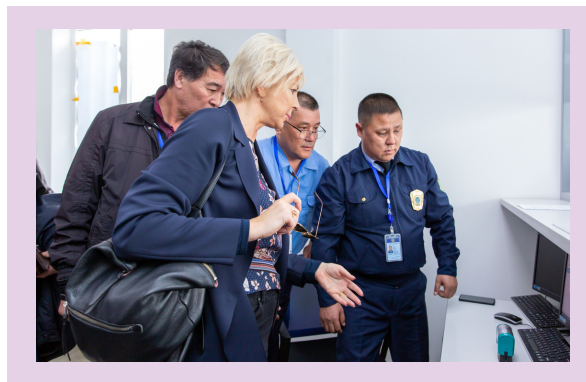
THEMATIC ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS



COMPONENT 3 FACILITATION OF TRADE

In the first quarter of 2023 the main efforts of Component 3 were focused on enhancing capacities and methods of customs control and control at border-crossing points (BCP).

Continuing the cycle of activities started in the previous year in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the national workshop on innovative principles and methods of risk management and green channels was held in Uzbekistan. National experts in the field of development and implementation of risk management strategies and measures of the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan were gathered to expand their knowledge and learn from the experience on customs risk management system in EU countries. Among others, such topics as gathering, structuration and assessment of the risk information, principles for profiling in yellow, red and blue channels, profiling for exclusion from the control were in the centre of the focus. EU experts from Latvia supported the Uzbek customs administration in improving their risk management system, through the application of innovative methods, tools and information systems. Based on the discussions and assessment of the existing system, areas for improvement were identified, and recommendations were developed to further modernise the risk management and green channel systems.



Also, the technical assistance mission of EU experts on inter-agency cooperation between Customs and Phytosanitary, Veterinary services involved in border control at border crossing points was organised in Kazakhstan.

During the mission the expert team met with representatives of the Committee for Veterinary Control and Supervision of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Committee of State Inspection in the Agro-Industrial complex of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and visited "Nur-Zholy" BCP to get acquainted with the practical cooperation among the agencies involved in the customs clearance of the veterinary and phytosanitary (SPS) consignments, as well as to hold the workshop on inter-agency cooperation at BCPs.

As a result of this technical assistance, the existing legislation which regulates cooperation among customs administration and SPS Institutions was analysed leading to the development of the expert recommendations for the improvement of cooperation and communication tools among these institutions. In the next quarter a mission of the same nature will be organized to Kyrgyzstan.



COMPONENT 4 IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION



In the first quarter of 2023, the Component 4 continued supporting Central Asian state and local authorities in building their capacities across several thematic sub-areas. Taking into account the importance of effective communication for local governance in the border areas, the Component held a 5 days training for the representatives of the Kyrgyz and Uzbek local authorities from the border regions to boost their communication and enhance the quality of information provided to the border communities. The training was held in Osh, Kyrgyzstan and Andijan, Uzbekistan, also featuring a visit to the border crossing point enabling participants to learn experiences and needs of population from each side of the border and brainstorm on joint communication strategies. Currently, the expert team is working on the booklet with practical guidance on effective communication in the cross-border context.

To bring attention to the significance of gender equality and to support Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in their efforts in advancing women rights, the Component held a series of activities focused on the increased support to women. Thus, in anticipation of the adoption of the new National Action Plan (NAP) for implementation of the UN 1325 Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, in cooperation with the UN Women Tajikistan, the BOMCA Programme conducted a training to take stock of the lessons learnt and achievements resulting from the implementation of the previous NAPs, as well as making an emphasis on the main benchmarks and indicators relevant for the implementation of the new NAP with the reference to the Tajik border areas. A set of tailored recommendations and applicable tools have been developed and shared with the state authorities. Further, BOMCA organised a Forum of Female Leaders bringing together female activists from border regions and representatives of the Committee on Women and Family under the Government of Tajikistan to boost their interpersonal skills and develop joint solutions to the challenges women commonly face in the border areas.



In advance of the International Women's Day, in cooperation with the General Prosecutor General's Office of Uzbekistan, BOMCA brought representatives of different state institutions at the Roundtable to raise awareness on the challenges encountered by women residing in the border areas of the country. The event served as a platform for dialogue and brainstorming on joint ideas and solutions to support this group of women taking into account best practices existing in the EU and in Eastern Partnership countries.

In parallel to the capacity building activities, the Component was also engaged with the initiation of processes for the development of technical means to increase efficiency of Kyrgyz and Turkmen state authorities in dealing with population in the cross-border context. Thus, the first quarter of 2023 marked the launch of the process to develop an informational website to attract investments from diaspora members residing abroad to their origin border regions in Kyrgyzstan. Also, a start of the development of the mobile application for the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan to facilitate cross-border economic interactions has been launched. Both technical solutions will be developed through the first half of 2023.

The first months of 2023 have marked the finalisation of the contracting stage of the Central Asian NGOs whose proposed actions have been selected for funding within the first Call for applications in the framework of BOMCA 10. Overall, 9 proposals supporting border communities from across Central Asia received the highest score in terms of thematic relevance, design of the action, consistency in the implementation approach, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.



FEATURED STORIES



GAINING FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE IN THE EU INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT

In March, in cooperation with UNODC, BOMCA 10 organised a study visit to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX (Warsaw, Poland) and the Polish Border Guard. 15 representatives from the senior management, risk analysis and IT units of the border control authorities from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan received an overview of the operations of the FRONTEX Situation Center and the Situation Centers of the Polish Border Guard at regional and local levels. The representatives of Central Asian border authorities had a chance to observe the implementation of the European integrated border management principles through witnessing application of "green" border surveillance for tackling the large-scale migration crisis on the border between Poland and Belarus.

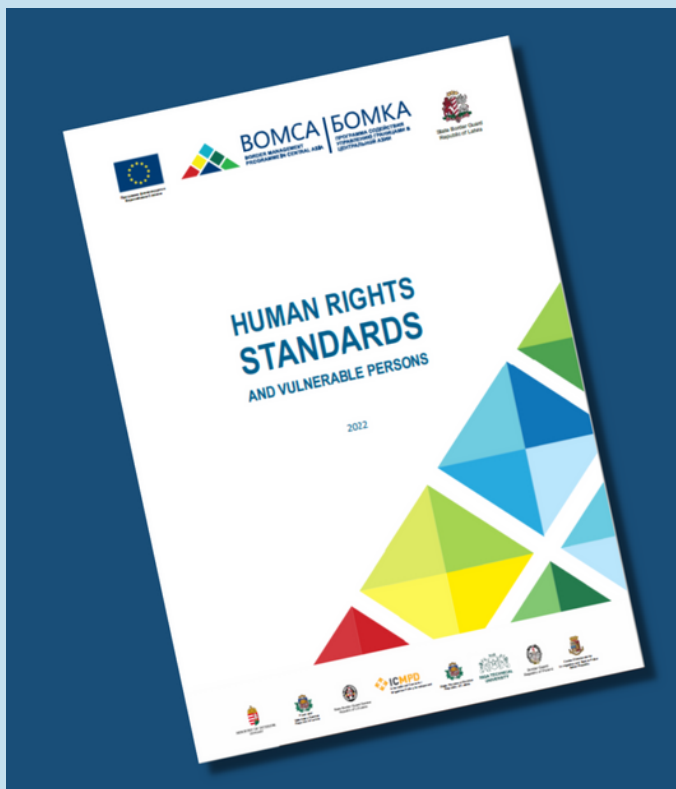


Furthermore, participants actively shared their practices and expertise in border security and implementation of main principles of integrated border management system. This helped to enhance their theoretical knowledge and improve practical skills in the establishment of risk analysis systems and carrying out vulnerability assessment as well as to learn about state-of-art technologies currently used in border control.

This activity also allowed to discuss potential cooperation of Central Asian border guard authorities with FRONTEX and Polish Border Guard in the future, which will be reflected in the recommendations for further strengthening of relations.



EU-FUNDED PROGRAMME RELEASED THE BOOKLET ON HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS



In the framework of Component 2 BOMCA Programme has released the booklet "Human rights standards and vulnerable persons" as part of the workshops on human rights, gender, eliminating sexual harassment and gender sensitivity held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in May 2022.

The implementation of the specific objective of BOMCA 10 Component 2: enhancing detection, coordination and investigation effectiveness - contributes to the achievement of the overall objective of enhancing security, stability and sustainable growth in the Central Asian region, as well as supporting cross-border cooperation and improving living conditions for people living in the border regions of Central Asia. This booklet is intended primarily for border guards and law enforcement officials in Central Asia, providing key information, important aspects and links to additional literature on human rights, gender sensitivity and countering gender-based violence in the context of law enforcement activities of government agencies. Also, this publication will be of interest to a wider audience as a source of well-structured and specific information on the protection of human rights.

The workshops were held in cooperation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and targeted border guards and law enforcement officers. The objective of the workshops was to familiarize participants with the topic of human rights, gender issues, indicators of sexual harassment and gender sensitivity, as well as with the linkages of these issues with the context of law enforcement and border agencies and the role of non-governmental organisations in providing assistance in cases of human rights violations and gender-based violence.

This booklet is available on BOMCA website in [Repository](#) section.



STRENGTHEN THE TRAINING CAPACITIES ON CAR AND TRUCK SEARCH OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

In February, BOMCA 10 held the training of trainers on car and truck search in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, following two training sessions completed last year in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This activity strengthened skills and competencies for the effective inspection of cars and trucks crossing border posts in order to identify illegally transported goods, weapons, drugs and other high-risk items.

The training targeted representatives of the customs agencies responsible for organising the training process and development of the methodology for inspecting vehicles and strengthened skills and competencies for effective inspection of cars and trucks crossing the border in border crossing points.

During the event, EU experts paid special attention to the methodology of effective controls to identify illegally transported goods, weapons, drugs and other high-risk items. The participants were trained on practical methods, which incorporated good practices of monitoring and identifying hiding places for smuggled goods and substances in vehicles. The participants also got acquainted with the latest technical solutions for effective vehicle search.

In addition, the target group was given practical skills and provided with training curricula to organize further training on the topic and thereby transfer the knowledge to their agencies.





INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN THE BORDER AREAS OF KYRGYZSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

Effective communication is key to the work of local authorities in the border regions. Provision of clear and transparent information to border communities can prevent misunderstandings leading to undesired tensions and thus, is a prerequisite for stability and dynamic development of the border areas. Therefore, the BOMCA Programme and its Component 4 has been making a special emphasis on supporting the development of communication skills of the local authorities working in the border regions.

The interactive workshop on effective communication for the Kyrgyz and Uzbek local authorities took place from 30 January to 3 February 2023 in the Fergana Valley. First, the participants from the two countries met in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, where the first two days of the workshop took place. The third day was spent at a border crossing point between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, where the participants could see themselves how the population is crossing the border and what communication challenges might arise. For the last two days of the activity the participants travelled to Andijan, Uzbekistan, where the event was concluded.



The methodology for this activity has been previously piloted within a training on communications in Kyrgyzstan in summer last year. Based on the request of the beneficiaries the format of the event was enhanced and a cross-border activity was organised, allowing to train the delegations not only from one country, but from the two neighboring countries at the same time.

The circular migration between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan is intense with 16,000 people crossing the border daily at peak times. There are a lot of mixed families living from the both sides of the border and thus, many challenges that the border areas population is facing are mutual for the two countries. Therefore, the workshop provided for a valuable opportunity for the local authorities from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to meet, exchange information and most importantly, jointly develop cooperation ideas.

The unique feature of the workshop is its practical focus: the participants train their communication skills on real life examples from their daily duties. Within the workshop they develop tools that can be further used in their work, including press release drafts, communication strategies and visualizations for social media. Currently the expert team is developing a practical booklet that would provide tools for day to day communication for local authorities and would further support the transfer of knowledge.



THEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FOCUS IN THE NEXT QUARTER (APRIL - JUNE 2023)



Regional workshops



Thematic meetings



Distance learning



Procurement of technical equipment



National workshops



Exchange of trainers



Capacity building activities



Implementation of Programme's grants by Central Asian NGOs



Training of trainers



Technical assistance



Study visit



COMPONENT 1

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES

- Study visits to the EU Member States
- Facilitation of distance learning
- Strengthening training capacity in the field of document security



COMPONENT 2

IMPROVEMENT OF DETECTION CAPACITIES

- Enhancing awareness on investigation of cross-border crimes
- Enhancing cooperation with INTERPOL



COMPONENT 3

FACILITATION OF TRADE

- Inter-agency cooperation between Customs and Phyto-sanitary and Veterinary services
- Facilitation of the application of innovative principles and methods of risk management and green management
- Development of training capacities in car and truck searches



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 populations 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, for all population groups and among women, as a special category

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