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REPORT

How Successful Are U.S. Efforts to Build Capacity in Developing Countries?

A Framework to Assess the Global Train and Equip "1206" Program

Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Beth Grill, Joe Hogler, Lianne Kennedy-Boudali, Christopher Paul

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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Summary

The U.S. government has long worked with allies and partners to build their capacities to counter threats through various means, including training, equipping, and exercising, as well as through relationship-building activities such as workshops and conferences, staff talks, and education. Yet, it is challenging to comprehensively assess exactly how these activities have contributed to U.S. objectives. Security cooperation activities are long-term and geographically dispersed, and there is currently no comprehensive framework for assessing these programs.

Assessing the impact of security cooperation efforts is inherently difficult but extremely important. In short, security cooperation assessments support informed decisionmaking at the policy, program manager, and execution levels, and they provide stakeholders at all levels of government with effective tools to determine which aspects of these investments are most productive and which areas require refinement.

Those who plan and execute security cooperation efforts intuitively know whether their individual programs have successfully gained ground with their respective partner nations. At the most basic level, officials assert that the U.S.–partner nation relationship is simply "better" than it was prior to executing the activity. These assertions are difficult to validate empirically, however.

At present, assessments of security cooperation programs, if they are done at all, are largely conducted by the same organizations that executed the activities. Thus, these assessments, no matter how carefully carried out, are subject to concerns about bias on the part of the assessors. Objective assessments, when available, provide valuable data on which meaningful discussions about program funding can be grounded.

This report provides a framework for thinking about, planning for, and implementing security cooperation assessments for the 1206 Program managed by Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD[P]). It argues that such assessments provide the necessary justification for continuing, expanding, altering, or cutting back on existing programs. Without insight into the successes and weaknesses of security cooperation programs, it is impossible to make informed decisions about how best to allocate the resources available for their use.

The Global Train and Equip "1206" Program

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 established the authority for the 1206 Program. Section 1206 of that legislation authorizes the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, to spend up to $350 million each year to train and equip foreign military and nonmilitary maritime forces to conduct counterterrorism opera-

tions and to enable the foreign partner to participate in or support military and stability operations in which U.S. armed forces are involved. This authority is set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2011, but Congress may renew Section 1206, as it has in the past.

The 1206 Program enables the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to conduct capacity-building activities focused on counterterrorism and stability operations with foreign military partners. By law, Section 1206 authority has two discrete uses:

- to build the capacity of a foreign country's national military forces to enable that country to conduct counterterrorism operations or participate in or support military and stability operations in which U.S. armed forces are involved
- to build the capacity of a foreign country's maritime security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations.

Study Approach

RAND was asked by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (OASD[SO/LIC&IC]) in OUSD(P) for assistance in identifying key stakeholders, their roles, and sources of data in support of a comprehensive assessment of the 1206 Program. RAND was also asked to develop the key elements of an implementation plan that would allow the repeated assessment of the program's outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

The RAND study team adopted a multistep approach to achieving these study objectives. We first focused on identifying current roles, data sources, and ongoing assessment processes through a series of discussions with key policymakers, legislators, and project implementers in the field. We then developed and deployed a survey designed to gather information on the roles, processes, and responsibilities of stakeholder organizations in the 1206 Program, as well as to elicit information regarding assessment guidance and skills. Next, we analyzed the survey results to determine which stakeholders were best suited for the collection of data in support of 1206 Program assessments and which stakeholders could potentially conduct such assessments. We then combined our findings from the survey analysis and the interviews and presented them to the sponsor. Based on the survey findings, we developed recommendations and key elements of an assessment implementation plan.

This report lays the groundwork for a comprehensive assessment of the 1206 Program rather than for various "snapshot-in-time" assessments of specific 1206 projects around the world. It takes a longer-term view, with the understanding that accurate assessments, especially those focused on outcomes and cost-effectiveness, require time and effort.

Assessment Framework

We based our analysis of the 1206 Program on five assessment levels:

- Level 1: need for the program
- Level 2: design and theory
- Level 3: process and implementation

- Level 4: outcome and impact
- Level 5: cost-effectiveness (relative to other, similar programs).[1]

We think of these five levels, integral to the assessment framework, as a hierarchy, depicted graphically in Figure S.1.

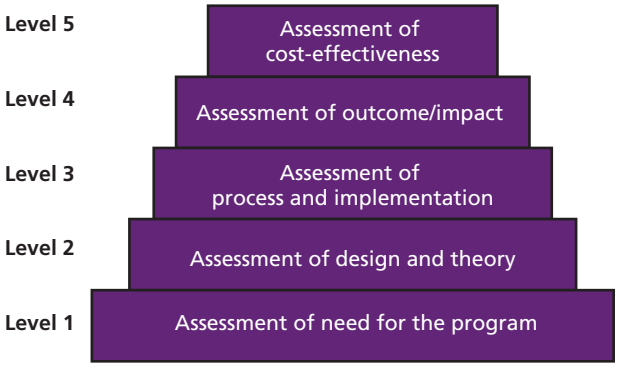
In this hierarchy, a positive assessment at a higher level relies on positive assessments at the lower levels. By "positive," we mean that the assessment reveals that associated objectives are being met. Accordingly, problems at a higher level of the hierarchy link to problems at lower levels of the hierarchy. For example, if a cost-effectiveness assessment reveals a problem, one can examine information from the lower levels of the hierarchy to fully understand the root cause of that problem.

Interviews and Survey Approach and Findings

Chapters Three and Four discuss the approach and findings from our research effort, which included 14 interviews with 1206 Program stakeholders in DoD and the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and staff from key congressional committees. Interview questions helped the team identify current roles in the 1206 Program, as well as data sources and existing assessment processes for the program.

We also conducted an online survey of stakeholder representatives to gain specific insights into current and potential assessment capabilities. Fifty-six of the 136 individuals asked to take the survey responded, which is approximately 40 percent. Survey questions were grouped

Figure S.1
Five Levels: The Assessment Hierarchy



SOURCE: Adapted from Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman, *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 7th ed., Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2004, Exhibit 3-C. Used with permission.

NOTE: For a detailed discussion of the assessment hierarchy, see Christopher Paul, Harry J. Thie, Elaine Reardon, Deanna Weber Prine, and Laurence Smallman, *Implementing and Evaluating an Innovative Approach to Simulation Training Acquisition,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-442-OSD, 2006.

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[1] The study did not include a cost-effectiveness assessment, which is a measure of relative benefit based on cost and requires comparison with similar programs. We did not have access to the required budgetary information to carry out such an analysis.

into four broad areas derived from the assessment hierarchy presented in Figure S.1: process implementation, process design and development, program recommendations, and program decisions. The team was able to connect each respondent's answers to possible assessment roles.

The interviews and survey results clearly indicate that the 1206 Program stakeholder community is in favor of instituting an assessment framework. Such a framework should include specific guidance on assessments, measureable objectives at the project level (in particular), and data collection and data reporting processes. It is clear from the results that much data are currently being collected, but they are not reaching policymakers in a systematic way. Interview participants also mentioned the need to improve coordination between DoD and DoS at all levels.

Key Findings, Recommendations, and the Assessment Implementation Plan

This report offers five key findings and nine recommendations, as well as some thoughts on an assessment implementation plan.

Findings

Our analysis of the survey data revealed the following key findings:

- There is a lack of formal guidance on the assessment process for the 1206 Program. Such guidance would help ensure that all 1206 stakeholders understand the importance of assessing the program in a comprehensive way.
- Measurable objectives that explicitly connect to broader U.S. government, theater, regional, and 1206 Program goals are currently lacking for the 1206 Program.
- Gaps seem to exist in the data collection and reporting requirements process. Data are not reaching stakeholders charged with conducting assessments.
- Assessment roles and responsibilities for 1206 Program stakeholders are currently unclear and unassigned.
- Coordination among key stakeholders, in both DoD and other agencies—namely, DoS and key congressional committees—could be improved.

Recommendations

Our analysis of the survey data resulted in the following recommendations:

- Develop an implementation plan for 1206 Program assessments.
- Develop and disseminate "life-cycle" guidance for project development, implementation, and assessment.
- Ensure that 1206 Program stakeholders understand their assessment roles.
- Establish a process for setting objectives at the project and activity levels.
- Systematically collect data on the achievement of objectives. Consider using focus groups to develop metrics.
- Identify data collectors based on their proximity to the action.
- Host an annual conference of 1206 Program stakeholders at the policymaking level.

- Consider developing an automated tool to facilitate the collection and reporting of assessment data.
- Consider hiring outside support or appointing career staff members to be "program representatives" for the 1206 Program at each of the respective combatant commands (COCOMs).

Assessment Implementation Plan

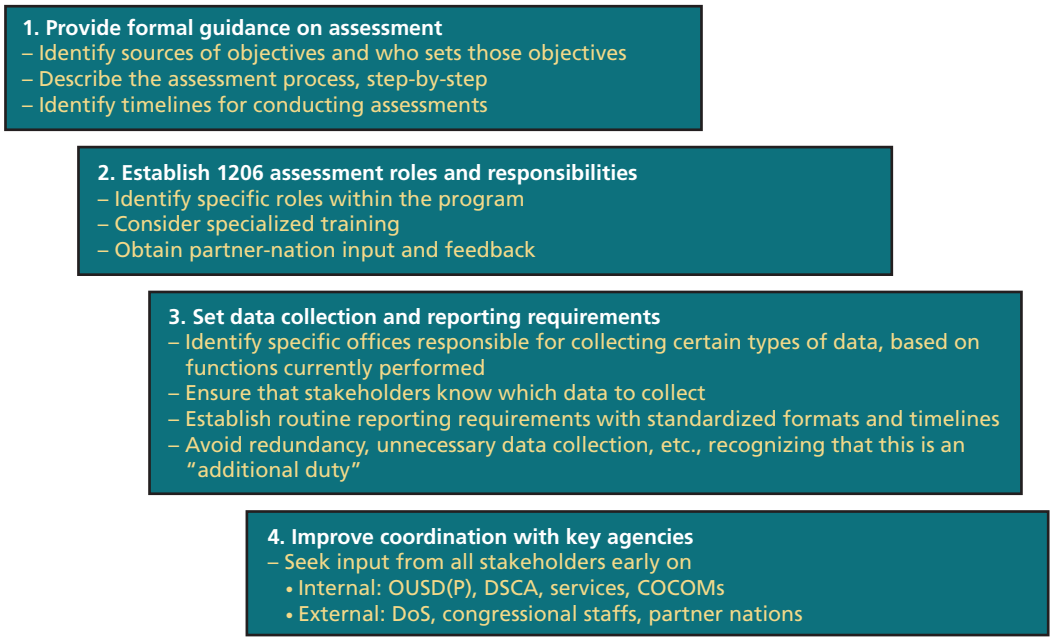
Our assessment implementation plan is divided into two tracks (near-term actions and longer-term actions), but several of the activities can be undertaken simultaneously as resources and timing allow. Track 1, near-term actions, detailed in Figure S.2, offers relatively low-cost steps that can be implemented in the short term.

In contrast, track 2 comprises some longer-term, potentially more costly and time-consuming steps, as shown in Figure S.3.

A proposed rollout plan is presented in Figure S.4. The rollout plan provides notional timelines for instituting track 1 and track 2 of the assessment implementation plan.

Phase 1 of the rollout focuses on internal changes within OUSD(P) that can be accomplished relatively quickly. Phase 2 involves other stakeholders in DoD and DoS and outreach to key congressional committees; it centers on a key meeting with senior representatives from stakeholder organizations. Phase 3 of the rollout involves the execution of the implementation plan.

Figure S.2
Track 1 of the Assessment Implementation Plan



NOTE: DSCA = Defense Security Cooperation Agency.
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Figure S.3
Track 2 of the Assessment Implementation Plan

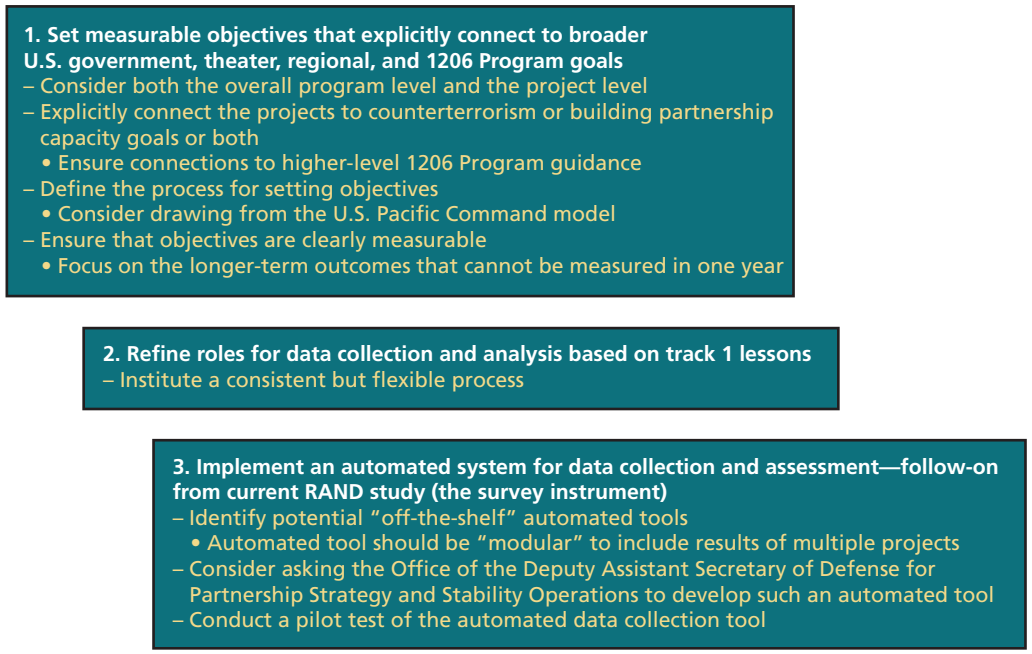

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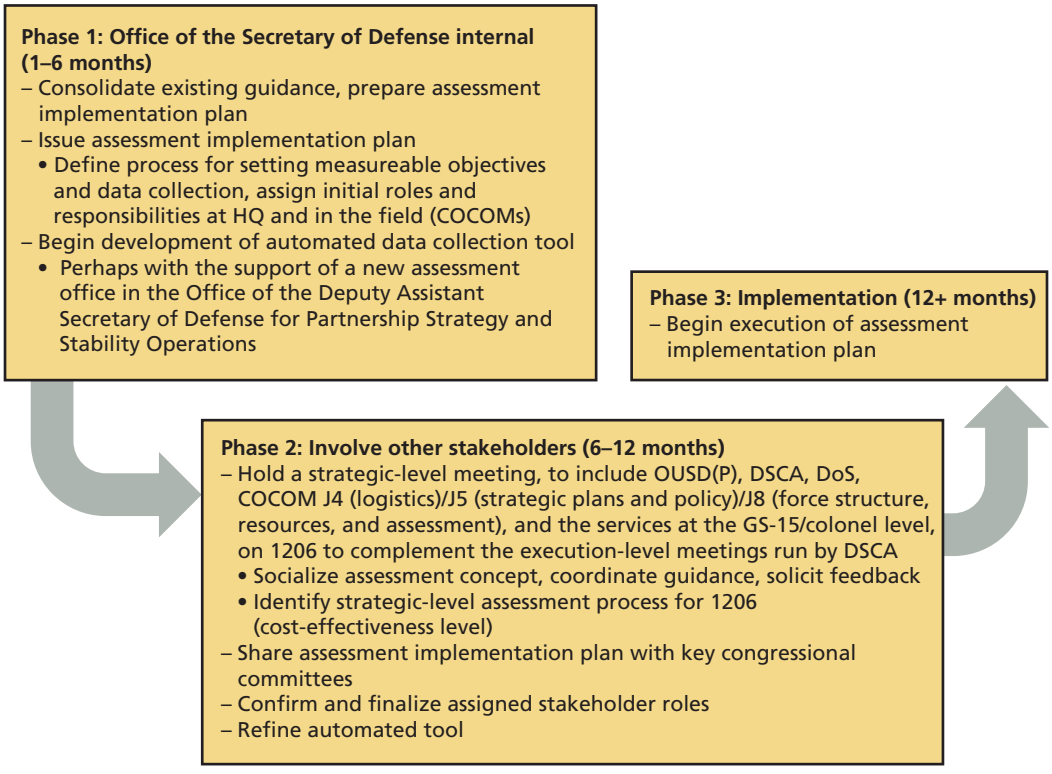
Figure S.4
Proposed Rollout for the Assessment Implementation Plan



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