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REPORT

Assessing the Effectiveness of the International Counterproliferation Program

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Summary

The ICP Program is one of many programs implemented to confront the threat of WMD proliferation. Its mission is to counter the threat of the proliferation of WMD-related materials and technologies across the borders and through the independent states of the former Soviet Union, the Baltic region, and Eastern Europe. One of the unique characteristics of the ICP Program is its interagency foundation. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) implements the ICP Program, in coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other federal agencies. The program strives to enhance the ability of host-country agencies to prevent and counter the proliferation of WMD and related items across international borders. It also aims to aid partner nations in their own efforts to deter, detect, investigate, and respond to crimes regarding WMD and related items, whether they are chemical, nuclear, radiological, or biological agents or "dual-use" items, (items that can be used for both licit and illicit purposes). The program works toward the establishment of a professional cadre of border and law enforcement and related personnel among the participating nations while delivering technical assistance via low- and high-tech equipment, training, and guidance. The ICP Program's ultimate goal is the establishment of an enduring and mutually beneficial relationship between host-country agencies and those of the U.S. government that helps to realize their shared goals of counterproliferation.[1]

Study Approach

The study team was tasked with expanding on the RAND security cooperation assessment framework prepared for DTRA in 2009 to more fully develop an analytically sound and repeatable process for program assessment, as well as demonstrating how the assessment framework can be applied to the ICP Program. First, RAND's security cooperation assessment framework was tailored to allow for an assessment of the ICP Program.[2] To ensure that we had the correct objectives, indicators, and questions for the assessment, we consulted ICP Program plans and after-action reports from past events. The team developed assessment indicators tied directly to ICP Program objectives. Second, we conducted focused discussions with key DTRA stakeholders to gain insights into the perceived value of the program from a U.S. perspective. Next, we conducted interviews with partner country officials to ensure that we obtained balanced

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[1] For an overview of the history of the ICP Program, please see Appendix B.

[2] See Moroney and Hogler, 2009, pp. 69–82.

data, informed by all stakeholders. Finally, we assessed the results, determined key findings across the three case studies (Kosovo, Romania, and Georgia, discussed below), and recommended ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the ICP Program, based on our review of the reports, focused discussions, and case study work.

The Assessment Framework

RAND's assessment framework includes five key elements:

- strategic guidance
- programs
- stakeholders
- authorities (including directives and instructions)
- levels of assessment that are linked with a discussion of assessment indicators (inputs, outputs, and outcomes).

Strategic Guidance

The relevance of strategic guidance, in the context of program assessment, is that it establishes the importance of developing capabilities and cooperating with partner militaries to meet U.S. strategic goals, as well as directing program managers to carry out assessments.

Programs

Within the context of the framework elements, *programs* refers to the categorization of the various types of security cooperation programs, as found in strategic guidance. This report focuses on the application of the assessment framework to a single, specific program, the ICP Program.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders refers to assessment stakeholders—persons or organizations that make decisions for, or about, a program. There are different types of stakeholders, which can be further classified depending on their particular relationship to the program.

Authorities

Authorities refers to the authorities for conducting security cooperation programs derived from the U.S. Code, DoD directives, and instructions. Title 10 of the U.S. Code is the basic authority for DoD activities; it also serves as the primary authority for many DoD security cooperation programs. Title 22 of the U.S. Code provides the basic authority for foreign assistance, including security assistance.

Five Levels of Assessment

Assessments of security cooperation programs can provide various types of valuable information regarding different aspects of the program:

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

- level 4: outcome or impact
- level 5: cost-effectiveness (relative to other, similar programs).[3]

These five levels, which are integral to the assessment framework, can be thought of as a hierarchy, as depicted in Figure S.1.
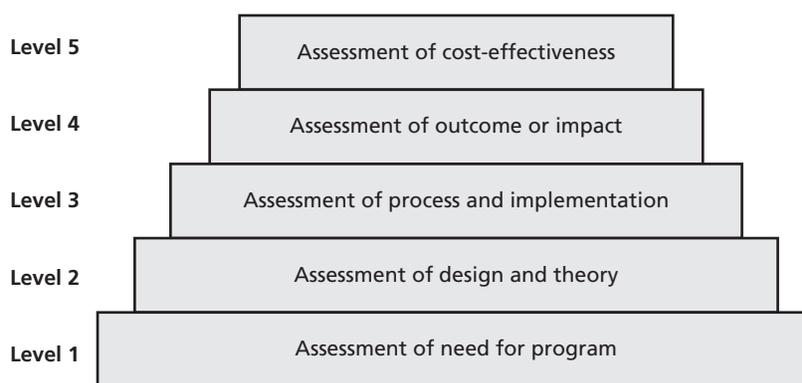
Field Research

The study team conducted field research on three case studies—Kosovo, Romania, and Georgia—through a series of interviews with representatives from partner country agencies who had some familiarity and past exposure to the ICP Program. We supplemented these conversations with interviews with U.S. stakeholders in order to obtain a broad and balanced collection of perspectives. Appendix D of this report lists the specific interview questions. We developed these questions specifically to provide insight into the various levels of assessment: need for the program, design and theory, process and implementation, and outcomes and impact. The responses were submitted to a subjective analytic process in which the study team assigned values to the content of the response according to a three-level Likert scale: positive, negative, or somewhat positive.

Key Observations

The key observations that emerged from the three partner country cases collectively represent a combination of both best practices and challenges for the ICP Program. We organize these observations according to the five assessment levels.

Figure S.1
The Five Levels of Assessment

Level 5	Assessment of cost-effectiveness
Level 4	Assessment of outcome or impact
Level 3	Assessment of process and implementation
Level 2	Assessment of design and theory
Level 1	Assessment of need for program

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[3] We did not include a cost-effectiveness assessment in this study, as the cost-effectiveness assessment 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 this out.

Need for Program

- The ICP Program could benefit from a more rigorous methodology for partner selection to ensure that partners receiving assistance are the most relevant from a strategic perspective.
- The ICP Program's length and scope is not transparent for partner countries, leaving them unsure about the commitment of ICP Program officials for the future.

Design and Theory

- The limited partner involvement in threat assessments could serve as the basis for informed dialogue about the entire program.
- The phase construct is not analytically sound and conveys misleading information about the sophistication of partners.
- Mechanisms for partner-feedback collection are limited to course participants; input from senior-level officials is not captured effectively, which could limit the impact of the program.
- High turnover in action officers undermines the ICP Program's effectiveness at a management level and hinders relationship-building efforts.

Process and Implementation

- ICP Program courses are largely supply driven, which is not a good indicator of the need for the program.
- The curriculum has become more dynamic over time, indicating the program's ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Logistical support is strong and should continue to be outsourced in-country.
- Interagency coordination on the U.S. side is improving but requires additional effort to develop a whole-of-government approach to combating WMD proliferation.
- Prebriefs and after-action reviews at the event level lack assessment-relevant content, leaving follow-on efforts without real context for where assistance should be focused in a particular country.

Outcome and Impact

- ICP Program effects are difficult to determine due to the abundance of related activities, making the program difficult to assess in certain countries.
- The ICP Program fosters interagency cooperation within partner nations; often, ICP Program events are the only time when these agencies train and exercise together.
- Partners have developed informal train-the-trainer mechanisms, making the program an ideal model for other, related assistance programs.

Recommendations

This section presents several suggestions of how the program could be strengthened. To help clarify their utility and enable their effective application, the recommendations are organized according to four major segments of the program life cycle: planning, execution, sustainment, and assessment.

Planning
Adjustments to planning will enhance ICP Program effectiveness.

- Solicit feedback from U.S. and key partner country stakeholders during the ICP Program planning process.
- Expand engagement with senior partner country officials after events; keeping them informed will only help to ensure the longer-term impact of ICP Program events.
- Enhance trip prebriefs with ICP Program–relevant data so that the team understands the strategic and operational context for working with that partner country.

Execution
Execution could be enhanced through oversight mechanisms and in-country advocates.

- Identify and continually engage U.S. ICP Program advocates in-country; they are the best source of on-the-ground information about the program's impact.
- Consider forming a high-level oversight body to oversee the ICP Program.
- Consider ways to mitigate lack of relevant expertise among action officers, their rapid turnover, and ways to ease the transition with the partner nation from one action officer to another.

Sustainment
The ICP Program's impact can be sustained through creative approaches.

- Develop plans for sustaining the program's impact over the long term, particularly with more-mature partner countries.
- Use the new ICP Program portal as an engagement tool; this tool will be a useful way to stay engaged between ICP Program events.
- Introduce a recurring senior-level working group with partner countries to keep the senior officials firmly engaged.

Assessment
Strengthen assessment through focus on measurable objectives and indicators.

- Include objectives, indicators, and results in after-action reports to set a benchmark.
- Identify assessment roles for stakeholders to ensure that data are being collected and assessed in a more systematic way.