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**BOMCA** | **БОМКА**  
BORDER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN CENTRAL ASIA | ПРОГРАММА СОДЕЙСТВИЯ УПРАВЛЕНИЮ ГРАНИЦАМИ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 9

April - September 2024



## BOMCA 10 IN FOCUS

Dear reader,

We are pleased to invite you to read this new issue of the BOMCA Newsletter, which highlights our work between April and October 2024.

Looking back, in this period BOMCA continued to progress in all three of its main areas of work – strengthening skills and institutional capacities of the border management agencies in Central Asia. The advancement of skillsets was paired with technical support and a number of agencies in the region received the long-awaited equipment. Finally, the innovative component for the programme – the work on grants for NGOs – reached its pivotal milestone.

After over three years of implementation and having successfully passed its mid-term period, the project focused on measuring impact across each of four thematic areas. While this work is not yet completed, the success stories have become more prominent and acknowledged by the national steering groups.

On behalf of the Consortium of the implementing partners and the Project team, we certainly hope that you enjoy this new issue!



## BOMCA 10 PROGRESS IN A NUTSHELL

*Project implementation timeline*



From April 1 till September 30, 2024, the Programme implemented 41 capacity-building activities and 2 coordination meetings in the Central Asian region. This work was taking place hand-in-hand with procurement of technical equipment. Furthermore, BOMCA reached its next milestone in terms of realisation of work with NGOs through grants.

## 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



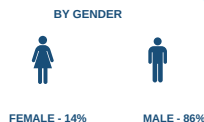
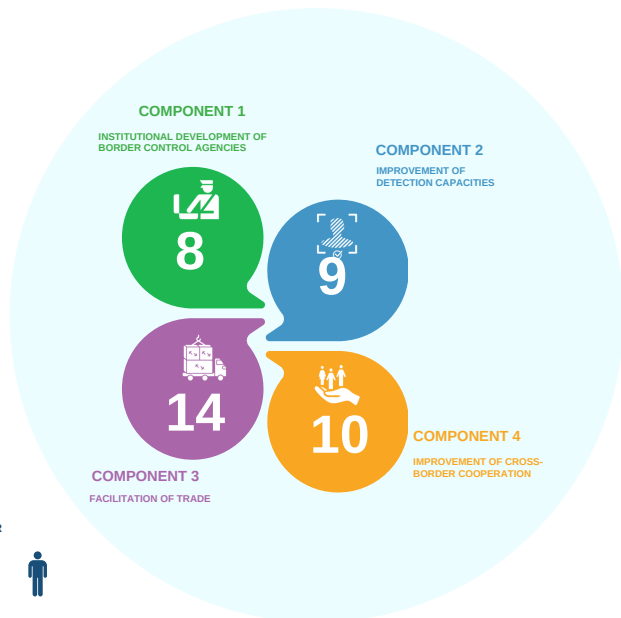
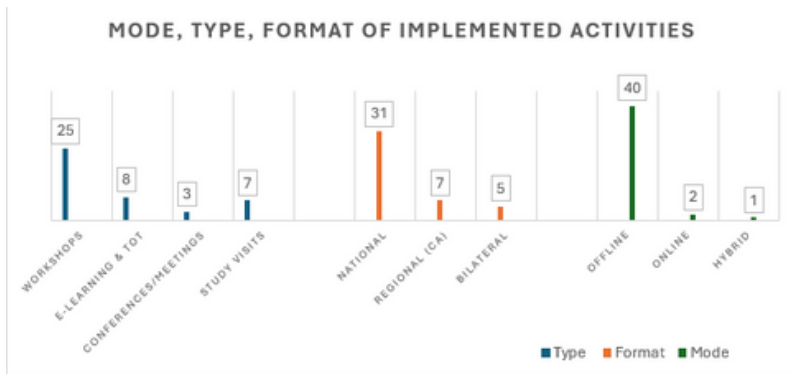
**COMPONENT 4**  
IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

**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)

# IMPLEMENTED THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

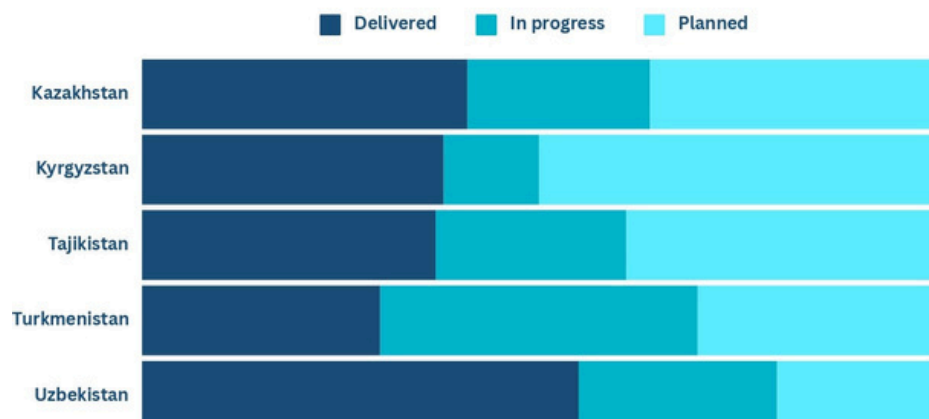
Project Implementation in the period: April 2021 - September 2025



## PROCUREMENT PROGRESS

### Procurement status per country

November 2021 - September 2024



## Implementation of Grants in the framework of Component 4



- Social justice and equal access to increased income for socially vulnerable families affected by migration in border villages in the Aravan district of Osh region Kyrgyz Republic
- Women of border communities of Batken region for economic inclusion and well-being Kyrgyz Republic
- Empowering migrant families in border communities of Batken region Kyrgyz Republic
- Psychological and pedagogical support to children left behind and those affected by migration in Talas and Chui regions Kyrgyz Republic
- Woman Entrepreneurship for Inclusion in border areas of Fergana region Republic of Uzbekistan
- Reducing human trafficking in Kazakhstan by raising awareness among victims of trafficking, migrant workers and their family members in Shymkent and Turkestan region Republic of Kazakhstan
- Raising awareness of migrants and women migrants about safe and legal migration in the border area of the Kyzylorda region Republic of Kazakhstan
- Identification of the needs of the population in the border regions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, raising awareness of the rights of migrants Republic of Kazakhstan & Republic of Uzbekistan



## Increased effectiveness and efficiency of border management in Kyrgyzstan

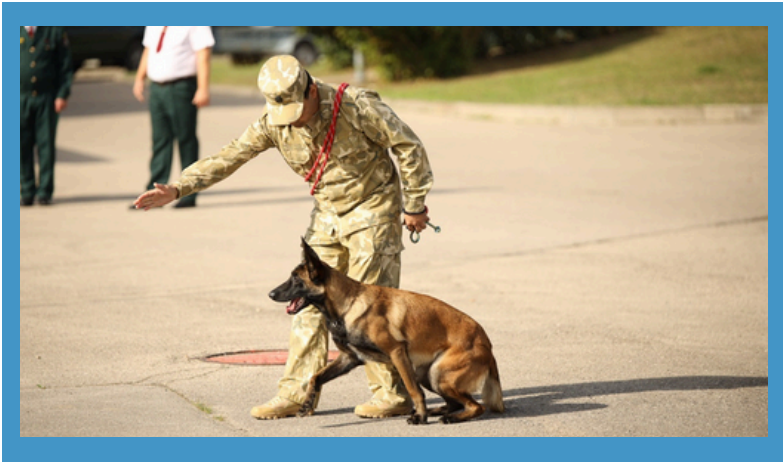
The New Integrated Border Management Strategy of Kyrgyzstan is currently in the approvals progress. The Strategy aims to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of border control measures by focusing on a holistic approach that integrates various border management activities to ensure better coordination and communication among different agencies and stakeholders involved in border security.

One of a key elements of this Strategy is the development of a situational awareness picture by establishing Situational Centre of Border Service in Kyrgyzstan. This Centre will serve as a central hub for real-time monitoring and management of situation at the border, and it will be equipped with advanced technology and data analytics tools. The Situational Centre will enable authorities to swiftly respond to any incidents at the state border.

In addition to the Situational Centre, a comprehensive risk analysis system is integral to the implementation process. This system is designed to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks associated with border security. The three-level risk analysis system addresses threats at the strategic, operational, and local levels. At the strategic level, it evaluates broad, long-term threats like geopolitical trends and global security issues, guiding national policy and resource allocation. The operational level focuses on specific geographical areas, assessing local crime rates, socio-economic conditions, and border-specific challenges to tailor responses for each region.

At the local level, it involves real-time monitoring and immediate threat response, ensuring on-ground personnel can swiftly address incidents and vulnerabilities, thereby maintaining robust and adaptive border security.

Overall, the Integrated Border Management Strategy, with its focus on the development of the Situational Centre and the risk analysis system, aims to create a comprehensive border management framework. This will not only enhance national security but also facilitate legitimate cross-border movements and trade, contributing to economic growth and stability.



## Enhanced capacities to detect cross-border crimes

The BOMCA 10 project has made a significant contribution to enhancing detection capabilities in the Central Asian region through the gradual development of K-9 service dog activities.

Recognizing the success of the training courses for dog handler trainers specialising in the search for explosives, ammunition, weapons, and drugs completed in 2022, in Lithuania and Latvia, followed by two national 10-day canine training courses, held in Kyrgyzstan in 2023 and 2024, BOMCA in July 2024, launched the second round of a 12-week Training of Trainers (ToT) course for K9 trainers from five Central Asian countries.

The course was implemented in parallel in Lithuania and Latvia and was prepared in line with the European and the FRONTEX Agency standards. It trained dog handlers on theory and developed practical skills for training of K9 teams and service dogs used for daily border guarding tasks in searching for explosives, ammunition, weapons and drugs.

The trainers were provided with specialized K-9 dogs and appropriate training equipment. The newly trained ten national experts are now expected to be fully equipped to transfer knowledge further, the enhancing regional operational and training capacities of K-9 units in the region.







### BOMCA contributes to effective detection on the borders

The speed with which goods can be moved from one point to another has always been one of the decisive factors in the success of trade. The same applies to the controls carried out by the services at the border between countries. Therefore, it is essential to improve and strengthen the skills and capacity of customs officials to take advantage of the benefits of modern control equipment, especially X-ray control equipment for checking vehicles and goods on international border crossing points.

Earlier in the project, in September 2022, the Regional workshop on the recognition of anomalies in X-ray imaging for freight transport at the land borders for custom officials of all five Central Asia countries was held in Riga, Latvia. During the workshop, participants familiarised themselves with the basics of analysis of X-ray generated images, and the principles of analysing and evaluating such images. Also, they were introduced to the best practices in the evaluation of X-ray images, X-ray scanning systems used by EU Customs administrations, and work procedures in the use of scanning equipment. The entire workshop was supported by a number of practical simulation exercises.

Building upon the knowledge and skills gained, the participants delivered training sessions at the national level. 37 officers have been trained in Turkmenistan; 193 operators, including 78 officers, in Kazakhstan; and 24 officers in Uzbekistan.

The knowledge and skills acquired on the studies and training courses on cargo scan image analysis were also put at test in a real-life situation in August 2023. At Ak-Zhol checkpoint in Kyrgyzstan, an officer trained by BOMCA disclosed an attempt to smuggle a large amount of foreign currency - approximately 147 million Kazakhstani tenge – during a border control check, and the traveller was handed over for the further investigation.

The BOMCA Component 3 expert team is pleased that the knowledge provided during the project has proven useful to CA colleagues and has brought results in the practical work at the border crossing control points.



Photo credits to the State Committee of the National Security of Kyrgyzstan



### Improved living conditions of border communities through NGOs work

Following the establishment of good practices of cooperation with the NGOs from Central Asia and based on the results of a highly competitive selection process, BOMCA selected and provided EU funding to 12 projects in the framework of its second Call for Proposals. NGOs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan started the implementation of actions aimed at the improvement of living conditions in the border areas, with the overall funding totalling almost 635 000 EUR.

The funded projects target migration prone border areas of Central Asian states such as the Tursunzade and Shahrinav regions and Sughd and Khatlon regions in Tajikistan; the Batken, Osh, Zhalal-Abad and Talas regions in Kyrgyzstan; Turkestan region in Kazakhstan; Lebap and Dashoguz provinces in Turkmenistan; and Tashkent region in Uzbekistan. Most selected projects build the capacities of local vulnerable populations in the domain of entrepreneurship, digital and economic empowerment, strongly focusing on women left behind by migrants. They also include solid activities to raise awareness about the perils of irregular migration and prevention of trafficking in human beings, providing legal assistance to protect migrants' rights. Many actions have a strong component on cooperation with local authorities and building NGOs' networks to effectively improve services available to the border communities.

Two projects specifically support children left behind expanding access to psycho-social services, whereas some projects aim at conducting research activities on the challenges faced by local communities in the border areas, to further contribute to evidence-based policy response. All these efforts will ultimately increase the capacities of the populations residing in the border areas, improve their economic and personal well-being, positively affecting living conditions on the community level.

"NGOs are change agents and thus supporting organisations working in the border areas is of a critical importance for the improvement of the well-being of the local population, their economic development and promotion of human rights. We are happy to closely work with Central Asian NGOs who do tremendous work in the border regions, assisting the migration-affected population and improving their living conditions. It is already a second round of BOMCA grants, which provides EU funding for the essential initiatives in the region, and we could certainly see positive changes and tangible impact", - comments Ms. Ekaterina Belukova, BOMCA 10 Component Leader.

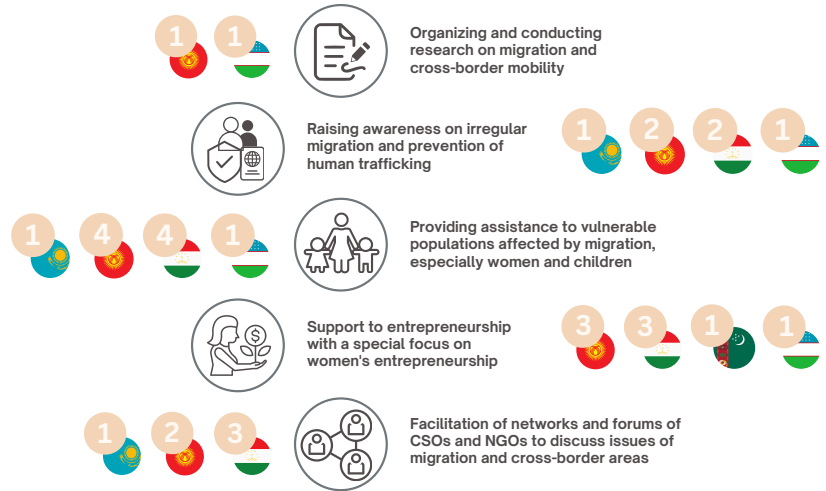


### Grant support to Central Asia's NGOs working in border areas (2nd Call for Proposals)

Funded projects:



Thematic focus of the projects\*:



\* One project could cover more than one thematic topics

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