Report on

Border Liaison Office – Computer Based Training (BLO-CBT) Conference

New Beach Hotel
Sihanoukville, Cambodia

27-30 July 2009

UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific
in Cooperation with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam

"Consolidation and Enhancement of the Border Liaison Office
Mechanism (BLO) in East Asia"

Project: AD/RAS/I61

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On 27-30 July 2009, UNODC held a *Border Liaison Office – Computer Based Training (BLO-CBT) Conference* for the Project *"Consolidation and Enhancement of the Border Liaison Office Mechanism (BLO) in East Asia" (Project AD/RAS/I61)* in Sihanouk Ville, Cambodia.

The Conference was attended by 12 participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam, including the Project Coordinators for AD/RAS/I61 and a Senior Law Enforcement Advisor (CBT) from UNODC also participated and shared the perspective and suggestions on aspects of CBT.

The Computer Based Training (CBT) Programme was introduced to all Border Liaison Offices (BLO) established under the support of the project among the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) comprising of Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The knowledge of modern border control techniques and experience gained from the CBT training are applied and enforced effectively along and across the borders among the law enforcement officers.

BLO-CBT Conference is organized for substantive and comprehensive consultation to overcome various problems encountered as well as to brainstorm the future plan of actions in strengthening the sustainability of the service of the BLO-CBT in the region. The information and outcome gathered at this Conference will be used to outline a plan of action that caters specifically to the future needs and development of BLO-CBT system. Key issues in relation to BLOs and CBT involving aspects of relevancy, progress of each country, BLO assistance and sustainability are examined and discussed.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BLO	Border Liaison Office
CBT	Computer-Based Training
CCDAC	Office of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control
IT	Information Technology
LCDC	Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
MPF	Myanmar Police Force
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACD	National Authority for Combating Drugs
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ONCB	Office of the Narcotics Control Board
RC	Regional Centre
SODC	Standing Office on Drugs Control of Viet Nam
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1. Background

Early in 2002, under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific Project "Development of Cross Border Law Enforcement Cooperation in South East Asia" (AD/RAS/D91) introduced Computer Based Training (CBT) to all Border Liaison Offices (BLO) established under the support of the project among the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) comprising of Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The implementation of CBT in BLOs across identified high risk border areas of the MOU-GMS countries was the key technical inputs UNODC RC provided to build the capacity of these frontline law enforcement officers. The knowledge of modern border control techniques and experience gained from the CBT training are applied and enforced effectively along and across the borders among the law enforcement officers.

Since the BLO-CBT system has been installed, BLO-CBT Managers have been trained. Unfortunately the turnover rate among the BLO staff including the Training Mangers in some countries is rather high. It has affected the BLO-CBT services provided to the frontline staff at the borders. Besides, UNODC has also been reported by member countries that some CBT installed are not operational anymore due to various factors. In order to maintain the system, the BLO-CBT Conference is organized for substantive and comprehensive consultation to overcome various problems encountered as well as to brainstorm a future plan of actions in strengthening the sustainability of the service of the BLO-CBT in the region.

The information and outcome gathered at this Conference will be used to outline a plan of actions that caters specifically to the future needs and development of BLO-CBT system. Key issues in relation to BLOs and CBT involving aspects of relevancy, progress of each country, BLO assistance and sustainability are examined and discussed.

2. Objectives of the Conference

The key objectives of the Conference were:

- To share and exchange experiences of BLO-CBT among member countries
- To observe common BLO-CBT operational problems/difficulties and recommended solutions
- To discuss limitations of CBT Programme
- To get recommendations from UNODC
- To enhance and strengthen good border cooperation
- To brainstorm the opportunity to update BLO-CBT training modules in responding to the expanded BLO mandates

3. Participants

The Conference was attended by participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam, including the Project Coordinators for AD/RAS/I61. Additionally, a Senior Law Enforcement Advisor (CBT) from UNODC also participated and shared

the perspective and suggestions on aspects of CBT. Altogether, 16 participants (A list of Participants attached as Appendix B) had the opportunity to fully attend and discuss on roles of BLO-CBT, the sustainability and the future of BLO-CBT.

4. Solutions from the Conference

Participants from member countries have brainstormed and outlined the following solutions:

BLO-CBT matters:

- Member countries need new and updated CBT training modules in responding to other transnational crimes i.e. smuggling of migrant, human trafficking and environment crime.
- Computer hardware needs to be renovated and/or new replacement.
- BLO staff needs to be trained to be IT specialist in order to trouble shoot and solve minor day-to-day operations
- For the sake of effectiveness in implementation of project activities and utilization of limited resources, participants strongly recommended that there should be closer and better synergy of BLO and CBT projects.
- National government in each country needs to formulate a long term work plan for taking responsibility in providing support technically and financially to BLO-CBT in order to be able to provide service to frontline law enforcement officers among member countries.

Other matters:

- Discussion on a potential to establish two BLOs between Cambodia - Lao PDR and two BLOs between Cambodia – Viet Nam
- Cambodian authorities including Pol. Gen Moek Dara, Secretary General of NACD discussed and strongly expressed to UNODC of their interest in establishing a BLO at Sihanouk Ville international seaport.
- Participants supported the idea of expanding BLO's mandates to cover other Transnational Organized Crimes (TOC) specifically in Anti-Human Trafficking between Cambodia and Viet Nam, Cambodia – Lao PDR and Cambodia - Thailand
- Recommended UNODC to organize at least once a year for all BLOs to meet and share lessons learned from each other

5. Outcomes of the Conference

a) Country Progress Reports (For full details, see Appendix C)

Cambodia:

Since 2002, currently there are totally **9 BLOs** established in Cambodia under the support of UNODC Project D91 and I61. Evaluation and monitoring are conducted at each BLO-CBT after 3 years of its establishment.

BLO-CBT activity achievement:
- Appropriate modules at each BLO have been chosen to suit the nature of work.
- CBT Managers are educated to be able to select appropriate training modules for each BLO to prioritize daily work eg. Airport/seaport
- Each student has studied 30 or 48 hrs to complete the course.
- 951 trainees have been trained through selected BLO-CBT modules where appropriate for their roles and responsibilities at their BLOs.
- From the suppression result, seizures under the BLO involvement are made more than non-BLO.

Problems encountered:
- In many BLOs established earlier since 2002, there are improper conditions for computer hardware. Many of these computers are in need of maintenance. In some cases they need replacement.

Efforts to solve problem:
- In 2007, Chiefs of BLO in 9 provinces are invited to meet and discuss problems. The CBT results from each BLO are brought to Phnom Penh for IT inspection and repaired.

Type of assistance sought:
- Upgrade of new equipments due to large number of training hours already completed.

Recommendations:

- There should be an annual examination and surveys and report on BLO-CBT conditions in every BLO.
- Types of module used should be installed separately on each computer eg. Modules on human trafficking and drugs on separate computers.
- The CBT modules should be updated and/or developed in response to the expanded mandates of BLO i.e. Wildlife illicit trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling and new drug/trends smuggling in the region..

Group Discussion:
- Illegal extraction of Safrol-Rich Oil has affected the wildlife. Inspection of containers at Sihanoukville found 3 tons of cannabis, destructions have taken place.
- The proposal on setting up BLOs between Preah Vihear (Cambodia) and Ratanakiri (Lao PDR) to counter illicit trafficking of wildlife and other related environmental related crimes in this border economic free zone was proposed in the meeting.

Lao PDR:

BLO-CBT activity achievement:
- 30 students have been trained to use BLO-CBT

Problems encountered:

- No long-term BLO officers in charge, most officers stay 3-6 months.
- CBT computers are broken at Luang Namtha BLO, Bokeo BLO and Lak Xao BLO.
- BLO officers lack computer skills

Efforts to solve problem:
- Plans to conduct CBT trainings in provincial level for CBT trainers.
- CBT training is sometimes encouraged to be organized by separate agencies i.e. Customs Office, Local Police unit, Immigration Office, etc.

Type of assistance sought:
- More support from UNODC, other agencies including ONCB and other International Law Enforcement agencies on infrastructure and technical support for BLO-CBT.

Recommendations:
- Training of CBT-Trainers should be provided at least once a year.
- Installation drivers should be provided additionally.

Group Discussion:
- LCDC should assign IT officer to identify the problem why computers broke down.
- LCDC should resolve internal issue on why BLO officers are moved frequently
- LCDC should discuss with Lao national counterparts to identify the right persons to use CBT or assign persons who has IT skill to be CBT Manager.
- LCDC should investigate if the CBT is applicable to the certain border area or needs to be moved into provincial.
- LCDC should arrange a provincial group training to encourage people to learn.
- LCDC needs to inform Viet Nam authority on the case that Muang Mai BLO has been moved from 500m to 1km from border area.
- LCDC requests establishment of BLOs between Ban Muang Sen, Muang Khong and Champasak with Cambodia (refers to the 8th Ministerial Meeting)
- Establishment of one or more BLOs between Lao PDR – Myanmar
- Proper software for new ASEAN highways and new economic corridors needs to be developed and installed in the BLOs where needed.
- LCDC is trying to approach provincial administration offices to get funds to support BLO-CBT activities under their jurisdiction areas.

Myanmar:

BLO-CBT activity achievement:
- 406 students have been trained to use BLO-CBT.

Problems encountered:
- Lack of IT expert at Tachileik BLO
- Only 4 training managers are in charge among 7 BLOs. Lack of human resources.
- BLO officers have been transferred frequently.

- No CBT computers at Chin Shw Haw BLO, Wangpon BLO and Kawthaung BLO because managers have moved the computers into their own offices.

Efforts to solve problem:
- CCDAC has planned to train new blood managers by conducting the BLO-CBT Manager courses along with developing short courses if possible.
- CCDAC has had a discussion with concerned BLOs on how to upgrade the old and/or broken computers for CBT.

Type of assistance sought:
- Discussion with UNODC on how to overcome the vacant replacement at Chin Shwe Haw BLO, Wangpon BLO and Kawthaung BLO.
- Collaboration between CCDAC and UNODC for training on BLO-CBT.
- Inspection of computers used for CBT.
- Upgrade existing computers to support CBT tasks.
- New modules of CBT need to be developed in order to respond to the needs of expanding BLO mandates.

Recommendations:
- Possibility of CBT training at MPF where a big training center at central institute is located.

Group Discussion:
- UNODC and CCDAC will arrange the inspection of computer in Yangon soon.

Viet Nam:

BLO-CBT activity achievement:
- 563 BLO-CBT students have been trained.

Problems encountered:
- Instability of electrical power
- Training officers are working part-time for the CBT only. Therefore, CBT training programme is not their first priority.
- Frequent transfer of BLO-CBT Training Managers.
- Limited computers for training
- CBT software caused errors due to interference from other softwares eg. MS office
- Computers at Mong Cai BLO are broken.

Efforts to solve problem:
- Trying to minimize the transfer of training officers
- Plans to conduct CBT trainings in provincial level for CBT trainers
- CBT Training is sometimes organized by each separate agency if the resource is inefficient eg. Custom Office, Immigration Office, Border Army etc.
- The inconsistency of power supply in some border areas affects the operation and conditions of the CBT computers.

Type of assistance sought:

- Computer upgrade and/or replacement.
- Provide additional software copies to as many BLO as possible

Recommendations:
- Provide original copy of drivers (software) so that the national IT expert can investigate and solve preliminary problems first.
- Provide computers with CBT software to police academy so that it can be integrated into academy curriculum.

Group Discussion:
- Thanh Thuy BLO is not yet in operation due to lack of support from both sides (Vietnam and China)
- Lao Bao BLO and Cau Treo BLO are also not yet in operation.
- Moc Bai BLO is the only BLO that is in operation.

b) Data Collection and Analysis (For full survey, see Appendix E)

In the Conference, some important statistics in relation to the achievement of BLO-CBT activity has been gathered and reported. The brief summary is as follow:

Cambodia has shown a significant output on number of students trained and CBT training hours accomplished. In Cambodia, the number of students completed the training is 951 and accumulated 36,798 hours of CBT training hours.

Lao PDR, the estimated number of students completed the course is 18. BLO Bokeo has the highest number of students trained.

Myanmar has also shown a great result in terms of number of students and training hours. There are in total 410 students trained to use CBT and a total training hour of 32,480 hours.

Finally, **Viet Nam** has trained 593 BLO Officers to use CBT with only total accumulated training hours of 996. It is doubted that the Training Managers may not record the number of students/training hours properly.

c) BLO-CBT Sustainability (For full details, see Appendix F)

The participants from 4 countries concluded and outlined factors for consideration in order to sustain the BLO-CBT activity in their own countries:

- *Equipment Readiness:*
  - Re-equip the CBT as some parts have already broken down while other parts are still working eg. Monitor/Screen at Kampong Som Port is broken.
  - Focal point should be to study where the best location for CBT training facility would be if UNODC agrees to support the necessary accessory equipments e.g. Air-conditioner and etc.

- *Human resource:*
  - Training manager position should not be vacant.
  - Local authority should avoid the frequent transfer of BLO staffs, specially the BLO-CBT Training Managers.
  - Efficiency evaluation and data collection & analysis should be conducted.
  - CBT short training course for new BLO officers should be conducted before assigning them to any BLOs.

- *Technical Knowledge:*
  - Training Managers should be able, with enough knowledge and capacity, in selecting the appropriate CBT training modules for their BLO locations and situations.
  - The Training Managers should also pay attention to the request made by BLO-CBT trainees of the special interest in specific training subjects and training modules.
  - CBT should be added into police academy's curriculum so lectures can be carried out to new police officers and all BLO officers.
  - Government and UNODC should cooperate to set up CBT training centers. This method will be profitable to regional police officers.
  - "Training of Trainers package" is essential.

- *Local and international support:*
  - Present outcome of funding to donors for their continuing support.
  - Each provincial BLO should be encouraged to seek minor funding support from local authority or NGO to help strengthening BLO.

- *Commitment:*
  - Continuing support from government and UNODC ensuring that CBT will be profitable to daily operation to fight against crimes.
  - Government and local authorities should find ways and means to secure their own funding to support the programme.
  - It is vitally necessary to arrange workshop for BLO local staffs and with neighboring BLOs in order to build networks and discuss technical knowledge or problems encountered.
  - Each BLO should be encouraged to initiate self-sustainability by producing reports showing achievement and problem encountered in providing BLO-CBT services to the frontline law enforcement staff at the respected border areas. UNODC and other funding agencies can use this information to consider seeking ways and means to continue the support and to strengthen the BLO-CBT activity.
  - Provide information to UNODC on how to enhance BLO.
  - The objectives of BLO need to be under the framework of national agenda or "umbrella projects".

Conclusively, every participant agreed that Computer Based Training is one of the most essential technical components responsible for the BLOs' successful operation. Every country needs to seriously think and prepare for operational plan in strengthening and/or promoting the CBT activity to be sustainable. It also can be internationally and/or regionally integrated and cooperated.

d) The Way Forward

- UNODC informed that BLO-CBT for migrant smuggling will be developed soon. Any member countries is interested in installing the training module at their BLO should indicate their interest to UNODC RC through CBT Project Coordinator and/or BLO Project Coordinator.

- It takes a number of weeks to complete programme's design, scripts writing and trials before requesting approval of modules. One module usually takes 6 months minimum. Overall, the approximate timeframe is one year to produce a CBT module. The module will then be translated into local languages for ease of use.

- CBT Training center will be implemented to give support, answers and act as help-desk to users.

- All member countries should raise awareness on the importance of CBT by organizing workshop twice a year for training managers to discuss problems and types of assistance sought.

- Delegation from Viet Nam also suggested that CBT should be provided and installed into police academy curriculum. Therefore, police academy can fully support on training facility to each department with suitable modules eg. Human trafficking, migrant smuggling or HIV/AIDS.

- Head of Myanmar delegation also agreed that if CBT is provided to police academy then government will surely consider supporting the programme.

- Cambodia has requested UNODC to advise alternative learning method such as self-learning modules which has easy installations and user-guidelines for BLO with frontline drugs and trafficking issues. Moreover, the request to expand BLO mandates is essential.

- The importance of BLO mandates: Drugs → migrants smuggling → environmental crimes → transnational organized crimes

- Participating countries should go back to consider how to get government support on BLO expanding mandate. Currently, UNODC is jointly working with UNEP, Freeland and Traffic to develop this idea.

6. Concluding remarks

At the end of the Conference, all participants agreed on the importance of Computer Based Training (CBT) to help improving the efficiency of BLO mechanism for cross border cooperation in the region. All participating countries have stressed that further support from UNODC is essential to continue improving BLO effectiveness and develop plan of actions and mandates for more evolving BLOs.