Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan Border Management Cooperation in Drug Control



Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan: Border Management Cooperation in Drug Control

Outline Action Plan

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Introduction

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working closely with Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as with other neighbouring States (in Central Asia and the Persian Gulf) for a long period of time, attempting to build cross-border cooperation. With the objective of fostering a sense of trust between these countries that will hopefully carry over into their operational activities, UNODC has: conferred with individual Governments, held regional meetings of senior officials, witnessed the birth of the Inter-governmental Technical Committee (IGTC), provided communications equipment to facilitate the cross-border exchange of operational information and trained regional law enforcement officers. However, strong political commitment will be needed to transform these various projects in a more programmatic and regional plan of action.

The recent opium boom in Afghanistan, and the instability at its borders – due in part to drug trafficking – may be a catalyst to creating a heightened sense of urgency. Consequently, states in the region – even those that had experienced border-related tensions in the past – may realize the mutual benefits of working together; a convergence of interests among relevant parties could lead to intensified cross-border cooperation. Hence, instead of being a source of disagreement, border management could become a way of building confidence and security. In the end, parties in the region have a vested interest in tackling a threat that defies national frontiers.

Yet, the responsibility of addressing the situation does not lie solely with regional powers. All states, particularly transit countries and those with a large demand for heroin, have a stake in improving the security of Afghanistan's borders.

In the spirit of shared responsibility, and in consultation with the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, UNODC proposes an Outline Action Plan to improve regional cross-border cooperation in the field of drug control. In line with UNODC's facilitating role in this endeavour, the Executive Director of UNODC invited representatives of the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to meet in Vienna on 12 June 2007, as well as a follow-up meeting on 6-7 May 2008 in Tehran on the joint invitation from UNODC and the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Background

Many parts of Afghanistan's 5,800 kilometres (km) border are difficult to control. Drug trafficking and other illicit cross-border activities, such as the smuggling of firearms, money laundering, migrants, etc., are rife. Law enforcement agencies in the surrounding countries are institutionally weak, short of resources, or otherwise unable to stem the massive flow of opiates out of Afghanistan or of precursor chemicals coming into Afghanistan.

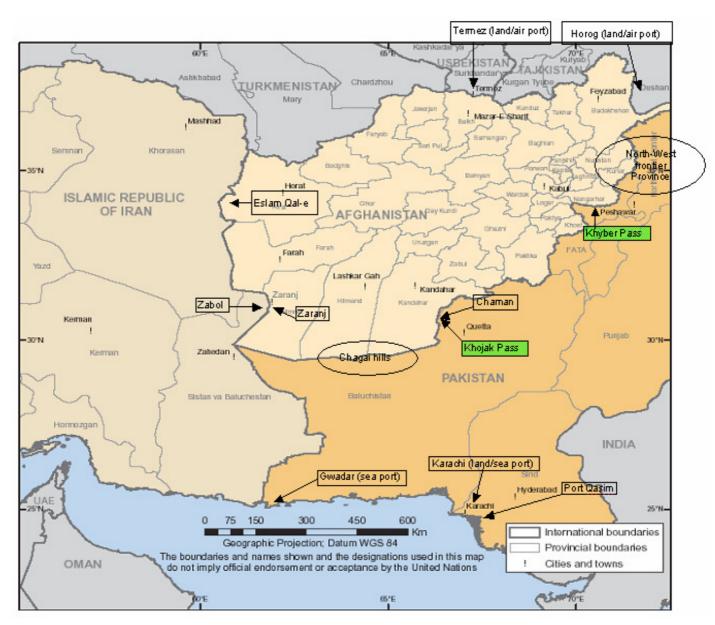
Among the three countries, border control is particularly weak along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. Border issues in Afghanistan are coordinated within the Border Management Initiative (BMI). While the Afghan Border Police plans to have troop strength of 12,000 by 2010, the current deployment is only half that number.

Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan and Iran are 2,430 km and 976 km long, respectively. It is one of the primary transit countries for opiates produced in Afghanistan. The trafficking of opiates into and through Pakistan increased steadily over the period 1990 – 2006 with the increase in Afghan production. The working assumption of Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force is

that roughly one third of illicit opiates exported from Afghanistan transit Pakistan en route to Western Europe, Africa and East Asia. Pakistan is also a possible transit country for precursors en route to Afghanistan. Infrastructural improvements, including the development of Gwadar Port on Pakistan's Makran coast, and improved land transportation links between Pakistan and Afghanistan are likely to increase trade and travel, but may also be exploited for illicit cross-border activity.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's eastern border with Afghanistan and Pakistan is 1,845 km long and consists of mainly mountainous or harsh desert terrain. Consequently, it is extremely difficult for the 12,000 anti-narcotics police and border guards that have been deployed to establish control over the area. To support the efforts of these forces, the Government has initiated a massive construction programme along its borders. In spite of these measures, organised trafficking groups as well as individual mules still manage to ship small and large consignments of illicit drugs across the borders.

Map 1 – Key border points



Outline Action Plan

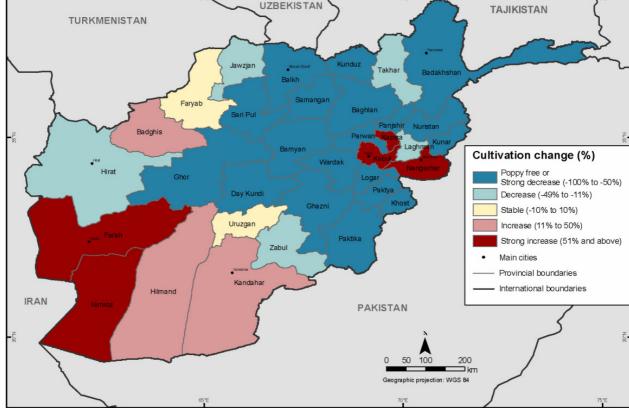
Under the current political and strategic context, it is important to be modest, realistic and incremental in the prospects for improving cross-border cooperation and of forging trust and confidence among parties. At the same time, a step-by-step approach can generate important momentum and demonstrate concrete results to counterparts and funding partners.

This Outline Action Plan intends to pursue such an approach. It is a dynamic model – which includes both confidence-building measures and operational activities - that can be used to progressively step up the level of cooperation and coordination among the three countries over the next three years.

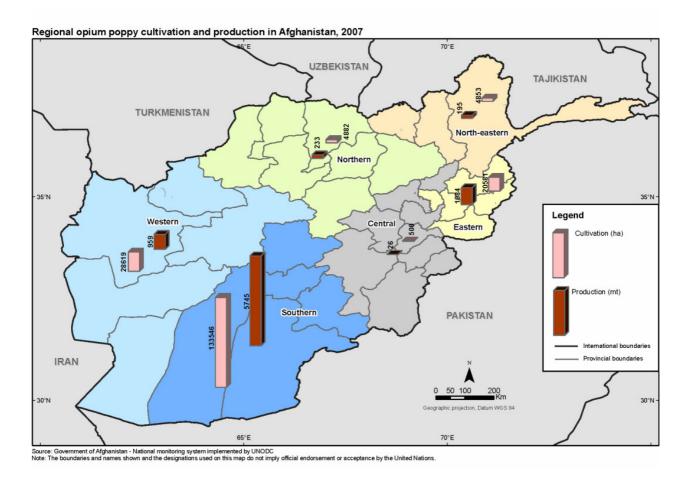
The interventions described in this document are mainly focussed on the southern border areas of Afghanistan, as these provinces are the heartland of insurgency and major security challenges. They are also the main producers of opium – accounting for over 80% of the 2007 harvest – and one of the main transit corridors for cross-border smuggling.

Map 2 – Opium Poppy Cultivation change in Afghanistan (by province), 2006 - 2007

Opium poppy cultivation change in Afghanistan (by province), 2006 - 2007 UZBEKISTAN TAJIKISTAN TURKMENISTAN



Map 3 - Regional Opium Poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan, 2007



The Outline Action Plan is composed of two stages:

<u>The first stage (I)</u> aims at increasing border management cooperation in counter narcotics enforcement through a sequence of four steps:

- Step 1 Iran and Pakistan
- Step 2 Iran and Afghanistan
- Step 3 Trilateral Ministerial Agreement
- Step 4 Afghanistan and Pakistan

<u>The second stage (II)</u> of this Action Plan, building on the trust and confidence gained during the first stage, is meant to step up coordination, information and intelligence sharing in two steps:

- Step 1 Domestic coordination, information and intelligence exchange
- Step 2 Regional coordination, information and intelligence exchange

The main responsibility for the plan's success rests with the parties themselves. UNODC will, however, facilitate the implementation of technical assistance activities and mobilize financial support.

A summary table (work-in-progress) of the activities contained in the Outline Action Plan is enclosed as annex I. Details of the UNODC projects in support of this Outline Action Plan are reported in the map enclosed as annex II.

I. Increasing cross-border cooperation in drug control

Step 1 – Iran and Pakistan (see map in annex III)

• Border cooperation between **Iran** and Pakistan

<u>Location</u>: The border area of Mile 72 to Rotak, covering 250 km of joint border (Sistan Baluchistan and Kerman). Of particular importance is the upgrading of four check points:

- ➤ "Khan Mohammad" check point at Mirjaveh;
- ➤ "Kole Sangi" at the Zabol border;
- ➤ "Iranshahr" and "Nosrat Abad" check points located at crossings in the border area spanning Sistan-Baluchistan to Kerman provinces.

Activities: Provision of joint training modules and compatible radio communication systems to the Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police (border guards) and to Customs Administration Units at the above-mentioned entry points, in order to increase their capability of intercepting and seizing illicit consignments of narcotic drugs and chemical precursors. Other activities include, *inter alia*, the organization of periodical operational meetings, the identification of measures geared toward enhancing joint procedures, as well as the facilitation of simultaneous patrolling.

Lead: The governments of Iran and Pakistan.

Support: UNODC Iran (Integrated Border Control Project – IRN/I50).

• Border cooperation between **Pakistan** and Iran

<u>Location 1</u>: Pakistan's western borders with Afghanistan and Iran: Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province

Activities: Provision of training and equipment to the Frontier Corps Baluchistan, the Frontier Corps North West Frontier Province, the Anti-Narcotics Force, the Coast Guards, Customs and Federal Investigation Agency. Other activities include the institutionalization of parallel and joint patrols; the establishment of border liaison offices; the organization of regular meetings of personnel from both sides of the borders (Pakistan/Iran and Pakistan/Afghanistan) for the purpose of exchanging operational information; cross-border controlled deliveries; increased surveillance of shipments made under the Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan; and initiatives to end the smuggling and diversion from licit use of precursor chemicals needed for narcotics production.

<u>Lead</u>: The governments of Pakistan and Iran.

Support: UNODC Pakistan (Project: Pakistan Border Management – PAK/J61).

<u>Location 2</u>: Pakistan's Sea borders and freight land crossings at Karachi (sea port), Port Qasim, Multan, Faisalabad, Sambrial, Lahore (Lahore Rail, National Logistics Company dry port), Sust (Pakistan/China), Chaman, Quetta and Torkham.

Activities: Provision of training and equipment to law enforcement agencies for the identification and inspection of high-risk containers.

Lead: The government of Pakistan

<u>Support</u>: UNODC (Container Control Pilot Programme - GLO/G80 – Pakistan sea and dryports) and UNODC Pakistan (Provision of a Crime Prevention/Law Enforcement Adviser for the UNODC Programme in Pakistan – PAK/U16).

Location 3: to be determined. The project will establish Border Liaison Offices along Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan and Iran.

Activities: A Pilot-BLO will be established within the ongoing Border Management project PAK/J61. Following the positive evaluation thereof, a separate BLO-project will be designed to expand this component of J61, aiming at the establishment of 7 additional BLO's in Pakistan (project to be developed by UNODC Pakistan).

Lead: the Government of Pakistan

Support: UNODC Pakistan (Project proposal: Enhancing cross-border cooperation along the Pakistan/Afghan, Pakistan/Iran border through the establishment of border liaison officers)

Step 2 – Iran and Afghanistan (see map in annex IV)

• Border cooperation between **Iran** and Afghanistan at selected border posts

<u>Location</u>: The border area of Hashtadan to Yazdan (comprising 180 km of joint border), covering the border posts in the areas of operation with Afghanistan zero border crossings will be targeted in the first phase of the project. Of particular importance is the strengthening of two check points:

- ➤ "17th Shahrivar" (south of the Tayabad border)
- "Mashad post"

Activities: Provision of joint training modules and compatible radio communication systems to the Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police (border guards) and to Customs Administration Units at the above-mentioned entry points to increase their capability of intercepting and seizing illicit consignments of narcotic drugs and chemical precursors. Other activities include, *inter alia*, the organization of periodical operational meetings, the identification of measures geared toward enhancing joint procedures, as well as the facilitation of simultaneous patrolling.

Lead: The governments of Iran and Afghanistan.

<u>Support</u>: UNODC Iran (project: Integrated Border Control Project – IRN/I50; and project: Strengthening control in selected internal check-points, sea-ports, airports and railway stations – IRN/I51) in close coordination with UNODC Afghanistan (project: Strengthening Afghan-Iran drug border control – AFG/H16).

• Border cooperation between **Afghanistan** and Iran

Location: Herat, Farah and Nimroz provinces

Activities: The on-going UNODC project (AFG/H16 SAID) has provided radio communication equipment, vehicles and narcotics identification kits to 25 border posts in Herat, Farah & Nimroz. 50 officers of the Border Police were also provided with radio communication systems as well as narcotics identification training. A Regional Logistic & Maintenance Unit was established in Heart and the construction of two similar Units in Farah & Nimroz is underway. A comprehensive radio communication system has been set up to provide connectivity at the company, battalion and brigade levels. In addition, a satellite ground station and local area network have also been set up in Afghan Border Police HQ in Kabul to provide Internet connectivity and reliable information sharing system between the Afghan Border Police and the neighboring countries. The project was extended until December 2008.

In line with the coordinated Border Management Initiative, UNODC project AFG/J55 aims to re-establish the rule of law in Nimroz province, the main gateway for smugglers moving opium, morphine and heroin out of Afghanistan. The area border police have pulled out of the region because of lack of support, manpower, equipment, training and facilities. UNODC, through this project, will provide the infrastructure to facilitate the Afghan Border Police and other counter narcotics agencies in a regional border enforcement undertaking. This will be made possible by the construction of a secure Regional Border security garrison, a large regional centre that can support a 100 to 200 man element. This enhanced base of operations would be strategically placed in the tactical cross roads of the Nimroz smuggling routes, and will put adequate numbers of properly trained and equipped police officers in proper position to interdict large numbers of international smugglers who currently move freely through this area.

Lead: The governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

<u>Support</u>: UNODC Afghanistan (project: Strengthening Afghan-Iran drug border control – AFG/H16; project: Establishment of Regional Center for the Afghan Border Police in Nimroz Province, AFG/J55).

Step 3 – Trilateral Ministerial Initiative

Location 1: Tehran, Iran.

<u>Activity 1</u>: Trilateral Ministerial Agreement. In the second quarter of 2008, the three countries will gather at the Ministerial level (both Counter-Narcotics and Interior) to:

- (a) take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the previous steps
- (b) agree on the next operational steps.

This meeting should also consolidate a review of the current UNODC-supported tripartite institutional interventions (see below under other relevant initiatives), in order to revitalize them to a degree that they could function as a type of mini-Paris Pact platform for the three countries.

The Trilateral Ministerial Agreement could be signed under the framework of a revised Inter-Governmental Technical Committee Meeting (IGTC). IGTC meetings, which have been

organized by the Anti-Narcotics Force of Pakistan and UNODC, have brought together senior counter narcotics enforcement officials first from Pakistan and Iran and subsequently from Afghanistan. The last IGTC meeting was held on the 5th July 2004. The Trilateral Initiative Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to take place in Tehran, Iran on May 6-7, 2008.

<u>Lead</u>: The governments of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

<u>Support</u>: UNODC Iran (project: Promotion of Regional and International Cooperation in Drug Control - IRN/I53), Afghanistan and Pakistan (Development of Pakistan Country Programme - PAK/U13).

Location 2: To be decided.

Activities:

- ➤ Provision of expertise and resources for the organization of cooperative drug control activities, between Iran and close neighbouring countries; relevant activities will include the development of Memoranda of Understanding or the implementation of existing ones, as well as the organization of regional workshops and trainings (UNODC Iran).
- ➤ Preparatory work on projects to promote trilateral cooperation in the field of counternarcotics enforcement; relevant activities will support trilateral consultations and information/intelligence exchange (UNODC Pakistan).

<u>Lead:</u> UNODC Iran (project: Promotion of Regional and International Cooperation in Drug Control – IRN/I53) and UNODC Pakistan.

Support: The governments of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Other relevant initiatives:

- ➤ Senior Law Enforcement Officer (SLEO) meetings: Since late 1999, these meetings have been organized by the UNODC Country Office for Pakistan to increase operational command-level cooperation between law enforcement agencies, such as the Anti-Narcotics Force, Customs, FCs and MSA of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Even as these meetings were meant to have been held on a bi-annual basis, the last meeting took place on the 6th December 2005 in Rawalpindi, Pakistan; and despite the fact that participants agreed to exchange information/intelligence on the activities of international drug traffickers, no action in this direction has been taken.
- ➤ Quadripartite Counter Narcotics meeting between Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UK: The objective of these meetings was to build relationships between individuals and institutions involved in counter-narcotics work; to exchange information on counter-narcotics activities and policies; to establish procedures through which intelligence can be exchanged regarding the manufacture, transport and marketing of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals. These meetings should be revamped.
- ➤ Regional Gulf Cooperation Meeting (RCGM): The RGCM was held on only one occasion, on 20-21 April 2004 in Islamabad, with participants from the Persian Gulf

States, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and observers from the DLOs of the UK, USA, France, Germany. The objective of the meeting was to stimulate regional cooperation between Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf States in combating the flow of drugs through these areas.

Step 4 – Afghanistan and Pakistan

<u>Locations and activities</u> (to be determined):

Anticipating closer collaboration between the two neighbours, emphasis can be placed on the establishment of domestic activities which can allow both Afghanistan and Pakistan to engage in cross-border activities in a structured and sustainable manner. These activities relate to counter-narcotics law enforcement; regional cooperation aimed to control the flow of precursor chemicals; narcotics-related judicial reform; effective cross-border cooperation along the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders, including through the development of intelligence capacity, the establishment of computer-based training, and the enhancement of joint-enforcement capacity – with the full involvement of customs forces – to control container shipments (UNODC Afghanistan and Pakistan). The Iranian approach of creating physical impediments to enforce control (i.e. dykes across dry river beds) is equally worthwhile, and possibilities for replication on the Pakistani side of the border may be explored.

In addition, the Paris Pact Round Tables called for regular operational meetings to discuss sensitive issues, such as, *inter alia*, trafficking patterns, drug routes, trafficking organizations, major traffickers, the locations of laboratories and stockpiles (Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Pakistan, March 2005). The cross-border cooperation mechanism developed at the Tajik-Afghan border was considered and cited as a potential point of interest, whose features could be replicated along the Afghan-Pakistani borders. A study-tour to the Border Liaison Offices in SE Asia was also recommended (Paris Pact Expert Round Table on Cross-border cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, Dushanbe, April 2006).

Any UNODC initiative also needs to take into close consideration existing mechanisms of cooperation, such as the Tripartite Border Meetings between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States, These meetings are held under the supervision of the Combined Command Force – Afghanistan on a quarterly basis (starting from 2002). In addition, other bilateral actors' efforts need to be coordinated. Such as, for example, the Canadian Initiative to build confidence between Afghanistan and Pakistan (1st Meeting in October 2007, Workshop to be held in May 2008).

<u>Lead</u>: The governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

<u>Support</u>: UNODC Afghanistan (project: Establishment of Regional Center for the Afghan Border Police in Nimroz Province – AFG/J55); UNODC Pakistan (project: Strengthening Pakistan Border Management Project – PAK/J61; project: Enhancing cross-border cooperation along the Pakistan/Afghan, Pakistan/Iran border through the establishment of border liaison officers (to be developed).

II. Stepping up Coordination, Information and Intelligence Exchange

This ambitious goal is the ultimate objective of the Action Plan and needs to be tackled with realism and pragmatism. A prudent approach vis-à-vis border control activities seems appropriate – first building trust and confidence among partners before heading in a more ambitious direction.

Step 1 – Boosting domestic coordination and intelligence-sharing

- Activities within **Afghanistan**: To be decided.
- Activities within Iran: Promotion of the establishment of a national information-sharing mechanism, thus further supporting cross-border cooperation between Iran and its eastern neighbours in Afghanistan and Pakistan; promotion and further strengthening of intelligence-led investigative capacities, so that law enforcement forces may be able to target drug trafficking networks more effectively.

<u>Lead</u>: UNODC Iran (project: Integrated Border Control in Iran – IRN/I50; project: Promotion and strengthening of intelligence-led investigation capacities – IRN/I52).

Support: Government of Iran.

Activities within **Pakistan**: Inter-agency support and intelligence collection in Pakistan; consolidation of the achievements of a UNODC intelligence collection and analysis project targeting four law enforcement agencies (the Federal Investigation Agency, the Frontier Corps Baluchistan, the Frontier Corps NWFP and the Anti-Narcotics Force as a way of providing support for the further improvement of cooperation. Other activities include the provision of inter-agency training courses on intelligence collection and analysis at the provincial level (e.g. courses in Quetta and Peshawar; PAK/U13 and PAK/I47).

<u>Lead</u>: UNODC Pakistan ("Computer Based Law Enforcement Training to Pakistan – PAK/I47; project: "Enhancing Intelligence Capacity of Key Pakistani Law Enforcement Agencies and Promoting Regional Cooperation"- PAK/H07 – was finalised in December 2007 and "Strengthening Pakistan Border Control Capacity" - PAK/J61 – and "Development of Pakistan Country Programme"- PAK/U13 – have assumed follow-up activities in line with the above.)

Support: Government of Pakistan.

Step 2 - Regional coordination and intelligence-sharing

Activities recommended in the Paris Pact process:

The Paris Pact Round Tables set out some pragmatic and achievable goals and activities:

 Designation of cross-border liaison officers for particular border sectors (Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Pakistan, March 2005).

- Deployment of drug liaison officers and regular information and intelligence exchange meetings (Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Pakistan, March 2005; and Expert Round Table on Cross-border cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, Dushanbe, April 2006).
- Organization of regular technical/operational meetings at key border posts at the police commander level. The possibility of establishing Border Liaison Officers (BLOs) or dedicated cross-border cooperation centres should also be explored and seriously considered by all parties (Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Pakistan, March 2005). The project proposal "Enhancing cross-border cooperation along the Pakistan/Afghan, Pakistan/Iran border through the establishment of border liaison officers" will be designed to follow up on this recommendation.
- Establishment of regular reporting mechanisms and operational meetings, to be held with a view to exchanging information and intelligence on trafficking patterns, locations of labs, stockpiles, major traffickers or trafficking organizations (Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Pakistan, March 2005).

<u>Lead</u>: The governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Support: UNODC Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Activities promoted by UNODC Iran: Provision of organizational support and know-how for the purpose of establishing an information/intelligence exchange mechanism between the three countries.

<u>Lead:</u> The governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

<u>Support</u>: UNODC Iran (Project: Promotion and Strengthening of intelligence-led investigation capacities – IRN/I52).

Annex I. Summary Table on UNODC activities in the area (work-in-progress)

Outline Action Plan									
Stage I - Promotion of cross-border cooperation in counter narcotics enforcement									
Step		Description	Budget USD million	Current fundings USD million	Donors	2008-2009 Funding Shortfall in USD million			
1	Iran & Pakistan	"Integrated Border Control in Iran - IRN/I50 Phase I" (status: ongoing)	2.5	1.7	France, Ireland, UK	0.7			
	Pakistan & Iran	"Strengthening Pakistan Border Management – PAK/J61" (status: ongoing)	3.5	2.1	Canada	1.4			
		"Container Control Pilot Project – GLO/G80 – with an expanded Pakistani component" (ongoing – project to be revised) (Pakistan Segment)	2.9	2.2	Canada, Italy	0.7			
		Enhancing cross-border cooperation along the Pakistan/Afghan, Pakistan/Iran border through the establishment of border liaison officers (future)	2.0	0	-	2.0			
2	Iran & Afghanistan	"Integrated Border Control in Iran - IRN/I50 Phase I" (status: ongoing)	(2.5)	0	-	(2.5)			
	Iran & Afghanistan	"Strengthening control in selected internal check-points, seaports, airports and railway stations – IRN/I51"	2.4	0	-	2.4			
	Afghanistan & Iran	"Establishment of Regional Center for the Afghan Border Police in Nimroz Province – AFG/J55" (status: ongoing)	3.9	3.9	Canada	0			
		"Strengthening Afghan-Iran drug border control – AFG/H16" (status: ongoing)	5.1	5.06	Austria, Canada, EC, Germany	0.03			
	Trilateral Ministerial Agreement	Inter-Governmental Technical Meetings and other operational meetings	To be determined						
3		"Promotion of Regional and International Cooperation in Drug Control – IRN/I53"	0.6	0.6	Italy	0			
		"Development of Pakistan Country Programme – PAK/U13"(status: ongoing)	0.9	0.5	Austria, Canada, UK	0.3			
4	Afghanistan and Pakistan	"Establishment of Regional Center for the Afghan Border Police in Nimroz Province – AFG/J55" (status: ongoing)	3.9	3.9	Canada	0			
		"Strengthening Pakistan Border Control Capacity – PAK/J61" (status: ongoing)	(3.5)	(2.1)	Canada	(1.4)			

	Outline Action Plan									
	Stage II - Promotion of information and intelligence exchange									
Step		Description	Budget USD million	Current fundings USD million	Donors	2008-2009 Funding Shortfall				
1	Domestic Coordination,	Afghanistan: to be decided	To be determined							
	Information/Intelligence Exchange	Iran: "Integrated Border Control in Iran – IRN/I50 Phase I " (status: ongoing)	(2.5)	(1.7)	France, Ireland, UK	(0.7)				
		Iran: "Promotion and strengthening of intelligence-led investigations capacities – IRN/I52" (status: ongoing)	2.1	0.6	France, UK	1.4				
		Pakistan: "Computer Based Law Enforcement Training to Pakistan – PAK/I47" (status: ongoing)	0.6	0.5	Canada	0.05				
2	Regional Coordination Information/Intelligence Exchange	Iran: "Promotion and strengthening of intelligence-led investigations capacities – IRN/I52" (status: ongoing)	(2.1)	(0.6)	France, UK	(1.4)				
		29.2	17.5		11.7					

Annex II - Map of the UNODC projects in support of the Outline Action Plan

