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



# NEWSLETTER

## ISSUE 8

October 2023 - March 2024



## BOMCA 10 IN FOCUS



Dear readers!

On behalf of the Border Management Programme in Central Asia, we are pleased to welcome you and invite you to read the 8th issue of BOMCA Newsletter.

For over twenty years that the EU flagship initiative has been contributing towards enhancing security, stability and sustainable growth in the region.

Each BOMCA activity provides an overview of EU MS' best practices and experiences in the areas of border security and trade facilitation. In addition, the systems approach facilitates the standardization, dissemination and exchange of these practices across the region. At the same time, BOMCA actively promotes the transfer of local experience through the introduction of joint training initiatives among law enforcement agencies in Central Asia.

In its current 10th phase, BOMCA continues to work with the national governmental counterparts and provides recommendations on comprehensive measures for each Central Asian country under four thematic areas. Moreover, the programme has been actively engaged at both the strategic and operational levels, collaborating with various agencies, fostering synergies with other international partners, and undertaking initiatives across the thematic areas in each of the five countries involved. Multiple milestone developments have taken place in all three main pillars as capacity-building, procurement and grants.

This issue will zoom into the overall progress and celebrate success stories from October 2023 to March 2024. We'll hope that you will surely enjoy it!



## 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

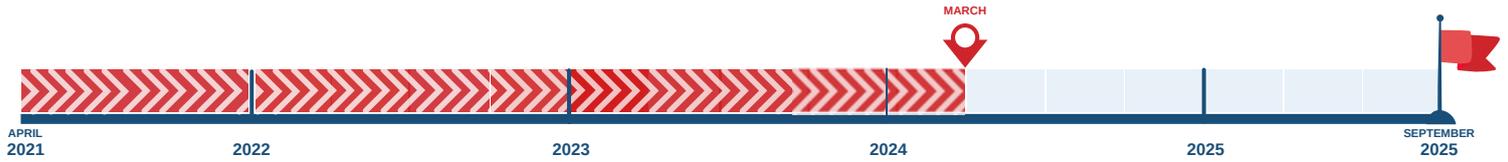
IMPROVEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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)

# BOMCA 10 PROGRESS IN A NUTSHELL

## Project implementation timeline



From October 1, 2023 till March 31, 2024 the Programme implemented 35 activities in the Central Asian region. Furthermore, BOMCA intensified work on procurement, while projects granted to NGOs in Central Asia run at full speed. The infographics below visually reflect the array of the activities implemented and provide an overview of participation.

## Implemented thematic activities

Project Implementation in the period: October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES - 28

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES - 7

### FORMAT OF THE IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

OFFLINE - 32

ONLINE - 3

### BY GENDER



### PER COUNTRY



TOTAL: 551

## Procurement progress

### Procurement progress by type of needs

November 2021 - March 2024



### Procurement status by country



# BOMCA 10 - Implementation of Grants

In the framework of Component 4



## Women gain further economic independence

In the framework of the 1st BOMCA 10 Call for Proposals, eight non-profit organisations from Central Asia received grants for implementation of initiatives benefiting most vulnerable population residing at the borders. With the financial support of the European Union, NGOs working in the region can support migrants and their families, people affected by migration, victims of human trafficking, women, youth and children.

In the framework of BOMCA 10 project Kyrgyz Public Association 'Insan-Leylek' received funding for the implementation of 12-months project, "Women of border communities of Batken region for economic inclusion and well-being". As a result, BOMCA 10 grant helped to support the enhancement of social entrepreneurship among women living in the border villages of the Batken region: they received tailored training sessions on income-generating activities, business planning, and green entrepreneurship. These training sessions helped women to gain the required knowledge and confidence in starting their own small businesses, contributing to the well-being of their families and communities they live in. Furthermore, a competition of the best business ideas, held among the project participants, enabled 9 women to receive the necessary equipment for boosting their businesses further. Moreover, the organisation closely worked with the representatives of the local self-governments to improve social and economic development plans for their communities, with a focus on higher inclusivity and women empowerment.

«With this project we aim to work more closely with border communities to promote trade and sustainable green entrepreneurship but also rural women entrepreneurship», - said Her Excellency Marylin Josefson, Head of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan, commenting on the essence of the EU support to the Batken region through the BOMCA 10 grant. Investing in women's economic empowerment is crucial for the stability and security on the regional and national levels. Economically - autonomous women substantially contribute to the well-being of their families and resilience of their communities and thus improve living standards, decrease vulnerabilities to conflict and promote social justice.

"Since I didn't study anywhere after finishing 9th grade, the concept of planning expenses and income never occurred to me. Now I have learned to carefully make plans for the months and years ahead for my business and promote products through social networks. After participating in this project, I began to feel more confident, because I realized that success can be achieved primarily through your skills, perseverance and hard work." – Minavarhan Nazarova, one of the trained women, shares her impressions about the training on business planning and literacy. Having adequate access to economic opportunities, women can better assert their rights and participate in the decision-making processes, which positively impacts local communities and overall society.

BOMCA 10 continues supporting border communities and most vulnerable populations through the activities of the Component 4 and its grant scheme.



## 24/7 cooperation to protect the border

In the framework of programme Component 1, 'Institutional Development of Border Agencies', BOMCA supported the Kyrgyz Border Guard Service in the development of the Concept for the development of Situational Centre. The programme is also facilitating practical implementation of the concept with technical support – equipment and software.

The Centre aims to gather information on the situation at the border and shall allow the Border Guard Service to have sufficient data for timely decision-making and for improving reaction time to incidents.

The Centre will be entrusted with a wide number of tasks. This includes collecting statistical data on violations of the state border, allowing for strategic analysis, as well as ensuring data for conducting operational analysis of illegal activities at the border. Swift data exchange and coordination channels are other crucial elements that this Centre adds value to.

The Centre will operate 24/7, providing operational information, support and assistance to all management bodies of the Border Service and authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic.

During the concept development international experiences on establishment and operation of similar centres were studied in detail, in particular the Interpol Command and Coordination Center, the Situational Center of the FRONTEX agency, the Situational Center of the Border and Customs Service of the US Department, as well as the Situation Center of the Polish Border Guard.

Building upon the lessons learned and good practices, the Centre will provide strong added value in the strategic and operational work on the borders security. We are looking forward to cutting the ribbon and marking the launch of its work, so stay tuned to BOMCA's progress.

## K9 dogs - best and valuable assistants

Should you have ever crossed the border the chances are high you have seen K9 service officer in action with their dog. Recognising that the development of dog handling services is one of the elements of a well-functioning system for combating cross-border crimes, BOMCA has been continuously contributing to the improvement of cynology in law enforcement agencies, in particular in advancing the skills of the of the dog handlers.

The success of a Training of Trainers course for dog handlers, which was held in Lithuania and Latvia in 2022, as well as a series of national workshops held in all CA countries, followed by the provision of Standard Operational Procedures on the system of selection and training of cynologists and service dogs, has a long-term value. The canine centers of CA law enforcement agencies have already updated their training programmes for dog handling specialists and included elements of the EU methodology.

As pointed out by Ms Natalia Gladkova, Senior Inspector of the Cynological Training Department of the Specialized-Training Customs of the State Customs Service under the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic, who was also among 10 trainees in the region to successfully complete the unique course in Latvia and Lithuania, "... Despite the rapid progress in technology, working dogs and their use in the work of border, customs and law enforcement agencies have not lost their relevance in the twenty-first century. The use of specially trained service dogs combined with advanced technology makes it possible to effectively enhance the possibilities of both, allowing the relevant agencies to identify and investigate cross-border crimes linked to the illegal importation of explosives, ammunition, weapons and drugs more effectively."

To put in practice the theoretical knowledge and skills gained, another trainer certified in the EU MSs held a national training session in Kyrgyzstan in 2023, while a further session is planned for 2024.

Being inspired by the results of the training sessions held in EU MSs, in July - October 2024 the programme aims to increase the pool of the national trainers by holding the second round of the three-month courses in Latvia and Lithuania.

While the topic of cynology will not be off BOMCA's agenda at least until end of 2024, the value added by these efforts to strengthen capacities of the cynology services in the region will be certainly noticeable well beyond that time.



## Vehicle checks: gaining speed without losing quality

One of the key elements to ensure smooth international trade flows across the border is quick and effective border control procedures. 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 and up to date control methods for checking vehicles and goods on international routes at border crossing points.

The efficiency and speed of customs control activities has been strengthened with the support of the Component 3, 'Facilitation of Trade'. A series of national events – including a training-of-trainers course on car and truck search for officials of customs and border guard services took place in all five counties from 2022-2023. Thanks to unique methodology combining theory and practice, the officials were trained on key elements of modern control methods when conducting inspection operations in relation to vehicles, cargo and goods transported across the state land border.

As a result, the skill-set of the officers was advanced in order to effectively inspect vehicles and goods. At the same time, the training of trainers course prepared a number of qualified training experts who could effectively transfer this knowledge further within their agencies. To-date a number of officers have benefited from the related BOMCA efforts.

In Kazakhstan, based on the results of the acquired knowledge and skills, special courses on the topic "Methods of inspection and identification of profiling" were conducted in person at Nur-Zholy and Kalzhat customs posts. While in Kyrgyzstan customs officers of the northern and southern region were trained during the seminar "Profiling Inspection of vehicles and cargo".

In Uzbekistan, BOMCA trained experts conducted training sessions with visits to customs posts, where employees were trained and based on the expertise of the Faculty of Advanced Training of the Customs Institute, distance and traditional courses were conducted in 7 areas.

In Tajikistan, BOMCA 10 organised training for the personnel from checkpoints of the Border Troops and custom's structural units.

In Turkmenistan, officers of the State Customs Service and the State Frontier Service organised training sessions for customs and border officers, based on BOMCA provided materials/presentations, after the ToT in 2023. The Customs Training Centre is currently studying the provided curricula for integration into the training course on detection of smuggling (which includes car/truck search sessions).

While the initial outcomes of multiplication of transfer of knowledge are already impressive, they are certainly not exhaustive, as further sessions continue to take place. With such speed and scope of the knowledge transfer we can evidence enhanced capacities of the national agencies in the region to effectively address control procedures, which is one of the elements contributing to facilitation of trade with and within the region.

