



CONCEPT NOTE

Research, Analysis and Information

Time Frame: June 2010 – July 2012

Background

Afghanistan faces tremendous drug and crime challenges that require effective responses. As part of its mandate to assist states against drugs and crime, UNODC is in an excellent position to contribute to the discovery and dissemination of authoritative information on nation-wide trends in Afghanistan. UNODC is best known for its opium surveys and its comparative advantage in providing an evidence base for government and international action on drug and crime issues. Next to the Opium Poppy Survey (including eradication and price monitoring), there have been a growing number of UNODC-supported monitoring initiatives, including the Drug Abuse Survey of 2005 (2009 findings to be shortly released), the anti-corruption survey, the provincial profiles and socio-economic assessments, as well as studies on the impact of public awareness campaigns.

UNODC has also been working to further the *Afghanization* process, crafting ownership and research capacity within Government institutions enabling them to monitor counter-narcotics trends. Especially in relation to the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) benchmarks.

The first NDCS was launched by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in May 2003. In 2005, the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) led a four month consultative process among relevant ministerial representatives, which led to the current update of the NDCS, covering the period 2006-2010. The strategy contains the Government's policy goal and key priorities as well as setting out benchmarks by which progress is measured. A new update of the NDCS is required, taking into consideration the progress made over recent years, refining the benchmarks as well as generating greater interconnectivity with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the recent research undertaken by national and international stakeholders alike.



Strengthening the evidence base in this way will support regional advocacy, both through dissemination of accurate 'facts on the ground' and encouragement of government and international partners to adopt effective responses.

Research 'at work'

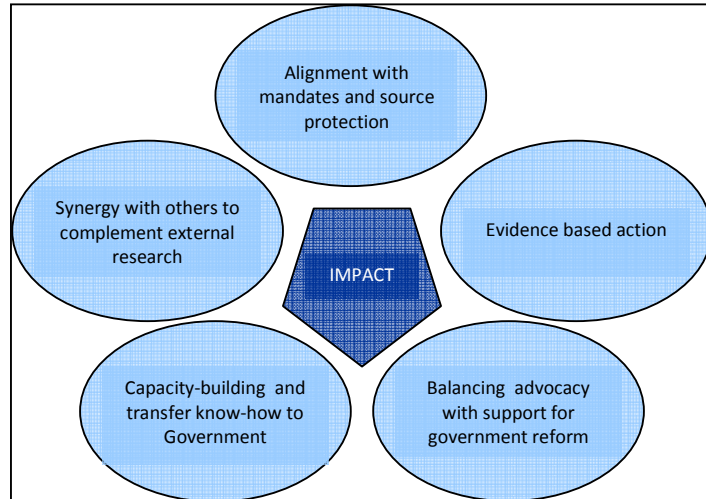
Five principles determine UNODC's Research, Advocacy and Information priorities and methods:

1. **Evidence based action:** UNODC is a service delivery agency and not engaged in academic observation. Research and benchmarks will add to the credibility of the implementation of the NDCS and related topics, providing an evidence base for other actors' policies and UNODC's project development. It serves and influences both counter-narcotics and criminal justice priorities.
2. **Synergy with others:** Many agents in- and outside of Afghanistan are interested in and conduct research on domestic drug and crime issues and their wider impact regionally and international.

Research undertaken by UNODC will complement and not compete, taking advantage of UNODC's access to information and exploiting synergies with wider activities by UNODC and other agents.

3. **Alignment with mandates and source protection:** UNODC will tap efficiently into local data providers, including UNODC provincial offices, unprocessed data from our Survey section, Afghan agencies and international representatives. The information and research platform relates to strategic policy setting, not operational intelligence. We therefore need to balance accurate information collection with the UN mandate bound by neutrality, which demands adherence to confidentiality and caution towards information sources.

4. **Balancing advocacy towards government reform:** Public advocacy is one method of pursuing remedial action by the Afghan government and international donors ('name and shame'). Quiet diplomacy and the restricted presentation of research findings is another method. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, which are to be balanced in order to achieve maximum impact.



5. **Capacity-building and transfer know-how to Government:** The *Afghanization process* requires transferring ownership of the data and the research capability towards the government, the latter, ultimately, taking over the responsibilities while adhering to the criteria of objectivity. The research is to include elements of capacity-building, for example by conducting surveys jointly with the government where possible and transferring ownership of these exercises to the relevant government authorities.

Proposed Areas of Intervention

- ***Measuring progress - Developing benchmarks for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the NDCS***

On the basis of its analytical work UNODC contributed to the development of the Afghan Government's National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) first in 2003 and then again in 2005. In spite of significant progress made, also thanks to an improved national institutional capacity in data collection and analysis in several sectors, the establishment of baselines as well as monitoring of progress made against set benchmarks has proved to be so far rather difficult and incomplete. There appears to be consensus among national institutions and international partners on the need for a more comprehensive analysis of progress towards counter-narcotics targets set forward by the NDCS, as well as creating more interconnection with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the recent research undertaken by national and international stakeholders alike.

In view of the revision of the NDCS scheduled for 2010, UNODC plans to support the refinement of benchmarks and contribute to devising a monitoring system. UNODC recognizes the ownership of the strategy development process should remain with the national counterparts, particularly the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, which underlines the importance of establishing data collection and analytical capacity within Afghan institutions.

Next to the MCN, partners in the design phase as well as for implementation will be the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), as well as Central Statistics Department (CSD), High Office of the Oversight (HOO), Attorney-General's Office (AGO), the Supreme Court (SC), the Independent Department for Local Government (IDLG). UNAMA as a principal coordinating UN agency will be consulted with other relevant UN agencies, along with other relevant international stakeholders such as UK, USA, ISAF/NATO, etc.

To this end, UNODC proposes to distinguish between refining existing indicators and developing new indicators – in the immediate term – and establishing a monitoring system in the medium to longer term. Objective measurement should be sought through comprehensive counter-narcotics indicators and these are distinct from whatever the Government may choose as its counter-narcotics strategy. It may be efficient to use some of these indicators to measure the strategy's progress (i.e. benchmarks), but an independent set of indicators should be established in order to ensure that the strategy and benchmarks do not become self-referential. In order to achieve the above following activities are planned:

- 1) Identification of comprehensive set of counter-narcotics indicators and further align the Government of Afghanistan and UNODC's existing analytical work with the identified indicators;
- 2) Rapid Assessment of data availability/collection and analytical capacity. With national counterparts, take stock of data availability and assess data collection and analytical capacity (both national and provincial levels);
- 3) Carry out baseline studies in order to obtain evidence for future monitoring as well as strategy development – this will also contribute to the NDCS revision in the course of 2010;
- 4) Further align UNODC's existing analytical work with the identified indicators;
- 5) Build capacity within MCN and other relevant institutions to cover all the pillars as identified in the NDCS (and also include issues such as drug-related corruption) with a view to transferring full responsibility to national counterparts;
- 6) Devise a monitoring mechanism within the MCN interfacing with main national institutions, authorities and agencies in charge of collection of necessary data in line with the new NDCS benchmarks;
- 7) Analysis of UNODC and MCN activity in data collection by developing/expanding areas of major concern.

- ***Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme***

The Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme (ICMP) was initiated in 1999 to create a national system to monitor the illicit cultivation of crops in Afghanistan. In close partnership with the MCN, UNODC's survey section operates this programme with a central team in Kabul overseeing coordinators in six different regions overseeing approximately 400 surveyors spread over the country. The survey team collects and analyses information on the location and extent of opium cultivation, potential opium production and the socio-economic situation in rural areas. Recently the section also took on the responsibility to monitor cannabis crops.

Information collection is based on a sampling approach that combined the use of satellite imagery and extensive field visits. The information on the location and extent of opium cultivation is estimated through interpretation satellite images. Satellite images are also used to confirm the eradication verification measures by the ground surveyors. The village survey consists of responses to questionnaire from farmers and headman of the villages on cultivation



and the socio economic situation of families in rural areas.

Various other field based surveys include: segment survey to support the satellite image interpretation; target survey to identify opium cultivation locations for acquiring satellite images; yield surveys for opium production estimation; drug price surveys on a monthly basis; drug flow survey on trafficking and eradication verification.

The ICMP is of crucial significance to policy goals and programme implementation in Afghanistan:

- 1) Key stakeholders (GoA, UNODC, UK and US) use opium survey results to formulate their strategies;
- 2) The Good Performance Initiative (GPI) is decided based on the opium survey results;
- 3) Eradication expenses are paid based on results of eradication verification survey;
- 4) Periodical updates provide inputs for planning counter narcotic actions such as information campaign, alternative livelihood activities, eradication plans);
- 5) Information gathered through ICMP by the survey section forms the foundation of UNODC's flagship publications: Opium Surveys, Winter Assessments, Opium Price Reports and Eradication Verification surveys, considered as public information.

UNODC is undertaking a capacity building exercise with the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) to initiate the transfer of survey responsibilities. This will involve :

- 1) Training of Ministry officials in GIS and Surveying (Completed);
- 2) Possible relocation of the UNODC survey team to MCN;
- 3) Upgrade of MCN technical infrastructure including information technology (IT).

The capacity building plan for 2010-2012 is envisaged as: Remote sensing and GIS (Focus in 2010-2011); Survey statistics (Focus in 2011); and Program management (Focus in 2012). Significant achievements have been made to date: In March 2010, MCN staff was in a position to compile the first eradication verification report of the year with support from UNODC. MCN also compiled and sent out the first monthly price monitoring report with support from UNODC.

- ***The institutional glue: the section of Research, Advocacy and Information (RAI)***

RAI is a cross-cutting section designed to identify and exploit information sources relevant to UNODC's mandates and strategy in Afghanistan, and to advocate and disseminate the research an information to targeted groups, the media and the wider public. Within UNODC, it serves as the institutional umbrella for the research activities and guides effective program development and project implementation as well as supports HQ-driven research on Afghanistan by contributing field information, advice and drafting.

Activities proposed for funding under this concept paper

Activities	Timeframe	Estimated Cost (\$)
Measuring progress - Developing benchmarks for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the NDCS		\$4,000,000
Illicit Crop monitoring Programme		\$1,500,000
Institutional glue: Research, Advocacy and Information		\$1,500,000
TOTAL		\$7,000,000