STRATEGIES TO COUNTER OPIATE PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Are we on the right track?

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Groupe URD (Urgence – Réhabilitation – Développement) provides support to the humanitarian and post-crisis sector. It aims to improve humanitarian practices in favour of people affected by crises via several activities: operational research, programme evaluations, the production of methodological tools, providing organizational support and training, in France and abroad.

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ACRONYMS

ADP  Alternative Development Programme
AFD  Agence Française de Développement
AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANDS Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AREDP Afghanistan Rural Entreprise Development Programme
ARIES Afghanistan Rural Investment and Entreprise Strengthening
BRAC Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CARD-F Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development - Facility
CDC Community Development Councils
CEPC Central Eradication Planning Cell
CERP Commanders Emergency Response Fund
CJTF Criminal Justice Task Force
CNPA Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan
CNTF Counter Narcotics Trust Fund
DACAAR Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DEA Drug Enforcement Administration
DFID Department for International Development (UK)
DoJ Department of Justice
EU European Union
FAO Food and Agriculture organization
FCO Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)
GAA German Agro Action
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GLE Governor-led Eradication
GPI Good Performer's Initiative
GTZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR Harm Reduction
ICOS International Council on Security and Development
IDEA-NEWS Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives / North, East, West
IDPA Integrated Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Project in Afghanistan
IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC International Finance Corporation
INL Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISAF International Security Assistance Force
JSU Judiciary Security Unit
MAIL Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MCN Ministry of Counter-narcotics
MDM Médecins du Monde
<table>
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>MISFA</td>
<td>Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan</td>
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<td>MoI</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
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<td>MoJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<td>MoPH</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Health</td>
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<td>MRRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development</td>
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<td>NADF</td>
<td>National Agricultural Development Framework</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>NDCS</td>
<td>National Drug Control Strategy</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>NRAP</td>
<td>National Rural Access Programme</td>
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<td>NSP</td>
<td>National Solidarity Programme</td>
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<td>PAL</td>
<td>Programme for Alternative Livelihoods</td>
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<td>PEF</td>
<td>Poppy Eradication Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGAR</td>
<td>Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction</td>
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<td>TARGET</td>
<td>Targeted Anti-trafficking Regional Communication, Expertise and Training</td>
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<td>OST</td>
<td>Opiate substitution Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMA</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
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<td>WatSIP</td>
<td>Water Sanitation and Irrigation Programme</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost ten years after the international community's military intervention and the fall of the Taliban regime, the question of the production of opium in Afghanistan is, more than ever, of central concern to actors and the international community in particular. During the past decade, there has been a succession of policies and programmes aiming to reduce drug production either through eradication, repression or via the implementation of alternative agricultural or rural development activities. What results have these produced? What lessons can be drawn from them?

In order to answer these questions, this study analyses the different activities which have been implemented in the last decade as part of the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) – by highlighting their strengths and weaknesses and the constraints involved in implementing them – and makes some strategic and operational recommendations to contribute to the debate about policies and programmes. Due to the scale of the subject (the wide variety of activities and large number of actors with very different approaches), the decision was made to analyse in detail a selection of development programmes directly or indirectly related to the fight against opiates, and to give only a general overview of the achievements and key issues of the other pillars of the NDCS.

The study is based on detailed analysis of existing literature and on interviews with representatives of Afghan ministries, international governments, United Nations agencies and researchers who work on counter-narcotics activities.

Opium in Afghanistan

Opium production was marginal in Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion. It began to increase in the context of the war economy and as a coping strategy in the 1990s before becoming a main cash crop, with a considerable increase in the area cultivated since 2001. Production has fallen since the record levels of 2007, but it still remains very high: 6,900 tonnes were harvested in 2009, for a cultivated area of 123,000 ha. A noticeable change took place in the location of opium cultivation between 2004, when production was generalised across the country, and 2009, when production became concentrated in southern provinces and in the western province of Badghis. Certain provinces have obtained “poppy-free” status for a number of years, whether consecutive or not. This is awarded by UNODC to provinces which have less than 100 ha of poppies. In parallel to the increasing area cultivated, there has been an enormous boom in the entire opiate industry in the last decade. 60% of the drugs produced in Afghanistan – morphine and heroin – are currently made in laboratories in the main provinces where poppies are grown (Helmmand, Nangarhar and Badakhshan).
However, it is not currently possible to say whether the decline which has been observed since 2007 in several provinces will continue in the long term because opium production is influenced by a number of different factors: agro-ecological factors (climate, irrigation), socio-economic factors (food security and poverty; access to credit, land and agricultural services; level of economic dependence on opium poppies), political and security factors as well as factors related to production, processing and commercialisation of opiates (know-how; the relative price of wheat and opium; production in other countries; access to chemical precursors; the proximity of laboratories and trafficking networks). What is more, Afghan opium production is higher than world consumption and large stocks exist. The current drop in production may be a strategy to control prices.

The fact that production is concentrated in the South shows that there is a strong link between opium production and insecurity (as there is a strong link between illegal activities in general and insecurity, the production of hemp having also increased significantly in the regions of the South). The reasons for the current drop in production are different depending on the province. In the provinces of Nangarhar and Balkh, it is clear that the actions of governors have played a crucial role. In the other provinces, economic and agro-ecological factors such as changes in the price of wheat and opium and poor poppy harvests have pushed farmers to give priority to their own food security and grow wheat.

To reduce production, trafficking and the consumption of opiates sustainably, the Afghan government has defined a global strategy based on 4 priority areas – prohibition and repression, the development of alternative livelihoods, the treatment of drug addiction and the strengthening of institutional capacity at central and provincial levels – and 8 pillars of action. Alongside the government, a large number of actors are involved in counter-narcotics activities, the principal ones being the American and British governments, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). NGOs are also very involved as implementing partners in development and drug-addiction treatment programmes.

**Opium poppies and development**

Rural development programmes are at the heart of the national strategy. The approach used in these has progressively changed. Initially, following the example of other countries, actors tried to introduce alternative crops – which would compete directly with poppies. Although certain crops, like saffron, did have a certain amount of success, the implementation of these programmes, which were often only pilot programmes, were beset with difficulties, particularly in relation to sustainability.

These crops were then integrated into more comprehensive, “Alternative livelihoods” programmes. These included a wide variety of activities, ranging from organisational support, the development of agricultural and income-generating activities and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. These programmes clearly brought some progress in terms of economic development in certain provinces and encouraged farmers to abandon poppy cultivation, temporarily at least, but it is very difficult to say whether or not they
have had a long-term impact on opium production. The programmes have numerous weaknesses: too short to ensure the long-term success of sectors; over-ambitious objectives in relation to the actors’ capacity; lack of coherence between the different activities implemented; weak integration with local dynamics and national programmes; inadequate targeting of beneficiaries in relation to the issue of opium poppies.

Following these mixed results, most donors have changed strategy. Alternative livelihoods programmes are being replaced by a new concept: mainstreaming measures to counter opium poppy cultivation in agricultural and rural development programmes. The three main sectors involved are agriculture, infrastructure and financial services. These programmes aim to establish stable, long-term agricultural activities (particularly fruit and livestock production) which have high added value, with a supply of inputs and a secure irrigation system and they also aim to provide access to markets and public services while creating short term employment opportunities in construction and allowing access to credit. Thus, the programmes aim to counter the opiate sector by focusing on its strengths.

Several financing mechanisms have been put in place to make disbursement easier and to improve the way development aid is distributed in the context of the fight against opium poppy. In practice, these funds have mainly contributed to funding the government’s large-scale national programmes. The biggest of these, the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF) did not achieve its objectives - few funds disbursed and little connection between the programmes funded and the fight against drugs - and was discontinued. The Good Performers Initiative allocates aid to provinces where less than 100 ha of poppies are cultivated. This mechanism has been more successful, despite problems of transparency. A new initiative, the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD), aims to integrate national agricultural and rural development programmes at the local level. However, management problems, running costs and limited human resources mean that the CARD is subject to the same risks as the CNTF.

**The other fronts of the counter-narcotics strategy**

In addition to development, the national counter-narcotics strategy includes educational and public awareness campaigns, banning and repression, eradication and the treatment of drug addicts.

**Awareness-raising and education** activities take the form of media and communication campaigns for young people and schools. These activities are often badly thought through (very little coordination with other anti-drug activities and little collaboration with local leaders), are implemented on a very small scale and have not had much impact so far.

**Banning and repression** activities aim to penalise traffickers and those further down the chain by seizing merchandise (drugs and chemical precursors), making arrests and prosecuting offenders. With action taken to reinforce international and regional cooperation at borders and improve the capacity of the police and judicial system, these activities have had a certain amount of success: there has been an increase in the number of drug
and precursor seizures, the number of arrests is rising and some high ranking criminals have been imprisoned. However, progress is slow because i) the biggest drug traffickers are often part of, or are linked to, the government, ii) the trafficking networks are very large and are able to adapt rapidly to new constraints, iii) collaboration between states is not easy: there is a great deal of reluctance to exchange strategic information, iv) certain judges and others within the judicial system do not do their jobs properly due to the major risks involved, v) anti-drug laws are not appropriate: no distinction is made between small traffickers, simple middle men and drug barons who have established whole networks.

**Eradication** has been the subject of debate for many years. Though the negative and even counter-productive effects of eradication have been widely documented – the risk of making farmers even poorer, causing resentment against the government and the international community and strengthening popular support for the insurgency, creating an incentive for farmers to grow poppies in order to receive compensation – this strategy was widely used and encouraged in Afghanistan in the 2000s, with little success or effect on the production of opium. Since 2005, between 4% and 10% of the potential production of opium has been eradicated. In 2007, 4% of the total area of cultivation was eradicated in a limited number of provinces (17% in 2008 and 12% in 2009). The drop in the surface area eradicated can be explained in part by a change in strategy since 2007, but also by the insecurity in the South and West where production is concentrated. Today, eradication, which for a long time was promoted by the US, is no longer a priority among actors. Eradication is limited to areas where farmers have clear alternatives to meet their needs. The objective is to make sure that the cultivation of poppies involves a certain level of risk which is dissuasive for farmers.

Drug abuse is a growing problem in Afghanistan, which is spreading to new sections of the population, such as young people: there are approximately one million opium users. Treatment for drug addiction has become more common since 2003, with the setting up of detox centres and reintegration programmes. However, current centres do not cover existing needs and funding is not guaranteed in the long term. What is more, the treatment available is incomplete and does not help with reintegration by providing training or helping people find work, despite the fact that under-employment is the cause of 20% of relapses.

**Conclusion**

*An impact that is difficult to measure*

It is difficult at this point to measure whether the national anti-drug strategy as a whole has really had a positive impact because the results for each pillar have not been sufficiently evaluated or are not easily available, and also because the strategy has been implemented essentially by individual pillar rather than in an integrated manner.

*Positive changes in strategy*

Though slow, practices are changing and there is growing recognition that there is no one replacement crop, nor any one “alternative” form of development, but that only holistic socio-economic and political development will make it possible to reduce dependence on opium
poppy cultivation in a sustainable manner. Lessons learned concerning the damaging effects of a purely repressive approach are gradually being taken on board and a more balanced approach is being adopted between repressive approaches (eradication, banning and criminal justice) and those which aim to support communities (awareness-raising, development, demand reduction). In particular, eradication has now been given a less important role in relation to development, notably due to the change in US strategy since 2007.

Lack of coordination between the different pillars of the national strategy
Nevertheless, there is still a great deal to be done to improve the coordination between development activities and the other counter-narcotics activities, particularly awareness-raising and banning and eradication operations. This lack of integration does serious damage to the effectiveness of the fight against opiates and can even be counter-productive, especially when repressive activities are not accompanied by sufficient levels of economic support.

Coordination problems and differences of approach between actors
Coordination is made more difficult due to the absence of a clearly recognized leader. The Ministry of Counter Narcotics has proved to be incapable of assuming this role because it lacks both the legitimacy and the capacity to do so. Apart from operational aspects, this diversity of approaches and priorities between actors restricts collaboration between institutions. Nevertheless, all actors share the will to work together and achieve greater consensus and mutual understanding of the problem. This lack of coherence between actors, and particularly between donors, and lack of continuity between their strategies is an obstacle to the expansion and sustainability of programmes and funding mechanisms.

Corruption and a lack of political will
Corruption is present at every level and undermines the activities being implemented in every domain. It hinders the actions of the counter-narcotics police and the justice system and limits the effects of eradication. Afghan leaders have not shown a great deal of political will faced with the problem of drugs, which is not surprising as many politicians and people close to the government are involved in drug trafficking. Nevertheless, this situation is changing little by little, notably since the realisation that Afghans are themselves becoming victims of the drug.

Strategic recommendations
There is some confusion over the connection between drug production and economic development, the security situation and governance. The production of opium is considered by most actors to be one of the causes of security problems, corruption and the insurgency. And yet the production of opium is more a symptom of these problems and is a way for many farmers to manage this crisis. By focusing on a symptom of the crisis rather than on its fundamental causes, there is a risk that the economic situation will deteriorate (loss of an essential source of revenue for farmers and businesses which depend on the sector) as will the political situation (increased corruption; resentment felt by farmers against the government and the international community which strengthens the insurgency).
The government and the international community should concentrate their efforts on factors which lead to the production of drugs, such as those linked to the security and political situation (governance, corruption) and those linked to the socio-economic situation and should measure the progress made in the fight against drugs with indicators related to these factors. This would make it possible to refocus the actions of the international community on improving the living conditions of Afghans, which is a political as well as social and economic issue.

Operational recommendations for development programmes

1. Improving the effectiveness and impact of development programmes implemented as part of the fight against opiates requires long-term investment.

2. The planning and implementation of operations needs to be flexible in order to respond to the needs of different population groups and adapt to different situations which change over time.

3. The pertinence of operations depends on how well factors influencing opium poppy cultivation at the local level have been analysed and how factors such as economic development, security and governance are integrated into strategies which are adapted to the local context.

4. It is therefore important to contribute (financially and technically) to the government’s national development programmes in different key sectors, such as agriculture, rural development, job creation and industrial development.

5. Supporting rural and agricultural development programmes run by NGOs remains pertinent nevertheless. It is therefore important to find a way of coordinating these cross-sector programmes and the government’s sector-based development programmes.

6. It is important to continue diversifying and developing different agricultural products, taking great care with regard to the choice of products and beneficiaries, the quality of market studies in order to avoid creating artificial markets and dependence, processes which allow actors to become autonomous and the sustainability of supply systems for quality inputs.

7. The development of products on a large scale can not be based simply on investment in processing. Investment is also necessary in other infrastructure such as packaging factories and power plants, for example.

8. Financial and technical support is needed to develop rural and agricultural credit mechanisms and products.

9. In addition to their role in long-term economic and social development, projects which develop rural infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams, etc.) which use a large amount of labour are a means of reducing the amount of labour available in the short term for the cultivation of poppies.

10. It is important to increase the support given to demand reduction programmes in order to increase the quantity and quality of services for drug addicts.
11. It is important to improve the monitoring system for all programmes and to adopt indicators which measure how much the living conditions of Afghans have improved (revenue, food security, access to basic services, security, etc.) and the sustainability of the results obtained.

12. Each actor should contribute to improving inter-institutional collaboration, first of all by integrating their operations with the actions of the relevant ministries, and then by continually and pro-actively sharing information with the other actors involved.
1.

Introduction

For some years, Afghanistan has been at the heart of the production, processing and commercialisation of opium and opiates. 92% of world production in 2009 came from Afghanistan. Though poppies have been cultivated for several centuries in certain provinces of the country, today’s opium poppy economy is a recent development, initially in the context of the war economy following the Soviet invasion and as a coping strategy in the 1990s, then as the main cash crop, with a considerable increase in the amount cultivated since 2001. These activities have continued to be a key factor in the country’s civil war and the international community has allocated considerable resources to counter opium production as a part of its wider strategy against the armed opposition.

The object of this study is to analyse all the strategies which have been implemented over the last decade to counter the Afghan opiate industry. These strategies concern the cycle of production, commercialisation and use of opiates. They include awareness-raising, repression (eradication of crops, seizure, legal action against different categories of actor, etc.) and the implementation of alternative programmes (agriculture, but also, more generally, rural development).

After a quick presentation of the methodology used and the constraints encountered in chapter II, chapter III gives a general overview of the issue of opium in Afghanistan (level of production, factors which influence levels of production and the National Drug Control Strategy). Chapter IV focuses on the development-related strategies which have been put in place to counter the production of opium poppies and then chapter V deals with the other actions taken to counter opiate production. Finally, in chapter VI, the team’s conclusions are presented and a certain number of recommendations are made.
2. Object, methodology and limits of the study

2.1 Object of the study

The object of this study was to:

- Define the characteristics of different counter-narcotics approaches in relation to the cycle of production, commercialisation and use of opiates in Afghanistan: their objectives, the actors involved and the principle results obtained;

- Identify, via a review of the literature (published and grey) and interviews with Afghan and international experts, the key factors (geographic, political, economic, etc.) which contributed to the success or failure of the different strategies;

- Consider issues of inter-actor concertation/consultation due to the diversity of approaches and strategies.

2.2 Methodology

The study involved:

- An in-depth analysis of existing literature, presented in annex 1: much has been written in the last decade on the issue of drugs including the work of researchers and experts, investigations and studies by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), documents and evaluations of counter-narcotics programmes. The research team collected and summarised this rich source of information in order to cover all the different aspects of counter-narcotics activities.

- A series of interviews carried out with representatives of the Afghan state and several other countries, representatives of UNODC at their headquarters and in the field, political and military representatives from different countries and researchers who work in the field of counter-narcotics (see annex 2). The research team travelled to Vienna to UNODC headquarters and to Kabul to meet the main actors involved: the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), the French, US and UK development agencies, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), UNODC, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and development actors (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit - GTZ). A number of telephone interviews were carried out in addition to these face-to-face interviews. Finally, experts in drug-related issues were consulted at the end of the study to validate the results and discuss the recommendations.
2.3 Constraints

The research team encountered a certain number of constraints in carrying out the literature review and analysis:

- *Lack of information about the “real” effects of programmes on drug production:* it was difficult to find actual evaluation documents either because organisations did not want to make them available or because there are no real mechanisms to measure the effects of programmes.

- *Scope of the subject and exhaustivity of the report:* the subject of the fight against opium is vast and includes a wide range of strategies and a large number of actors with very different approaches. The choice was made to concentrate more specifically on a selection of development programmes directly or indirectly related to the fight against opiates. A general overview is also given of the other strategies which have been adopted in the last decade, but the information presented is by no means exhaustive.
3. Opium in Afghanistan

3.1 The huge growth of the opiate industry in the last decade

3.1.1 Opium poppy cultivation before 2001

Before the Soviet invasion, opium poppies were only cultivated in a marginal way and for local use in Afghanistan. Cultivation was concentrated in very poor regions in the South and certain regions in the North.

Following the Soviet occupation, illegal activities such as the cultivation of opium poppies became part of the war economy: illegal activities were used to finance military spending and the war created favourable conditions for their development. Thus, during the 1980s, farmers, whose agricultural land was systematically bombed, compensated for the lack of surface area that could be cultivated by cultivating the much more profitable opium poppy. Furthermore, the absence of control by the central authorities over a large part of the rural territories left the door open to traffickers. Production, which had continued to develop during the war against the communists, literally exploded after their withdrawal in the 90s. In order to cope with military spending, warlords pushed farmers to sow more opium poppies (Labrousse, 2005).

Following the complete ban on cultivation decreed by the Taliban regime in 2000, the production of opium fell for the first time in 2001 (cf. figure1). The drop in production was spectacular, with almost no opium being grown throughout the country, except in the province of Badakhshan, which was not under Taliban control. This drastic reduction in production was hailed by the United Nations as "one of the most remarkable successes ever" in the fight against drugs. There are many factors which may have influenced the Taliban's decision to ban opium poppy production. It is possible that, by acting against the production of the drug, they wanted to give a sign of "good will to the international community" in order to obtain financial aid. But mainly it would seem that they limited production to use up stocks, which were very high in 2000, in order to control the price of opium. It should be noted that the Taliban ban only concerned the cultivation of opium poppies and not the other activities of the sector: processing and trafficking were not stopped.

Since 2001 and the fall of the Taliban regime, there has been a boom in opium production.
3.1.2 The explosion of production since 2004

Compared to the 1990s, the production of opiates has increased a great deal in the last decade. In 2007, the record level of 8,200 tonnes for a cultivated area of 193,000 ha (cf. figure 1 and 2) was reached. Since then, production has fallen, but it has remained very high (6,900 tonnes in 2009) and significantly higher than its level prior to 2000, which was around 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes.

The area of land used to grow opium has grown significantly since 2001. In 2004, the production of opiates was generalised throughout the country, with very high levels of production in certain districts of Badakhshan, and in provinces in the East (Nangarhar, Kunar), in the North (Sari Pul) and in the South (Hilmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Day Kundi). In 2009, the geographical distribution of opium poppy cultivators changed significantly: 20 provinces became “poppy-free”, production became more intense and concentrated in the provinces of the South (with >10,000 ha of land cultivated), and in the province of Badghis in the West of the country (cf. figure 3).

\[\text{Sources: ONUDC and ONUDC/MCN opium surveys 1994-2009}\]

\[\text{The term “Poppy free” is used by UNODC to describe provinces where less than 100 ha of opium poppy is cultivated. It was first used in 2007.}\]
The opiate industry as a whole has grown in parallel to opium poppy cultivation. Activities to transform opium into drugs (morphine and heroin) has increased significantly with the installation of laboratories in the main provinces where production takes place (Helmand, Nangarhar and Badakhshan). It is estimated that 60% of the current production of morphine and heroin takes place in Afghanistan.

The opiate sector therefore has considerable weight in the Afghan economy: the export value of opiates represents a quarter of the licit Afghan GDP (cf. figure 4). However, this proportion is getting smaller due to the drop in production since 2007 combined with the drop in the market value of the drug and also the growth of the licit Afghan GDP.
3.1.3 How sustainable is the reduction which has been observed since 2007?

The reduction in the overall area cultivated and the number of provinces involved in opium production since 2007 seem to indicate that the fight against drugs has achieved some positive results. The strategies implemented have without doubt contributed to these results. In the provinces of Balkh and Nangarhar, it is clear that measures taken by the governors have been crucial. Following the example of the Taliban ban of 2001, local governors adopted a very proactive political strategy with the goal of reducing production. In Balkh, a successful awareness-raising campaign led by the governor before the planting season has resulted in reduced production since 2007. In Nangarhar, the governor used his personal relations with local tribal chiefs and powerful people, as well as with the US army, to impose the ban in his province. In Helmand, the eradication campaigns and the distribution of wheat seeds in the food-zone have reduced the area where poppies are cultivated by 37% (UNODC, 2009).

However, a certain number of other factors tend to put these good results in perspective and cast doubt over the sustainability of the reduction which has taken place. Firstly, the Afghan production of opium, which was estimated to be 6900 tonnes in 2009, is higher than global consumption, which is estimated to be 5000 tonnes (UNODC, 2009). There are therefore large stocks of opium (two years’ worth at least). The reduction of production might be a strategy by traffickers to control prices. Secondly, the relative prices of opium and wheat have changed a lot with the rise in wheat prices since 2007, which has encouraged farmers to favour their food security and grow wheat. But what will happen if the price of wheat drops significantly in the future? The strategies of provincial governors, who promise the population aid as a means of encouraging them to respect the ban, may not always guarantee that there has been a sustainable change in terms of production. For example, in Nangarhar, after two years of low production in 2005 and 2006 due to a dynamic campaign by the governor, it rose to a very high level again in 2007 because the population were “tired” of waiting for the aid promised by the
governor and they had been impoverished by two years of non-cultivation. Finally, a province where there are no opium poppies does not necessarily mean that there are no drugs: certain provinces where no opium is cultivated are nevertheless places where trafficking and processing takes place. In Badakhshan, for example, the area cultivated has decreased considerably since 2007, but processing and trafficking still takes place regularly.

There are therefore no real indicators that the observed reduction is permanent. It may be part of the short-term strategies of different actors involved in the sector. The use of the “poppy-free” concept is criticized from this point of view, as it does not give any indication of the sustainability of the observed reduction. Furthermore, the regions in the South where production is highest are far from being able to claim poppy-free status. And poppy cultivation is not the only drug produced in Afghanistan: the country is also the biggest producer of cannabis resin in the world. Like opium poppies, hemp is principally cultivated in the regions of the South, but it is also grown in several poppy-free provinces (ONUDC, 2010). There is a high risk that the drop in opium production will be accompanied by a rise in cannabis production.

In order for action against drug production to be effective and sustainable, it is therefore important to understand all the different factors which influence opium production.

### 3.2 Factors which influence opium production

The development of the opiate sector is dependent on a large number of factors which can be split into four categories:

- factors related to the political and security situation,
- factors related to the agro-ecological situation (edaphic and land conditions),
- socio-economic factors, including those linked to capitalisation and food security,
- factors directly related to the opiates industry.

#### 3.2.1 Factors related to the political and security situation

The 2009 UNODC report highlights the link between the security situation and opium production, which explains why production is concentrated in the South of the country as illustrated in figure 5.
The relations between insecurity and opium production are complex and multifold. First of all, insecurity limits the central government’s capacity to establish the rule of law and enforce the ban on opium poppy cultivation, and all the more so as local governments are often directly involved in drug trafficking. In addition, though it is not their priority to encourage or force farmers to produce opium, the Taliban do nothing to dissuade it. On the contrary, they benefit from it through a 10% tax on all activities. Furthermore, by offering protection against eradication and banning activities implemented by the government authorities, they reinforce their political influence over a part of the population. The insecure regions of the South are close to the borders with Pakistan and Iran. These borders are very fluid and all kinds of trafficking takes place, making the export of opium and drugs easier. There is also synergy between insecurity and opium production: it is in the interest of traffickers and producers to maintain lawlessness so that they continue their illegal activities. Lastly, in an insecure context, opium cultivation is used by the farmers as a way of mitigating risks: inputs are supplied via trafficking networks and the harvest acts as a form of insurance as it is easy to transport if it is necessary to move.

3.2.2 Factors related to the agro-ecological situation

- **Climatic and agro-ecological conditions / agrarian systems**: opium poppy cultivation maximises the yield of irrigated land, using less water than wheat and vegetable cultivation. As it is more resistant to drought and uses less irrigation water, it involves less risk than other crops. In areas which have dysfunctional irrigation systems or which are dependent on the seasonal variations of watercourses or underground irrigation systems known as karez (Nangarhar, Badakhshan), choosing to cultivate opium poppies is a way of limiting risks. In certain areas favourable to double-cropping, the choice of whether to cultivate opium poppy depends on time management, bottlenecks in cropping calendars and how long plots are occupied. On the other
hand, the decision not to cultivate opium poppy can also be the consequence of poor harvests several years in a row, as was observed in Ghor.

### 3.2.3 Factors related to the socio-economic situation

- **Food security and poverty**: The decision to cultivate opium poppy is not made on the same terms depending on the socio-economic situation of households. For the wealthy or big landowners, cultivating opium poppy is not in direct competition with food-producing crops, which are necessary to ensure families’ food security. For poor households who are unable to meet their food needs with the little land that they own, the choice of whether to cultivate opium poppy is more complex. They are faced with a dilemma: should they cultivate opium poppy which they will be able to sell without any problems – often even before the harvest – or should they cultivate wheat to try to maintain their food security? Many farmers have also been forced to sell their stock and get into debt following periods of drought, such as between 1999 and 2002. As a result, cultivating opium poppies was their only source of became their only source of livelihood.

- **Access to credit**: The issue of access to credit is a key factor in understanding what drives farmers to cultivate opium poppies. The opiate sector is based on a system of advance payments for crops: the traffickers buy a crop in advance, often at a price that is well below the market price, thus allowing farmers to get through the lean period. The traffickers also give farmers the possibility of credit. As a result, certain farmers find themselves locked in a cycle of debt to the traffickers which prevents them from stopping poppy cultivation.

- **Access to agricultural and rural development services (market, agricultural and road infrastructure ...)**: The decision to cultivate opium poppies is also connected to whether or not they have access to markets, roads and the infrastructure necessary for stocking and preserving the product. Opium poppies have many advantages in this respect in relation to other crops: they are easy to store and transport and they can be sold to traffickers at the farm gate. In places where farmers have access to agricultural services and markets, it is easier to encourage other crops. For example, in the province of Nangarhar, the data shows that there has been a very large increase in the amount of vegetables being grown in districts around Jalalabad. This did not happen elsewhere because of restricted access to markets and difficulty in transporting crops (Mansfield & Pain, 2007). In the province of Ghor, certain farmers chose to grow opium poppies despite poor yields because there were no agricultural services which gave them access to other crops.

- **Dependence of the local economy on opium poppy cultivation**: In regions where a lot of opium is produced, such as Helmand, numerous economic activities have developed around the opiate sector which has made the local economy as a whole (shops, etc.) dependent on it. In other provinces, the situation is more uneven, with the existence of a wider variety of economic activities, around, for example, large cities like Mazar-i- Sharif in the province of Balkh or, as noted above, Jalalabad in Nangarhar province.
3.2.4 Factors directly related to the opiate sector

- **Past opium poppy cultivation and know-how**: the cultivation of opium poppies and the extraction of opiate substances require know-how. In certain provinces, such as Badakhshan, opium poppies have been cultivated on a small scale for many decades and consumed locally whereas in other provinces such as Ghor and Balkh, it has only been introduced recently.

- **The price of opium**: The price of opium has varied a great deal over the last decade, with a market which is regulated on the basis of supply and demand: a sudden increase in supply inevitably causes the price to fall and vice versa. In 2001, following the Taliban ban, the producer received 600 US$ for a kilogram of dried opium. Since 2003, the price has been falling (cf. figure 6). In 2009, the average price was 64 US$/Kg (ONUDC, 2009). It should be noted that the price also varies a great deal depending on when it is sold (before, during or after the harvest) and the province.

![Figure 6. Average farm gate price of dry opium (US$/Kg), 2002-2007](image)

Source: ONUDC/MCN opium surveys 2009

The drop in price of dry opium played a decisive role in reducing production in certain provinces like Ghor.

- **Relative prices of wheat and opium**: Parallel to the fall in price of dry opium, the price of wheat has gone up sharply on the Afghan markets, thus modifying the rates of exchange between wheat and opium and increasing the competitiveness of wheat in relation to opium poppy. In 2003, the gross value of a hectare of opium poppy was 27 times that of a hectare of wheat. In 2009 the ratio had fallen to 1 to 3. In terms of net value, this ratio is even smaller because opium is labour intensive and is therefore more expensive to cultivate. According to estimates by UNODC, net income from opium was only twice that of wheat in 2009\(^2\) (ONUDC, 2009). The drop in production since 2007 is partly attributable to this poor ratio: farmers give priority to their food security, and therefore to wheat cultivation, which is very expensive on the market.

\(^2\) This result does not take into account income generated by the sale of other opium and wheat derivatives such as straw.
• **The production of opium in other countries:** Labrousse (2005) shows that from the end of the 1970s, the measures taken against drug production in Pakistan and Iran, and the reduction in production in the golden triangle (Myanmar and Laos) following the drought, created the conditions for Afghanistan to take over from these countries. This drop in production in the golden triangle was confirmed during the 1990s, opening up new markets to the Afghan opiate sector (cf. figure 8). However, Afghan production is now so high that it outstrips worldwide demand and there is a stockpile of 2000 tonnes.

![Figure 7. Proportion of Afghan opiates on the world market (tonnes), 1994-2009](image)

Source: ONUDC/MCN opium surveys 2009

• **Access and price of precursors for processing opium into heroin:** A number of chemical compounds (such as ammonium chloride and acetic anhydride) are needed to transform opium into heroin and morphine. These chemical precursors are not made in Afghanistan. They therefore need to be imported and their price is subject to increases. Access and proximity to the precursors are therefore key factors for the activities of clandestine laboratories which have grown in number in the last decade. At the regional level, major variations in price and levels of access are apparent between the regions of the South and West, where prices are particularly low and those of the North where prices are particularly high (UNODC, 2009).

• **The presence of opium processing sites:** The number of clandestine opium processing laboratories has grown in the last decade (Helmand, Nangarhar, and Badakhshan). The proximity of these laboratories influences the choice of whether to cultivate opium as they contribute to the economic dynamic around opium in the province and provide a nearby market for farmers’ produce.

• **Access / proximity to international trafficking networks** (Pakistan/Iran and Central Asia): The main outlets for drugs produced in Afghanistan are external markets. Access and proximity to international trafficking networks is therefore an essential factor in maintaining and developing the sector. The regions adjacent to Iran and Pakistan, some of which have very porous borders, are doorways to regional and international networks.
3.2.5 Factors which interact differently depending on the province

Afghan provinces have different profiles and have evolved differently in relation to opium poppy cultivation. Over the last 15 years, each province has experienced rises and falls in production in varying degrees, as figure 8 shows for 5 Afghan provinces (Badakhshan, Balkh, Ghor, Helmand and Nangarhar).

![Figure 8. Area of opium poppy cultivation in 5 provinces of Afghanistan (Badakhshan, Balkh, Ghor, Helmand, Nangarhar) (ha), 1994-2009](image)

The differences in production between provinces are therefore the result of complex interaction between the factors presented above and counter-narcotics strategies. Understanding these factors is essential to understand the success or failure of a strategy because, as pointed out by Mansfield (2010), “successfully transferring an approach or “model” that has proven effective in one province or another, or even replicating that same approach over time in the same province, will typically prove elusive”.

Table 1 below presents a summary of the principle factors which affect levels of opium production in the five Afghan provinces and Annex 3 gives a more detailed account of how production has evolved in each of these provinces.

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3 Mansfield, D. Where have all the flowers gone? Assessing the sustainability of current reductions in opium production in Afghanistan, 2010.
Table 1. Factors which influence the production of opium in 5 Afghan provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to the political and security situation</th>
<th>Badakhshan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghor</th>
<th>Helmand</th>
<th>Nangarhar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political and security situation/ power relations / involvement of local governments in drug trafficking</td>
<td>Relatively important role of local governors</td>
<td>Strong role of local governors and relative security</td>
<td>Non determining</td>
<td>High level of insecurity</td>
<td>Strong role of local governors and variable security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to the agro-ecological situation</th>
<th>Badakhshan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghor</th>
<th>Helmand</th>
<th>Nangarhar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climatic and agro-ecological conditions / agrarian systems</td>
<td>Mountainous areas, short irrigated valleys</td>
<td>River with good irrigated land (particularly upstream)</td>
<td>Mountainous areas, rain-fed land, poor opium poppy yield</td>
<td>River and large irrigated valley (food-zone) ; northern areas less favourable</td>
<td>Kabul and Kunar rivers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to the socio-economic situation</th>
<th>Badakhshan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghor</th>
<th>Helmand</th>
<th>Nangarhar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food security/poverty</td>
<td>Chronic food insecurity in mountainous areas</td>
<td>Food security in upstream areas</td>
<td>Major poverty and chronic food insecurity</td>
<td>Food security in the food zone</td>
<td>Variable food security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to agricultural and rural development services</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Good (particularly around Mazar-i-Sharif)</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Difficult because of insecurity</td>
<td>Good around Jalalabad but limited in the rest of the province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on opium cultivation within the local economy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>High (except around Jalalabad)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors directly related to the opiate sector</th>
<th>Badakhshan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghor</th>
<th>Helmand</th>
<th>Nangarhar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past opium cultivation and know-how</td>
<td>Yes, therapeutic use of opium</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to and/or presence of opium processing sites</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (large number)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between price of wheat/price of opium</td>
<td>Weak influence</td>
<td>Moderate influence</td>
<td>Strong influence (preference for wheat)</td>
<td>No influence</td>
<td>Moderate influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to / proximity of international trafficking networks</td>
<td>Very favourable borders with Tajikistan and Pakistan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Very favourable</td>
<td>Very favourable, border with Pakistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3. The national strategy and the actors involved

3.3.1 The National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS)

The Afghan government’s National Drug Control Strategy was drawn up in 2006 with the objective of reducing the cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs and completely and sustainably eliminating them in the long term. The strategy has four priority areas of activity and eight pillars of action, thus incorporating past lessons in line with the 2004 World Bank report which stated: “No single approach is likely to be effective and sustainable; a combination of different measures, well designed and well-sequenced, will be essential to have any hope of success”.

Each priority area is aimed at one category of actors in particular, three of them being part of the opiate economy (the farmer, traffickers and users). These are:

- Interdiction and law enforcement activities which aim to penalise traffickers and groups further down the line (traders/refiners/exporters) by seizing merchandise (drugs and their precursors) and by bringing to justice and condemning offenders,
- Alternative activities in the broadest sense which aim to provide producers and others involved in opium poppy cultivation (tenant farmers, farm labourers) with viable alternative livelihoods,
- Activities to reduce the demand for drugs and provide drug addicts with treatment,
- Activities which do not directly concern actors from the opiate sector but aim to strengthen the capacity of Afghan governmental institutions in the fight against drugs at the central and provincial levels.

In order to implement each of these priority areas, pillars of action have been defined. The pillars are the means by which counter-narcotics objectives are to be achieved. They include four types of action:

- coercion: international and regional cooperation for the seizure of merchandise, the strengthening of the legal system, law enforcement (arrests), eradication of crops,
- prevention: education and public awareness,
- substitution: development of alternative livelihoods,
- cure: treatment of drug addicts.

In addition to the four pillars above is the strengthening of Afghan institutions, which is essential for the other pillars to be implemented properly.

Organisations involved in the fight against the opiate sector should theoretically align themselves with the NDCS.

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Table 2 presents the four priorities and the eight pillars of action of the NDCS.

Table 2. The National Drug Control Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 priorities</th>
<th>8 pillars of action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disrupting the drug trade by targeting traffickers and their backers and</td>
<td>Public Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eliminating the basis for trade</td>
<td>International and Regional Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods</td>
<td>Alternative Livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the demand for illicit drugs and treatment of problem drug users</td>
<td>Demand Reduction and Treatment of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening state institutions both at the center and in the provinces</td>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eradication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institution Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2 The actors involved

The main actors involved in implementing this strategy are:

Within the Afghan government:
- The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics (MCN) is responsible for national policy, coordination and the monitoring and evaluation of counter narcotics operations.
- The Ministry of the Interior (MoI), which includes a vice ministry in charge of drug-related issues and the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA). The border police are also involved in the fight against the trafficking of opiates and the chemical precursors needed to process opium into morphine and heroin.
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) are responsible for judging people involved in the production and trafficking of drugs (see section 5.2.3 for more details)
- Governors supervise all economic and political development operations in their provinces, including anti-drug operations. They are responsible, among other things, for certain eradication activities: Governor-Led Eradication (GLE).

At the level of the international community:
- The US government is involved in counter-narcotics activities on a number of levels:
  - The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) which comes under the control of the State Department, is responsible for reducing the illegal entry of drugs into the United States and minimising the impact of international crime on the United States and its population. In Afghanistan, it provides the NDCS with support on a range of operations. They recently put in place 7 Counter-Narcotics Advisory Teams (CNAT) in 7 provinces, to provide governors with support in applying the NDCS.
  - The Department of Justice (DOJ) provides the Afghan Ministry of Justice and the CJTF with support in arresting and judging criminals involved in the production and trafficking of drugs.
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which comes under the control of the DOJ, is in charge of all interdiction operations in collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of the Interior.
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are in charge of economic development, which includes “alternative development” programmes.
- The British government was designated partner nation on counter-narcotics at the G8 conference in Tokyo in 2002. However, this sharing of responsibilities was gradually abandoned. The following British government institutions play a role:
  - The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which is responsible for policy and governance issues and law enforcement (eradication and interdiction),
  - The Department for International Development (DFID) which is responsible for development programmes.
- The other donors – the European Union, Canada, Scandinavian countries, France, Italy and Germany – are involved on a much smaller scale than the United States and the United Kingdom. They support a variety of activities, including interdiction operations, and provide support to the police and army. They also finance development programmes.
- NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and foreign armies provide support at the central and regional levels for the implementation of the government’s strategy. They take part in information campaigns to discourage farmers from cultivating opium poppies and in eradication and interdiction operations. The US army has considerable funds at its disposal to finance development operations (essentially infrastructure) via the Commander’s Emergency Response Programme (CERP) (see section 4.3.2).
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – the agency within the United Nations with a mandate to conduct counter-narcotics activities – plays a central role in the management of information. It monitors the evolution of opium production in Afghanistan via an annual report and monitors developments in other drug-related areas (e.g. study of drug users). UNODC also supports the following pillars of action: law enforcement, criminal justice, demand reduction, regional cooperation and, indirectly, alternative livelihoods. It also provides the MCN with support in its inter-institutional coordination role (see section 5.6).
- The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) is mandated to support all coordination efforts for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It proposed to provide support for inter-institutional coordination of counter-narcotics activities and created a unit for this purpose in 2008. However, the responsibility for coordination has since been given back to UNODC. (see section 5.6).
- Many Afghan and international NGOs and private development agencies are also involved in counter-narcotic activities as implementing partners on alternative livelihood programmes and drug addict treatment programmes, the latter concerning NGOs only.
4. Opium poppies and development

Development programmes implemented as part of the fight against the opiate sector in Afghanistan have been strongly influenced by the evolution of approaches globally, without necessarily having integrated the lessons learned (cf. Box 1). Today the concept of alternative livelihoods is a central pillar of the national counter-narcotics strategy which aims to: “strengthen and diversify alternative livelihoods’ that free farmers and other rural workers from dependence on opium cultivation and encourages growth of the licit economy”.

**Box 1. Evolution of approaches to countering opium poppy cultivation around the world**

The first attempts to counter opium poppy cultivation through the implementation of development programmes were made in the 1970s, the first of these being a programme that was designed and implemented in 1972 in Thailand. These were a radical departure from previous strategies to counter illegal cultivation which, until then, had been based almost exclusively on repression (Chouvy, 2009).

The fight against opium poppy cultivation around the world has gone through a succession of different approaches to designing development programmes. The first approach was the introduction of alternative crops. This simple approach was perhaps too simple as it focused only on the cultivation of opium poppy itself without really dealing with the real causes which push the farmers to produce opium. In the 1980s this approach was replaced by the concept of Integrated Rural Development which was more centred on access to alternative sources of revenue and better living conditions. Finally, in the 1990s, the concept of “Alternative development” was born, which was followed by that of “Alternative livelihoods” in the 2000s (Chouvy, 2009). This new form of programme is supposed to be an improvement on previous programmes because it takes the country’s overall context in terms of development into account more effectively.

Several approaches have been adopted in this area over the last decade:
1. Identifying and promoting “alternative crops” to replace opium poppy
2. Alternative livelihoods programmes, such as those implemented by GTZ, USAID and DFID/FAO.
3. Other “normal” agricultural and rural development programmes, without an explicit objective of reducing the production of opium, which are implemented in regions where opium poppies are or could potentially be cultivated and which can contribute to reducing production.
4. Funding mechanisms developed to facilitate the implementation of national programmes which could contribute to reducing the production of opium poppy (CNTF, GPI and CARD).

What were the results of these different approaches? What lessons have been learned from the Afghan experience and how have these been taken into account in the design of new programmes? And finally, to what extent can we evaluate the impact of these initiatives on the production of opium?
4.1 From “alternative crops”...

Experiences in other countries have clearly shown that promoting alternative crops is not an effective way to reduce opium poppy dependence in a sustainable way (cf. Box 1). And yet, many organisations in Afghanistan continue to use the term “alternative crops” or “substitution crops”. It is important to recognise that it is still appropriate to explore different crops which could meet the needs of farmers and compete with opium poppy as part of integrated development approaches.

To understand the potential of “alternative crops” better, the results of several projects implemented in the last decade were analysed. The crops chosen included: saffron (DACAAR project), roses for essential oil (GAA/GTZ/EU project), cotton (AFD project), cashmere (USAID project) and licit opium for the production of morphine (a project promoted by the Senlis Council, renamed the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), but which was aborted because it was considered inappropriate by the Afghan government and donors).

This list is not exhaustive and these crops were selected because they were explicitly presented as alternatives by certain organisations, notably their promoters. Designating a crop as “alternative” is often a subjective distinction because the same crops can be introduced in other programmes as a means of diversifying rural income, whether opium poppy is being cultivated or not. At the same time, crops which are promoted as part of agricultural programmes (e.g. fruit production) can play a significant role in the fight against the opiate sector even though they are not presented as « alternative crops »

Analysis of selected projects shows that the long-term success of these substitution crops essentially depends on two factors:

- **Competitiveness in relation to opium poppies**, on the basis of several criteria, such as the weight value, net profit per hectare, ease of storage and transportation, effective demand on the international markets, the competitiveness of Afghan products in relation to other producers, the place occupied by the crop in the production system and the need for labour.

- **The sustainability of crops** put in place and the ability of Afghan farmers to pursue the activity without external technical and financial assistance once the programme is finished (knowing that opium poppy cultivation benefits from surprisingly sophisticated technical support – experimentation into improved varieties – and an impressively structured sector).

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5 Fruit growing programmes are dealt with in section 4.3.
4.1.1 Poor competitiveness of alternative crops in relation to opium poppy

Table 3 compares alternative crops and opium poppy in order to evaluate the “substitution” potential of each crop.

This analysis shows that the principal advantage of each crop is essentially its high weight value. The projects mentioned were all relatively successful⁶ in terms of the number of farmers involved and the income they made from these crops. The popularity of certain products (saffron and cashmere) and their distribution in other provinces confirm that they are appropriate sources of income for farmers.

Table 4 presents the results of a study conducted in 2007 as part of the Alternative Development programme for Northeast Afghanistan (ADP/N) by USAID in Badakhshan, part of which aimed to develop market garden produce. The authors estimated the net income per hectare for different crops (opium poppy, wheat, vegetables). They based their calculations on data collected by the project teams and data from the Ministry of Agriculture and UNODC. The results show that market garden crops (e.g. onions, cauliflowers, tomatoes and carrots) are very competitive in relation to opium poppy: their revenue per hectare is equivalent to, if not higher than that of opium poppy.

Table 3. Comparison of net income per hectare for opium poppy, wheat and a variety of vegetables, Badakhshan, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Net income per hectare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opium poppy</td>
<td>2,183 US$/ha (UNODC data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,358 US$/ha (ADP/N estimate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated wheat</td>
<td>530 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated wheat + straw</td>
<td>650 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainfed wheat</td>
<td>351 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainfed wheat + straw</td>
<td>431 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion</td>
<td>4,065 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>4,635 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>2,410 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>1,725 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>325 US$/ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USAID, ADP/N. Economic Analysis of net returns to opium poppy, wheat and vegetable, Badakhshan, 2007

However, in addition to weight value and net income per hectare, other factors should be taken into account to understand the competitiveness of alternative crops.

⁶ Except the project promoted by the Senlis Council in favour of licit opium which was refused by the government
### Table 4. Comparison of 5 substitution crops and opium poppy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations involved</th>
<th>Illicit opium poppy</th>
<th>Licit opium poppy</th>
<th>Saffron</th>
<th>Rose oil</th>
<th>Cotton</th>
<th>Cashmere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Senlis Council</td>
<td>DACAAR (DFID/RALF),</td>
<td>GAA / GTZ / EC</td>
<td>AFD / NAPCOD</td>
<td>USAID / Chemonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of project</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cancelled 1998</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provinces involved</td>
<td>Helmand, Kandahar,</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Herat; dissemination in Balkh, Baghlan, Kabul, Wardak, Bamyan and Logar</td>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
<td>North and North-East (Kunduz, Balkh)</td>
<td>Badakhshan, Kandahar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farah, Uruzgan, Zabul, Badghis, Badakhshan, Nangarhar etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of farmers involved</td>
<td>245 200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 500 (7 associations)</td>
<td>500 (31 associations)</td>
<td>28 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area cultivated and production</td>
<td>123 000 ha 6 900 tonnes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>212 ha 600-800 kg</td>
<td>78 ha (400 jeribs) 50 kg oil</td>
<td>80 000 tonnes in 2009 (yields: 2 tonnes/ha)</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price per kilogramme (paid to the farmer and/or on the international markets)</td>
<td>Opium in Afgh.: Price to farmer: 48 to 64 US$/kg Price to traffickers: 220 US$/kg</td>
<td>4 000 US$/kg (retail price of morphine)</td>
<td>3 000 to 5 000 US$/kg on local markets and 6 000 to 8 000 US$/kg on European and US markets (2008)</td>
<td>8 000 US$/kg</td>
<td>Price to farmer: 0.55 US$/Kg</td>
<td>Price to farmer: 16US$/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heroin in Afgh.: 2500 US$/kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Price on markets: 70 US/kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 The data on illicit production of opium is from UNODC’s Opium Survey 2009.
9 GTZ/PAL, 2009 : Lesson Learned Workshop On introducing and promoting Roses as a new commodity in Eastern Afghanistan
11 But according to ICOS, the market has great potential because in more than 150 countries where approximately 80% of the world’s population lives, only a tiny minority of patients who need morphine-based treatment have received any.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Illicit opium poppy</th>
<th>Licit opium poppy</th>
<th>Saffron</th>
<th>Rose oil</th>
<th>Cotton</th>
<th>Cashmere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profit margin per hectare</td>
<td>296 US$/ha (with family labour) or 226 US$/ha (with hired labour)</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>131 US$ (6 300 Afghanis)</td>
<td>Gross income: 679 US$/ha</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of storage</td>
<td>Easy storage, transportation and conservation</td>
<td>Easy storage, transportation and conservation</td>
<td>Good packaging necessary for marketing</td>
<td>Good packaging necessary and distillery needs to be close to the fields</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual demand on the international markets</td>
<td>5 000 tonnes</td>
<td>70 tonnes(^{13}) of opium</td>
<td>High (Holland, USA, Australia and Italy)</td>
<td>4 tonnes (high demands in terms of quality – ISO standard)</td>
<td>26 million tonnes; Possibility of trade with Pakistan which is an importer</td>
<td>16 000 tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition from other producing countries</td>
<td>Low level of production (Myanmar, Laos)</td>
<td>Little competition in relation to potential market (France, India, Hungary, Australia, Spain, Turkey)</td>
<td>Growing competition from Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Morocco, China, South Africa and Georgia.</td>
<td>90 producer countries; China, India, USA and Pakistan are the four biggest producers</td>
<td>China and Mongolia produce 90% of world production(^{14}).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in the production system</td>
<td>1 harvest/year (June–July); possibility of a second (non-poppy) crop depending on altitude, water and irrigated land</td>
<td>As for illicit opium poppy</td>
<td>Short production season, which does not correspond to that of opium poppy</td>
<td>Cultivation only possible above 1000 m altitude</td>
<td>Triennial rotation with wheat and barley</td>
<td>Does not enter into competition with opium poppy as livestock farming takes place on different land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs in terms of labour</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>As for illicit opium poppy</td>
<td>High, but only for a short period different from that of opium poppy</td>
<td>Weak, only for shearing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{13}\) International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Supply of opiates raw materials and demand for opiates for medical and scientific purpose, 2008
\(^{14}\) USAID Cashmere value chain analysis, Afghanistan. 2007
The following factors limit the capacity of crops to replace opium poppy sustainably and significantly:

- **The size of the market and the scale of production**: products with high weight value are often aimed at “niche” markets. Global demand is too limited to encourage a large number of farmers to invest in a sector, especially when it is already occupied by other producing countries. For example, global demand for rose essential oil is only 4000kg/year and there is growing competition from other countries (Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Morocco, China, South Africa and Georgia).

- **The crop’s place in the production system**: if the chosen crop or product is not directly in competition with opium poppy in the production system, it will not necessarily prevent opium production. For example, cashmere obviously concerns livestock farmers rather than crop farmers.

- **Targeted areas and farmers**: the majority of the projects that were analysed were implemented in provinces where the production of opium is weak, or even currently non-existent (saffron was initially introduced in Herat, cotton in Kunduz and in Balkh). Furthermore, the project documents do not say whether farmers who grew opium poppy were particularly targeted. It is therefore very difficult to analyse their impact on opium production levels.

- **The need for labour**: one of the “Achilles heels” of opium poppy is that its cultivation requires a large amount of labour several times a year. However, in a context where there is a shortage of work, this is also an advantage as it allows many households to make a living. Certain crops do not compete with this work market. Saffron, for example, requires a specific type of worker (with nimble fingers!) for a very short period after the opium poppy harvest season. Rose petals are often harvested by the members of a family. These crops do not, therefore, provide many alternative jobs for those in the opium poppy sector.

- **Access to credit**: Substitution crops depend on sectors which are not yet well established and “do not tackle the issue of the main advantage of opium poppy: credit”, as highlighted by Labrousse (2005). It should nevertheless be noted that the majority of programmes today do try to establish relations between the producers and credit programmes, like those run by the Ministry of Agriculture. However, putting these initiatives in place remains difficult. (see current initiatives in section 4.3.3)

- **Who benefits from these alternatives?** The majority of the substitution crops presented concern essentially farmers who own land and who are able to invest in crops in the long term, or at least, to take the risk of innovating. This is the same weakness that was observed in alternative development programmes in the 1990s: “Typically, it is the better off and less dependent on opium who have benefitted the most from alternative development projects”.\(^\text{15}\) Different categories of farmers are involved in the production of opium, for different reasons, and with varying levels of freedom of choice (see the typology in annex 4 drawn from the DFID/World Bank report, *Economic Incentives and development initiatives to reduce opium production*).

\(^\text{15\,Mansfield, D. quoted in Labrousse, A. Afghanistan Opium de guerre, Opium de paix, 2005 (p. 183).}\)
4.1.2 Difficulties in establishing sustainable “alternative” crops

All “substitution crop” projects have encountered constraints and operational difficulties in becoming established:

- **Respecting quality standards and labels:**
  The weight value and competitiveness of Afghan products depend on the ability of producers to supply products which regularly comply with the quality standards required by international markets. Compliance with labels can also significantly increase the value of products (for example, a kilo of organic rose essential oil is worth 20-30% more than non-organic oil). But many producers still find it difficult to respect these standards for various reasons: lack of technical competence, difficulty in obtaining quality inputs (e.g. saffron bulbs) and the constraints associated with respecting standards (e.g. vulnerability of roses to illness and pests when no pesticides are used to comply with “organic” standards).

- **Low production capacity:**
  In order to establish and maintain a position on the regional and international markets, it is important to ensure that production is consistent, both in terms of quality and quantity. Also, a certain level of production is necessary to see a return on investment in processing infrastructure (e.g. a modern rose oil distillery). But for many products, farmers have difficulty in increasing their production in response to market demand and/or ensuring a regular supply. The difficulty of maintaining adequate production can be caused by different factors, such as the investment needed (e.g. the cost of inputs for the production of saffron is almost 5 000 US$/ha), problems gaining access to quality inputs or mobilising the labour needed, vulnerability to climatic hazards or lack of technical skills.

- **Weak marketing capacity and problems with storage and packaging:**
  The weight value of a product does not only depend on its quality, but on prices on the local and international markets, the marketing techniques used and the quality of packaging. Producers lack knowledge of market dynamics, price structures and marketing approaches. The lack of storage infrastructure limits producers’ ability to take advantage of price increases on the markets. Also, the difficulty of gaining access to quality packaging, which makes a product more attractive, and to packaging machinery (which is often expensive) limits the value that producers can gain from their products.

- **Difficulty gaining access to credit and land:**
  The development of a product line therefore necessitates significant investment in terms of equipment, labour, packaging, etc. Yet, access to credit remains a major bottleneck in rural environments (see section 4.3.3). A return on this investment can only be made if access to land is guaranteed in the long term, which makes access to these product lines difficult for landless farmers. Furthermore, the absence of a clear land registry and the confusion around land ownership titles, without speaking of land seizures by local warlords or other powerful people, makes farmers vulnerable and discourages them from making investments.
• **Sustainability of access to quality inputs and different approaches:**
  Substitution crop programmes are usually based on "assisted" inputs, whereby free or subsidized inputs are distributed to the farmers. This is important, amongst other things, in order to be competitive in relation to the opium poppy sector where inputs are made available via the traffickers. But this raises the question of the sustainability of the production. Certain actors try to develop systems for the sustainable supply of quality inputs, but these are compromised by any free distribution carried out by other organisations, as well as by the lack of a quality control system for the inputs. Coordination is of capital importance in this area.

• **Difficulty in organising and making farmers’ associations autonomous:**
  The majority of projects involving the development of substitution crops assist the producers in organising themselves into associations or cooperatives. This requires a long process to build management capacity and many associations have great difficulty in achieving the necessary level. This is particularly true when development agencies have focused on agricultural training and have only recently realised how important it is to provide training in management, quality control and marketing. On certain programmes, responsibilities are currently being transferred from development agencies to Afghan companies, such as on the rose essential oil project, where GAA’s activities are being transferred to an Afghan company called RONA. It is too early to assess how successful or sustainable this initiative will be.

• **Legal and commercial frameworks:**
  The development of farmers’ associations and businesses in connection with agricultural products is currently limited by the absence of clear and coherent legal and regulatory frameworks with regard to the statutes, rights and responsibilities of farmers’ associations and businesses. For example, one issue which is not yet clear in the transferral of the rose oil project from GAA to RONA is that of the role of the state, as the investments up till now have been made by the public sector (by the Afghan State via development aid) and the capital is now going to be transferred to the private sector. How can this transition be conducted so that the government’s interference in the management of the business is limited?

• **The security context:**
  The security context can make the transportation of merchandise difficult and can create extra costs which affect the competitiveness of Afghan products. This can take the form of tolls or taxes in areas controlled by the insurgents, or, more frequently, bribes to local police to allow the passage of lorries.

All of these factors need to be taken into account in the design and implementation of projects. Success will not only depend on the choice of product. It is also – and perhaps most of all – a question of the implementation strategy chosen. Box 2 compares two projects involving similar products, one of which was successful and appears to have achieved sustainability, the other of which has not been very successful.
Box 2. “Roses for Nangarhar” and “Gulestan”

Two similar projects concerning the essential oil sector in Eastern Afghanistan were carried out at the same time: the “Roses for Nangarhar” project by GAA/GTZ/EU and the creation of the “Gulestan” company. Gulestan was created in 2003 by a group of French, Afghan and American organizations and produces essential oils, perfume and other cosmetics made with roses, orange blossoms, cedarwood and wild medicinal plants. Whereas the Roses for Nangarhar project appears to be prospering and will be transferred to Afghan businesses in 2010, the future of Gulestan was very uncertain in 2009. These different results can be explained in part by the differences described in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roses for Nangarhar</th>
<th>Gulestan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on a specialised product due to demand from a specific client (WALA)</td>
<td>Development of a variety of products, without any explicit demand from previously identified clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of quality control principles and compliance with specific labels in order to gain access to an international market</td>
<td>More experimental and craft-based production. Main client base: foreign expatriates in Kabul (affected by security risks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding from donors as part of a public/private partnership to launch the project</td>
<td>Initial financial support was smaller and less stable. No partnership with an existing large company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of farmers and setting up of local factory, managed by Afghans</td>
<td>A project which depends a great deal on individuals: less time given to the company structure and the handover to Afghan entrepreneurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This example shows that it is not enough to identify the “right” product, but that it is also important to use the right development strategy for the sector.

Many challenges remain and can compromise the sustainability of activities under way. There is a risk that certain sectors will not survive when the development agencies involved withdraw, especially when these play a key intermediary role (e.g. linking producers and the market) and have not prepared the transfer of responsibilities properly. There is also a risk that companies (notably foreign companies) will take control of the sector and limit the role and autonomy of the Afghan producers, and as a consequence, the added value that they could make on their products. Finally, the organisations who adopt this kind of approach have a huge responsibility because encouraging farmers to change their practices can represent a considerable risk and can increase their vulnerability if the project is a failure.

4.1.3 What role can alternative crops play?

Despite the difficulties set out above, certain projects have shown the potential of licit crops to compete with opium poppy. But has their introduction contributed to reducing the production of opium? It is extremely difficult to answer this question because very few assessments have been carried out, and most of all, because too many factors come into play in farmers’ decision of whether or not to cultivate opium poppy (see section 3.2).

The role of substitution crops is rather to give farmers a broader range of options in order to encourage them to change their practices. The options proposed need to be adapted to agro-
ecological conditions as well as the economic and social context. No one crop can be an alternative for all the farmers and households who make a living from the cultivation of opium poppy, but it can be for some. Substitution crops can only contribute to the reduction of opium poppy cultivation as part of broader development programmes. This is what “alternative development” and “alternative livelihoods” programmes attempt to do.

4.2 ...to “alternative livelihoods” programmes...

4.2.1 Three alternative livelihoods programmes

Certain donors, including the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, have financed “alternative livelihoods” programmes. These programmes include a wide range of activities such as support to local government institutions, the development of agricultural sectors and income-generating activities and the rehabilitation of infrastructure (irrigation systems, roads). The characteristics of three programmes of this kind are summarized in table 5. This is not an exhaustive list. The choice was made to analyse programmes presented as alternative livelihoods programmes implemented between 2004 and 2009 and for which activity and evaluation reports are available. For example, USAID’s portfolio on Alternative Development includes other programmes than those presented below\(^{16}\). An analysis of the results available and the potential impact is presented below. This analysis was limited by the difficulty of gaining access to the final evaluation reports\(^{17}\).

\(^{16}\) 3 ongoing programmes (Afghanistan Water, Agriculture and Technology Transfer Project (AWATT), Alternative Development Program - Southwestern Region (ADP/SW), Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives - North, East, West (IDEA-NEW)) and 14 completed programmes.

\(^{17}\) An evaluation of USAID’s Alternative Development programmes was carried out in early 2010. The report is currently being written. It is not certain that it will be available to the public. GTZ-IS supplied the research team with summaries of its own evaluation reports. It was not possible to obtain the evaluation report commissioned by the European Union.
### Table 5. Principal characteristics of three “alternative livelihoods” programmes (PAL, ADP, AALP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Project for Alternative Livelihoods in Eastern Afghanistan - PAL</th>
<th>Alternative Development Programme - ADP (split into 3 programmes ADP/E in the East, ADP/N in the North and ADP/S in the South)</th>
<th>AALP - Agricultural Alternative Livelihoods Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>DFID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme manager</td>
<td>GTZ - International Services</td>
<td>Padco (ADP/N), DAI (ADP/E), Chemonics Intl. (ADP/S) et ARD (ADP/SW)</td>
<td>FAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding ($)</td>
<td>20 500 000 €</td>
<td>ADP/N : 121 143 000 US$</td>
<td>6 831 748 US$ (3.75 million £)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall objective**

**Impact:** Poverty and opium poppy cultivation are sustainably reduced in three provinces of Afghanistan.

**Objective:** Increase support provided and adoption of alternative livelihoods in 3 provinces of Afghanistan.

**Specific objective**

1. The government administration fulfils its mandate in terms of rural development
2. Provide community organisations with assistance to develop alternative livelihoods
3. Set up local infrastructure
4. Manage and share lessons learned from the project

**ADP/E**

1. Support the development of a licit economy
2. Help provide alternative livelihoods to households whose subsistence depends, either directly or indirectly, on the opium economy.

**Overall objective**

Contribute to the sustainable elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan by 2013, in keeping with the National Drug Control Strategy

**Goal:** Contribute to the national anti-drug policy by developing viable alternative livelihoods and improving access to income-generating activities

1. Research, assessment and analysis
2. Capacity building at the community level
3. Capacity building at the national, provincial and district levels
4. Implement pilot livelihood projects
5. Coordinate and share information
6. Provide support in drawing up strategies and policies
4.2.2 What impact have these programmes had on opium poppy cultivation?

It is clear that there have been improvements and progress in terms of economic development in certain provinces. A study of the impact of PAL carried out by GTZ from October 2009 to February 2010 in the provinces of Laghman and Nangarhar, for example, concludes that “the development of infrastructure (such as roads and bridges) as well as the improved agricultural conditions that resulted from the rehabilitation of irrigation canals since 2007 has led, in certain villages, to a significant conversion from subsistence agriculture to market agriculture. The farms produce milk products and vegetables and this is no longer just for consumption or barter but to sell in the markets of Jalalabad and Metharlam. Producers are beginning to create cooperatives.” (GTZ, February 2010). David Mansfield also points out that “certain farmers in Nangarhar have effectively stopped producing opium, having diversified their agricultural and/or non-agricultural production, processing and commercialisation activities.”

USAID’s Head of Agriculture explained that an evaluation of the ADP/Southwestern region had recently been carried out and had concluded that it had achieved its objectives: the production of opium had gone down in the areas where the projects were implemented. The results of evaluations of other ADP programmes are unfortunately not available for the time being.

However, it is very difficult to establish whether economic development or a decrease in opium production are attributable to a specific programme. In addition to the difficulty of obtaining evaluation reports and impact assessments for these programmes, there are too many factors involved to allow precise correlations to be established. David Mansfield explains that, “the impact of alternative development programmes can not be analysed without considering all the different investments made in a province. The ADP-East and PAL programmes are of negligible influence compared to the other programmes implemented in the province of Nangarhar, such as those funded by the CERP. How can the impact of one programme be isolated from that of other programmes?”

It is also difficult to say whether the beneficiaries of programmes really replace opium poppy cultivation with other activities because, in general, the programmes target opium poppy producing regions rather than opium poppy producers.

Security conditions also have a major effect on the possibility of development and reducing dependence on opium poppy. GTZ’s impact assessment compared the progress made in terms of development in recent years between the provinces of Nangarhar and Laghman, and concluded that the security situation is a determining factor in relation to the progress observed.

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18 David Mansfield, personal communication, March 2010
19 Ibid
It is also important to note that many Afghans are dynamic entrepreneurs and that the private sector and local exchange networks are often more developed than the international community thinks. These also contribute to improving living conditions.

4.2.3 Weaknesses in the implementation of programmes

Operational weaknesses
Despite the results listed above, evaluations of alternative livelihoods programmes remain generally quite sceptical about their chances of success due to numerous weaknesses in terms of their implementation.

- The problem of aid absorption capacity amongst implementing partners: the start up, effectiveness and efficiency of programmes are compromised by the difficulty of finding reliable implementing partners. The 2009 evaluation of the PAL programme explains that, “as the capacity of implementing partners (NGOs, private companies) was weaker than expected, it took 3 years to structure a network of partners, recruit good managers, identify appropriate alternative livelihoods and train the actors involved in the project”.

- Programmes regularly encountered problems in terms of management which depends a great deal on the ability to recruit good management teams with the necessary technical skills and experience. Recruiting the right experts (particularly expatriates) is not easy due to the very restrictive living and security conditions which exist.

- Programmes which are too short to ensure their success and sustainability: due to the problems mentioned above, the duration of programmes has proven to be too short to achieve the targeted objectives. The evaluation of the PAL concluded that “the funding allocated to the programme, the complexity and the diversity of the planned tasks were disproportionate to the duration and ambitious objectives of the programme. Four or five years is not long enough to allow production and partners to gain real autonomy, and to ensure the sustainability of the programmes, especially when a handover strategy is not planned from the beginning”.

Lack of time is felt all the more keenly when development agencies use a participatory approach, which is necessary to promote ownership of the project's objectives and activities and its sustainability. This approach adds considerable time to the start up phase (mobilising the community, identifying partners, needs, etc.), especially in a context where people are used to receiving aid for free. It is necessary to wait two or three years before there are any visible results. But many donors lose patience after four or five years and change strategy.

- The difficulty of finding the right balance between objectives and means: not enough or too much? For certain programmes, the means allocated have been clearly insufficient with respect to the objectives involved (or vice versa: the objectives have been too ambitious in relation to the means made available). The implementation of AALP, for example, was undermined from the beginning by the fact that the budget and the initial duration planned for the programme were significantly cut, without the objectives being revised accordingly\(^\text{20}\).

In contrast, certain actors mention the risk of injecting too much money. Organisations with too much money and who are under pressure to disburse their funds rapidly did not have the time to develop participatory and more sustainable approaches. "Farmers are happy for the time being, but what will be left after they have gone?" asks the Afghan head of a large development organization. The MCN's director of planning also bemoans the "NGO cancer", also known as aid dependency, which has developed in Afghan society: "Afghans have stopped doing what they did for themselves in the past. They have been too spoiled. They need to learn to be autonomous again". Money in abundance also feeds corruption amongst certain implementing partners, NGOs and private construction companies.

Others answer that it all depends on how the money is used. USAID’s ADP-Eastern region programme has managed to combine significant spending power with the mobilisation of communities and the implementation of potentially sustainable products, thanks to a good technical and management team and excellent knowledge of the context. The same approach is now being adopted for the other ADP programmes, currently grouped together as Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives – North, East, West (IDEA-NEW) and the Alternative Development Program-Southwestern Region (ADP/SW).

Strategic weaknesses

Over and above implementation problems, even their design limits their potential impact:

- **An integrated programme or a multitude of little projects?** Alternative livelihoods programmes often have a wide variety of objectives and activities. Even though these different components are complementary, it is not easy to integrate them. Furthermore, these many little projects are not very well integrated into regional or national programmes (e.g. to develop fruit farming), if at all. This makes it difficult for the government to appropriate them and therefore limits their contribution to specific sectors (agriculture, rural infrastructure, etc.) and their sustainability.

- **Lack of strategic clarity: “alternative livelihoods”, “alternative development” or simply livelihoods?** The majority of observers point out that the only difference between "alternative livelihoods" programmes and the "alternative development" programmes of the 90s is their name (FAO, 2006; Mansfield and Pain, 2005). Evaluations have also raised the question of what distinguishes these programmes from normal development programmes. The evaluation of the PAL states that, "the reduction of opium poppy cultivation is stipulated in the general objective but no activity or component is specifically attached to this question". Also, the mid-term evaluation shows that the poultry farming activity funded by the AALP programme, though appropriate for improving the income of women in the region, was much less so with regard to the objective of reducing opium poppy: only 3 of the 42 villages targeted were producers (DFID/FAO, 2006).

Following the mixed results of alternative livelihoods programmes, most of the donors involved changed strategy. DFID has focused on Helmand, the reform of the agricultural sector at the national level and CARD (see section 4.4.3). The European Union has chosen to refocus on sector-based development programmes via MAIL and the MRRD. As for USAID, after having given priority to Alternative Development programmes, it is now
being given to agricultural programmes\textsuperscript{23}, even though this change has not yet made a great difference in terms of allocation of funds\textsuperscript{22}. What is more, USAID is being more flexible with regard to the targeting of areas for alternative development programmes, including provinces which have recently become “poppy-free”.

It would appear that the alternative livelihoods trend is being replaced by the “mainstreaming” of the fight against opium poppy in agricultural and rural development programmes. What are the principal programmes which can contribute to this fight? We will look at this question in the following section.

\textbf{4.3 ...to development programmes in the context of opium production...}

The kind of development programmes which can play a role in the fight against opium production –agricultural, business development, rural infrastructure and governance programmes – were described in detail in the very full report by the World Bank and DFID, \textit{Economic Incentives and Development Initiatives to Reduce Opium Production} (2008). The aim of this section is not to go through all these operations but to present the main issues in relation to opium poppy cultivation in the sectors involved.

\textbf{4.3.1 Agricultural development policies and programmes}

The agricultural sector is of central importance for the food security of the population, for economic development, and as a consequence, for the political stabilisation of the country and the reduction of its economic dependence on opium production. And yet, despite its importance, this sector was greatly neglected between 2002 and 2008. This is due in particular to the political weakness of the ministry\textsuperscript{23} and the long time it took the international community to acknowledge the importance of agriculture. In addition, the drawing up of a national strategy for agriculture was a long and tortuous process: the \textit{National Agricultural Development Framework} (NADF)\textsuperscript{24}, which was prepared in February 2009 and was based on the 2005 Master Plan, is the first document to have clearly identified priorities and proposed a road map for reform of the agricultural sector.

In order for the agricultural sector to contribute effectively to economic development and the fight against opium poppy cultivation, the following elements should be taken into account:

\textsuperscript{22} Alternative development programmes are concentrated in areas where opium poppy is cultivated and can include a wide range of activities (roads, training in midwifery for the wives of opium poppy producers, etc.), whereas agricultural programmes are more flexible in the choice of targeted area but focus on agricultural products.

\textsuperscript{23} From 2002 to 2009, 56\% of USAID’s investment was in alternative development programmes and 44\% was in agricultural programmes. Since 2010, the balance has reversed with 48\% for the first and 52\% for the second (interview with Kimberley Lucas, USAID, February 2010).

\textsuperscript{24} This situation is evolving thanks to the nomination of a dynamic minister in late 2008.

\textsuperscript{25} The NADF is organised around four programmes: institutional reform, management of natural resources, agricultural production and productivity and economic regeneration.
• Establish products with high added value and invest in agricultural activities which require a long-term change in production methods: an effective way of fighting opium poppy cultivation is to diversify ways of generating income and jobs via licit crops. Section 4.1 above gives examples of products which can compete with opium poppy in terms of weight value and net income per hectare. Two areas which could play a central role have not yet been mentioned: fruit production and livestock farming. Indeed, these are central to Afghan agriculture both in terms of their contribution to households’ food security and in terms of export potential. They also both require long-term investment (establishment of orchards and herds) and therefore long-term change in farmers’ agricultural activities. As such, the transition from opium poppy to fruit production or livestock farming is more likely to be sustainable than the transition from opium poppy to wheat, given that this is an annual crop which can easily be replaced with opium poppy from one year to the next. Nevertheless, investment in fruit production should be accompanied by the provision of support to other crops until orchards become productive. Also, the development of all agricultural products are subject to the same difficulties described in section 4.1 above in terms of access to credit, quality control and access to markets.

• However, the development of commercial agriculture can not be done without ensuring people’s food security and responding to the needs of different farmers’ groups. This is, amongst other things, of capital importance to reduce opium poppy cultivation by smallholders who are essentially motivated by the need to feed their families. One of the main challenges for the agricultural sector is to manage the transition from subsistence to modern farming which is capable of generating higher added value and creating jobs while meeting people’s needs. This requires investment in cereals, ensuring that smallholders and tenant farmers have access to inputs, credit, irrigation and extension services adapted to their needs, and diversification of agricultural products.

• Progress is being made, for example, regarding the drawing up of agricultural policies and programmes. A major weakness in the Ministry of Agriculture’s strategy was to focus on fruit production as the main area of commercial agriculture and for a very restricted number of fruit types. This meant that beneficiaries were essentially limited to landowners with access to water. The approach used by the NADF’s economic regeneration programme (2009), which was inspired notably by the Economic Incentives report (Ward et al, DFIF/WB, 2008), is to provide support in setting up services which can be applied to a much wider range of products (including areas which do not require any land such as beekeeping, poultry farming, leather and wool) which can benefit different groups of farmers, including those without land.

• In addition, the development of viable products at the national level requires groundwork at each step in the chain (setting up a supply system for quality inputs, quality assurance during production, processing, transportation, promotion, labels, producers’ and sellers’ organisations, credit, etc.) and reflection at the national level based on comprehension of the country’s different agro-ecological situations. And yet, the majority of programmes are implemented as small projects which concern only part of the sector and/or on a very limited scale. The European Union’s Perennial Horticulture Development Programme (PHDP) and Animal Health Development Programme (AHDP) are the only ones which adopt a genuinely global approach with very gradual
implementation and involving both the public and private sectors. This is possible because the objectives have been fixed for a timescale of 10 to 20 years.

• Irrigation and better management of water are essential to achieve high productivity and reduce vulnerability to drought in the agricultural sector. Major investment has been made in irrigation, notably via programmes by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, USAID and the European Union. Improvements still need to be made in terms of water management both at the watershed and the farm level. In terms of the fight against opium, it is important to then ensure that the newly irrigated land is not being used to cultivate opium poppy.

• Finally, a major obstacle to agricultural development is the question of land ownership. The absence or lack of clarity of a land register, the loss of title deeds during the war, confusion between community and state property systems and land seizures by warlords are all obstacles to long-term investment in licit commercial agriculture. In addition the crops grown by tenant farmers are determined by big landowners who are often involved in opium poppy cultivation. In the current context of political instability, it seems extremely difficult and even dangerous to take on this major challenge.

4.3.2 Infrastructure programmes with a direct impact on the availability of labour for opium poppy cultivation

The development of rural infrastructure is essential to revive the economy and people’s well-being, for example, via access to education, health and commercial markets. Key infrastructure includes roads, bridges, irrigation canals, anti-flooding walls, but also micro electric generators and electricity networks, dams, schools, clinics, universities, meeting places and government administration buildings.

Infrastructure programmes have a mid- to long-term impact on economic development, but also potentially a short-term impact on the production of opium. These programmes require a lot of labour. If implemented during the opium poppy cultivation period, they can contribute to the transferral of some workers from poppy fields to legal building sites if the rates paid are competitive compared to those for the opium harvest.

Major investment in infrastructure has been made, notably via the programmes of the MRRD\textsuperscript{25} and, to a lesser extent, via alternative development programmes like USAID’s ADPs and the PAL. The military Commander’s Emergency Response Programme (CERP) and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) have also been the source of considerable funds for infrastructure construction.

However, the investments made are very uneven depending on the province. For example, less than 20km of roads have been rehabilitated in Panjshir, Farah or Dai Kundi, whereas 484 km of roads have been built in Kunduz (Ward \textit{et al}, DFID/BM, 2008). What is more, problems of maintenance and questions of sustainability have emerged, particularly when the organisations responsible for maintenance are not involved in the design, the choice of sites or the construction. School and clinic construction projects which are

\textsuperscript{25} Such as the National Rural Access Programme (NRAP) and the Water Sanitation and Irrigation Programme (WATSIP))
financed by military funds have often been carried out without consultation of the Education and Health ministries. This situation is beginning to change, and significant effort is being made to improve communication between organisations and actors. At the same time, there is considerable corruption in the allocation of construction contracts and this often has repercussions for the quality of the work done.

4.3.3 Financial and business development services remain under-developed

Access to credit is one of the main difficulties facing farmers and one of the advantages of opium poppy over other crops because the traffickers provide credit and advance payments for harvests. As stated in the Economic Incentives report, "A backlog of opium debt has built up in some areas, exacerbated by drought and eradication (or coercion not to plant), which has locked the poor into the opium economy."

(Ward et al, DFID/WB, 2008, p.37). And yet, a study carried out in 2006 concluded that the financial systems in place only covered 8% of estimated needs in terms of credit (ibid., p.38).

A report by IFAD (2009) estimated that approximately 3.5 million potential clients received little if any service from the micro-finance sector. It does not offer a wide enough range of financial services and does not include loans which are adapted to the specific needs of crop and livestock farming. It does not have savings services, there are not enough insurance products and there are very few initiatives to develop Islamic funding methods. The interest rates applied by the micro-finance sector are around 18% and these will no doubt remain high until the sector reaches maturity, a higher volume of loans and the micro-finance organisations become more efficient, which would reduce the cost of loans. (IFAD, 2009, p.22)

Micro-finance organisations are grouped together under the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA), established in 2002. MISFA's work is appreciated for the quality of the service provided and its geographical coverage. However, MISFA and its partners do not have the implementation capacity to diversify the services on offer and extend their coverage. More than the availability of funds for micro-finance, it is the fact that operators lack the capacity to innovate and disseminate new products which limits the possibility of providing people with credit.

Apart from micro-finance, it is also essential to develop systems for financing small and medium-sized businesses. Several initiatives have been launched recently, including the MISFA's window for small and medium-sized businesses, support for the First Micro-finance Bank from IFC, BRAC Afghanistan Bank and a new USAID programme, Afghanistan Rural Investment and Enterprise Strengthening (ARIES).

These initiatives do not respond to the need for funding mechanisms which are specialised in agriculture. These remain necessary not only for small farms and small and medium-sized businesses, but also for the big landowners and food industry investors. The US government recently studied the possibility of setting up an Agricultural Development Agency, as it has been impossible to resurrect the former Agricultural
Development Bank because it was too corrupt. This fund, which would be co-managed by the Afghan government and the donors, would be the first step towards the establishment of a credit institution for farmers. An official announcement was supposed to be made on 21 March 2010, but the research team was unable to obtain any more recent information about this initiative.

Another area which is attracting an increasing amount of attention is that of business development, which includes training on market forces, marketing and management, professional training and the establishment of credit systems. After a long design and negotiation period, a major programme was finally launched recently by the MRRD: the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme (AREDP). It is still too early to judge whether this programme will be effective in contributing to the economic development of the country.

### 4.4 ... funded by specific anti-drug funds

Several funding mechanisms have been put in place in order to make the disbursement and distribution of development aid in the context of the fight against opium easier and to improve its management. In practice these funds have essentially contributed to the funding of normal development programmes like those described in section 4.3. The biggest of these to date, the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF), did not achieve its objectives and was abandoned, while others have had more success. A new initiative, the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD), seems promising, but it will have to deal with numerous challenges.

#### 4.4.1 The Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund – a fund for national counter-narcotics programmes

The Counter Narcotics Trust Fund was created in 2005 to:
- Increase the resources available for the implementation of the NDCS by the government,
- Put in place transparent mechanisms to monitor and account for how funds have been used,
- Accelerate the disbursement process.

This fund was supposed to make resources available for all the pillars of the NDCS and thereby facilitate the integration and coherence of the counter-narcotics activities of the different ministries involved.

The CNTF was put in place via the « national execution » method, which means that the government was responsible for how the funds were used. The MCN was responsible for overall coordination and the ministry of Finance for the funding allocated to different ministries. The CNTF was managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ten ministries, including the ministry of the Interior, the ministry for Rural Development, the ministry of Agriculture and the ministry for Health were responsible for identifying, developing and implementing projects related to the fight against drugs.
Sixteen donors contributed to the CNTF, with 58% of funding from the United Kingdom and 23% from the European Union. Even though the CNTF was created to fund all the pillars of the NDCS, 21 of the 33 projects implemented by the ten ministries concerned the "Alternative Livelihoods" pillar.

The implementation of the CNTF came up against many difficulties and the donors consequently decided not to renew it after the end of the programme in late 2009. An evaluation of the CNTF carried out in 2007 (Middlebrooke et al., 2007) and internal reports in 2008 and early 2009 highlighted the following weaknesses:

- **Gap between the objectives of the CNTF and the funds mobilised:** in 2006, the funds needed for the implementation of the NDCS were estimated to be 2.4 billion dollars. The planned budget in the CNTF project document was 900 million US$, but only 76.5 million US$ had been mobilised from donors and 46.7 million actually received by mid-2009 (CNTF report, first quarter of 2009).

- **Disbursement problems:** Of the 46.7 million dollars received, only 18.4 million dollars had been spent by the government on 30 June 2009, via 33 projects. This low level of disbursement is essentially due to the ministries’ weak capacity to design and implement projects, as well as very complex disbursement procedures.

- **Unclear link between the projects and counter-narcotic activity:** all the projects submitted to the CNTF for funding were supposed to meet eligibility criteria related to the fight against drugs. However, the independent review carried out in 2007 noted that “the projects financed by the CNTF are not very in line with the NDCS” and that there was no monitoring of the impact on drug production (Middlebrooke et al., 2007).

- **Unclear definition of what constitutes an “alternative livelihoods” project:** the projects financed by the CNTF in the alternative livelihoods category included all kinds of activities carried out by the MRRD, many of which were connected to infrastructure construction (schools, conference rooms, university buildings, irrigation systems, anti-flooding protective walls, roads, bridges and micro hydroelectric power installations). The CNTF also financed agricultural equipment and income generating projects such as a carpet weaving project in Ghor. The quarterly report of June 2009 states that this project allowed 4000 families to change from opium poppy cultivation to carpet making (CNTF, 2009b), but these figures, which are not very realistic, are not backed up with an impact study.

One of the biggest programmes that was funded by the CNTF was the Labour-based Rural Development Programme (LBRDP) by the MRRD. One of its objectives was to create 2,665,000 days of work. It is important to note that the 14 provinces where the programme was implemented did not include three of the principal opium poppy producing regions (Helmand, Kandahar, Nangarhar). This can be explained by the fact that the MRRD’s programmes in these provinces are already funded via bilateral cooperation.
The creation of jobs in non-producing provinces can still have an impact on the production of opium, if the work to be done coincides with the harvest period and the workers involved usually travel to the opium-producing areas. This said, the authors were unable to identify any impact reports for this programme which would make it possible to conclude that this objective had been met.

Due to these weaknesses, the two main donors - the EU and DFID – decided to stop funding the programme, and as a consequence it was closed down in December 2009. A representative of the European Union explained that “the CNTF essentially funded “regular” government programmes. Our current approach is to mainstream anti-drug issues into all of our programmes”. A DFID representative added that, in the end, the CNTF funded “lots of small badly-designed projects”. DFID is now focusing its efforts on the setting up of CARD (see section 4.4.3).

However, the director of the Planning department of the MCN feels that it was a mistake to close this programme: “The CNTF was a good tool for the MCN and the Afghan government. The donors made the decision to close the programme too quickly. We should have tried to repair it rather than close it, especially as a lot of money was invested to set it up.” The CNTF helped to strengthen the legitimacy of the MCN which is struggling to assert itself in relation to the other ministries in charge. What is more, the mechanism encouraged better integration of the different pillars of the NDCS. Constraints in terms of availability of funds, but especially limited absorption capacity, coordination problems and the weak leadership of the MCN no doubt compromised the CNTF.

4.4.2 The Good Performer’s Initiative – direct aid given to provinces making progress in the fight against drugs

In February 2007, a complementary section was added to the CNTF: the Good Performer’s Initiative (GPI). The objective of this initiative was to support and reward provinces which made significant progress towards eliminating opium poppy by allocating funds for their priority development projects. The “Good Performer” status is determined on the basis of an annual report by UNODC. One million dollars are given to provinces where no opium poppies are cultivated and 500 000 dollars are given to provinces where less than 1 000 ha are cultivated.

The GPI was initially integrated into the CNTF and was managed directly by a unit created within the MCN. The main donors of the GPI were the USA (USAID and INL) and the United Kingdom. This year, the GPI is still being run despite the closure of the CNTF. INL is now the only donor covering the total budget of 38.7 million dollars.

One of the characteristics of the GPI is that it has a rapid disbursement system to fund “quick impact” projects. At the end of March 2010, 23 provinces had received funding for a total of 45 projects, 15 of which were finished. The funds are used for projects which are

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30 It is possible that the UK will fund the GPI in the future.
31 Interview with Gregory Naarden, INL, in Kabul, February 2010
32 Contracts had been signed for a total budget of 20 358 207 dollars of which 9 721 932 dollars had been disbursed.
very similar to those funded by the CNTF, that is to say, essentially infrastructure (irrigation systems, schools, conference rooms, protective walls, etc.)  

This initiative had a positive impact and reinforced the political will to fight against opium production in certain provinces, such as Balkh, which received more than 2 million dollars. It is a way of motivating governors: the GPI is like the carrot at the end of the eradication "stick". This initiative helped to establish a better balance between coercive strategies (eradication, interdiction) and those which encourage licit development. A positive aspect of the GPI compared to past experiences which used incentives to reduce opium poppy production, is the inclusion of provinces which have never produced opium poppy, some which had felt penalized compared to opium poppy producing provinces.

However, this mechanism lacks transparency with regard to how funds are used. The director of the MCN pointed out that the GPI is a good thing “if there is transparency in the way projects are implemented and in the way they are selected. Otherwise, people will see it as a bad thing”. Certain interviewees mentioned that some governors use this resource as “their own private cheque book”. But systems are gradually being put in place to reinforce transparency and one interlocutor said that “in provinces where governors are “weaker” and really need assistance in the development of their province, but also to reinforce their own legitimacy in the eyes of the local population and the international community, the aid is generally used better. It is in provinces where governors are “strong” that the tendency to use funds for personal ends is most common.

It is not certain whether the fall in opium production in the provinces which have benefited from this aid is sustainable. Many governors are involved in drug trafficking or are tied up with large local producers and traffickers. It is possible that they use the GPI for personal ends, to reinforce their alliances and their power. They could very well “change sides” and start promoting opium production again if, for example, the GPI ended or the price of opium poppy went back up.

Despite these weaknesses, there seems to be a great deal of political will to continue with the GPI and to improve transparency and the way it is managed.

4.4.3 The Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility, an assessment and integration tool

Developed on the initiative of the United Kingdom, the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility is a mechanism which tries to integrate lessons learned about development in a drug production context. Funded by the World Bank and DFID, it is the result of in-depth analysis of the factors which push farmers to produce opium poppy and the kind of development programmes which could reduce opium production.  

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33 GPI, INL, Project Status Database, March 2010
34 See a description of this kind of strategy in Mansfield and Pain, 2008 Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan: the failure of success?
As very little progress has been made in terms of agricultural production, income generation and jobs (in comparison to the progress made in rural infrastructure, energy, and transport) and the factors which push farmers to produce opium vary from one region to the next depending on the socio-economic characteristics of farming groups (see annex 4), the CARD aims to:

- allow integrated analysis of the socio-economic and agro-ecological situation to be carried out so that the factors which influence opium production in the region can be understood properly,
- identify appropriate operations which may concern several sectors or ministries, such as the MRRD and the MAIL,
- finance and/or facilitate the setting up of projects within national programmes (NSP, NRAP, WatSIP, Agriculture) so that these different programmes are integrated at the local level. One of the aims is to coordinate infrastructure, agricultural development and employment initiatives.

The CARD will be jointly run by the MRRD and the MAIL and is based on the Agriculture and Rural Development strategy of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). It will be set up by the permanent staff of these two ministries at the provincial and district levels. A management mechanism is to be set up at the central level. The initial phase is due to last 3 years, during which development plans will be drawn up and implemented in 32 districts. A planned 67 million dollars should be available to finance these and 14.3 million dollars will go towards the running costs of the mechanism.

Unfortunately, the implementation of this mechanism is not easy. The start-up period has had to be extended from 6 to 12 months. Three district development plans should be ready in September 2010. The first is currently being finalized.

Despite the pertinence of the basic concept of the CARD, certain interlocutors were sceptical about its chances of success, notably for the following reasons:

- Though the initial idea was that ministry staff would implement the CARD and that it was designed to reinforce existing programmes, there is a risk that the CARD will cause the creation of parallel mechanisms to the existing systems of the two ministries involved which could weaken, rather than strengthen them. An indicator of this risk is the high implementation and running costs (14.3 million dollars over 3 years, or 17% of the total).

- Analysis and planning activities require certain human resources which are not easily available at the provincial level and particularly the district level. There is therefore a risk that these resources will be taken up to the detriment of other programmes under way. Furthermore, these activities will require a great deal of expatriate support for several years to come, which is expensive and more and more difficult because of security constraints.

- Investigation methods and the preparation of district profiles allow very detailed analysis to be carried out (at significant cost). But is this detailed level of analysis accompanied by an equivalent level of precision in the design and implementation of programmes? This is doubtful. What is more, whereas the MRRD is relatively well organised and able to implement its programmes in a relatively effective way, the MAIL’s capacity to provide support and implement its programmes in the field remains weak.
Finally, communication between the two ministries is not always easy, even if this should improve with the setting up of the new Agriculture and Rural Development cluster (headed by the MAIL, and including the MRRD, the Ministry for Water and the MCN).

One factor which could affect the quality of the implementation of CARD and its sustainability is the fact that the ministries involved have only appropriated it and its objectives to a limited degree. The project was initiated by DFID, but it is now a governmental project, at least in theory. A DFID representative did point out that “the MAIL and the MRRD do not seem to consider this programme to be an anti-drug programme”. They no doubt consider it to be first and foremost a mechanism for integrating their activities. There is therefore a risk that CARD will be another donor-driven project which collapses when the donors decide to change policy, as was the case for the CNTF. However, it is important to wait a few months more to measure the potential of this approach and the possibility of applying it in other areas.

4.5 Opium poppy and development: what results so far?

4.5.1 Impacts which are difficult to quantify

Have development programmes – whether labelled “alternative” or not – contributed to reducing the production of opium poppy, including in provinces which have recently become poppy free? It is extremely difficult to answer this question for a number of reasons:

- As the research team experienced first hand, there is a shortage of information available about programmes implemented, the approach used, the results, the means allocated, and especially, how they were distributed. Either this information is not available, or it is not shared. The MCN has tried twice to set up a data base on alternative livelihoods programmes, but has abandoned the project due to the quantity of work required because of the number of different actors involved and the lack of clarity about the definition of an alternative livelihoods programme. This shows how difficult it is for the Afghan government and the main donors to monitor these projects and, as a consequence, how difficult it is to evaluate how much development programmes contribute to the fight against opium poppy cultivation.

- Sustainable alternative crops, agricultural services, rural infrastructure and credit systems take years to implement. Programmes have produced some positive results, but it is still far too soon to determine whether these results are sustainable and whether they can be reproduced on a larger scale.

- The complexity of factors which influence farmers’ decisions is such that it is difficult to determine whether a drop in opium poppy cultivation is attributable to development programmes or other factors, and especially, whether the drop is sustainable.
Box 3. An attempt to analyse the relation between investment in alternative livelihoods and reductions in the amount of opium poppy cultivated.

In 2008, UNODC tried to identify the correlation between opium cultivation and investment in alternative livelihoods programmes by using the MCN’s data on these programmes. The conclusions of the study indicated that investment in alternative livelihoods are concentrated in regions where opium cultivation is low and that regions where it is high do not receive a lot of aid.

However, the results of this study reveal especially the difficulty, if not the impossibility of successfully carrying out this type of analysis. The author warns against using these results because the database is not reliable. The information available in the database did not allow a province by province analysis to be carried out though there are major variations between provinces within the same region. For example, in the southern region, the province of Kandahar receives a lot of aid whereas that of Farah is neglected. Furthermore, the distinction between alternative livelihood programmes (included in the database) and the others (not included) was arbitrary. Major programmes, like the CERP, are not included. Also, certain investments are made in one region, but benefit other regions, and these distinctions are not taken into account. For example, the hydro-electric dam built in Sar-e-Pul provides electricity to the province of Balkh. Finally, a correlation is not the same as causality. The most important determining factor appears to be that of security. It affects both development agencies’ ability to carry out operations and the amount of opium poppy that is produced as described in part 1. It is interesting to note that investment in development has increased a great deal since 2003, showing increasing awareness on the part of donors of its importance in the fight against drugs and the stabilization of the country.

4.5.2 The need to move from pilot projects to large-scale long-term programmes

Certain development projects or programmes have had positive results, whether in terms of improved living conditions, farmers’ incomes and/or a reduction in the amount of opium that is cultivated. Several crops appear to have the potential to meet households’ economic needs and could therefore replace opium poppy. Programmes have allowed farmers to change their practices. However, these projects have so far been implemented on a very restricted scale. Pierre Arnaud Chouvy compares this situation to observations made in several other contexts: “Alternative development programmes have always been pilot projects. When will we see genuine country-wide development programmes?”

The lack of coherence between donors and of continuity in their strategies makes it more difficult to extend programmes and funding mechanisms and make them more sustainable. The CNTF, for example, came up against problems because of its complexity, but also because the timescale on which it was implemented was too short for it to function properly. Donors then decided not to renew their support for the CNTF. It is

common for donors to stop funding programmes just when they are beginning to be operational, only to invest large amounts of money to implement complex new mechanisms – which are destined to come up against the same problems – rather than to build on what exists already. This tends to feed a certain amount of weariness and frustration amongst Afghan governmental representatives, who become more reticent about supporting these initiatives, particularly at the local level.

Finally, many programmes have a province-specific or region-specific approach, whereas it is important to have a country-wide development strategy to avoid unwanted effects in neighbouring areas. For example, the action taken in Helmand to counter opium poppy cultivation in the “food zone” – eradication campaigns and distribution of wheat seeds – led to a reduction of 37% in the area cultivated (UNODC, 2009), but in parallel, it also led to an increase of 8% in the area cultivated in neighbouring zones. The same connection can be observed in the country as a whole. Reductions have taken place in the north, but these have been accompanied by significant increases in the south.

4.5.3 Opium poppy or development: are we focusing on the wrong objective?

There is increasing recognition that the concepts of “alternative development” and “alternative livelihoods” are confusing. All professionals recognize that there is no single substitution crop and that “alternative” development does not exist. Only global socio-economic and political development can bring a long-term reduction in dependence on opium cultivation. This also implies stabilizing the economy as a whole and combating all illicit trafficking, not just of opium.

Mansfield and Pain write that alternative livelihoods should not be seen as a type of programme, but as a long-term goal, via participatory development strategies which respond to “variability in agroecological potential, market access and the needs and resources of different socioeconomic actors engaged in production”.38

Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy explains that “the aim of these counter-narcotics strategies is to eliminate what constitutes a third of the economy of one of the poorest countries in the world. This is absurd. Why not aim rather to increase the licit proportion of the economy? In the long term, this would result in a reduction in the importance of and dependence on opium poppy cultivation”.

Donor strategies appear to be integrating these lessons little by little, as is evident from the interest donors are showing in the agriculture, professional training and employment sectors. However, two essential areas are still not being sufficiently supported: credit and land ownership. Afghan farmers have been cultivating the land in some of the hardest climates and agro-ecological contexts in the world for centuries. Many Afghan businessmen set up businesses before the arrival of international aid. Does international aid have so much to give in these areas? On the other hand, without credit and access to land, this technical know-how and entrepreneurial spirit can not be put to

37 Telephone interview, 13 April 2010.
full use. Though the question of land ownership is too sensitive to be resolved in the current context of instability, there are numerous possibilities for action with regard to credit. It is crucial that this sector is developed more (see section 4.3.3).
The following sections present the objectives, principal results, constraints and lessons learned for each of the other NDCS pillars of action (cf. table 2).

5.1 Eradication

The objective of this pillar is to build the capacity to conduct targeted and verified ground-based eradication.

Box 4. Enforced eradication: counter-productive and destined to fail

As in other drug-producing countries, eradication has rarely been successful in Afghanistan. The World Bank report (2004) highlights that, “eradication in the absence of alternative livelihoods being available does not work, and eradication followed by assistance does not seem to work well, yet eradication (and its threat) can help reinforce alternative livelihoods development if the former follows the latter”. It also states that “a key lesson is that eradication alone will not work and is likely to be counterproductive, resulting in perverse incentives for farmers to grow more drugs (e.g. in Colombia), displacement of production to more remote areas, and fuelling of violence and insecurity (Peru, Bolivia, Colombia). Examples of eradication in Asia (Thailand, Pakistan, Myanmar and Laos) have also shown how eradication can contribute to armed violence. As a result, the governments of these countries have abandoned it as a counter-narcotic strategy (Chouvy, 2009)

The risks and principal negative effects of eradication in Afghanistan are:

- It makes farmers, who make the least from drug trafficking and sometimes have no other option than to cultivate opium, even poorer. This is especially the case if the eradication takes place at the harvest time (meaning that the farmer has no time to plant other crops) and/or if the eradication is not accompanied by any development or food aid activities.

- It fuels or develops resentment against the government and the international community and increases the population’s support for the insurgency.

- It prompts farmers to grow more: in the past, compensation given for eradicated areas pushed certain farmers to cultivate opium poppy in order to get compensation.
Eradication was the subject of debate for a number of years, with those who were in favour and those who were against. Though the negative and even counter-productive effects of eradication were widely documented as a result of past experience in other drug-producing countries (cf. box 4), this strategy was widely used and encouraged in Afghanistan in the 2000s, with little success or effect on opium production.

Table 6. Area of opium poppy eradicated, 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor-led eradication (ha)</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>13 050</td>
<td>15 898</td>
<td>4 306</td>
<td>2 687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eradication by the Poppy Eradication Force (ha)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>2 250</td>
<td>3 149</td>
<td>1 174</td>
<td>2 663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area eradicated (ha)</td>
<td>4 210</td>
<td>15 300</td>
<td>19 047</td>
<td>5 480</td>
<td>5 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of opium poppy cultivated minus area eradicated (ha)</td>
<td>104 000</td>
<td>165 000</td>
<td>193 000</td>
<td>157 000</td>
<td>123 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of area eradicated</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNODC opium survey 2009

Table 7. Area of opium poppy eradicated per province (ha), 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Verified eradicated area (ha)</th>
<th>Reported number of eradicated fields</th>
<th>Number of villages where eradication activities were reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>1 598</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Kundi</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faryab</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilmand</td>
<td>1 475</td>
<td>2 275</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirat</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunar</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruzgan</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 686</td>
<td>6 262</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONUDC opium survey 2009

Since 2005, between 4 and 10% of potential opium production has been eradicated, via either Governor-led eradication (GLE) or the action of the Poppy Eradication Force (PEF) who answer to the Ministry of the Interior’s Central Eradication Planning Cell (CEPC). The main operations were carried out in 2006 and 2007. In 2009, 4% of potential opium production was eradicated. This concerned fewer provinces (12 in 2009 compared to 17 in 2008) because production became more concentrated. The reduction in the area eradicated can be explained in part by a change in strategy regarding eradication since

39 The USA under the Bush administration were in favour of aerial eradication by spraying crops with chemicals.
2007, but also by the insecurity which prevails in the South and West where production is concentrated. Nevertheless, 55% of the area eradicated in 2005 was in Helmand where the security situation is unstable (UNODC, 2005).

A consensus is currently emerging between actors under the Afghan government’s leadership. This has been made possible, amongst other things, by a change in the USA’s counter-narcotics strategy since 2007. A review of U.S. counter-narcotics strategy carried out by the Strategic Studies Institute for the U.S. government in 2007 concluded that: “the current strategy disproportionately emphasizes and resources the eradication pillar at the expense of the [U.S.] strategy’s other pillars. [...] While eradication may seem like a quick and easy fix, it is alienating small farmers while many of the largest drug traffickers, kingpins, and corrupt officials in Afghanistan continue to prosper. With eradication getting most of the attention and resources, the alternative livelihoods, interdiction, law enforcement and justice reform, and public information pillars of the U.S. counter-narcotics strategy have been neglected, resulting in an ineffective counter-narcotics program”. (Glaze J., SSI, 2007)

Eradication by means of chemical spraying has now been banned and eradication must now be limited to the areas where farmers have clear alternatives to meet their needs. The objective of eradication is to introduce a credible risk into opium poppy cultivation in order to influence farmers’ decision-making and make them more reluctant to plant opium poppy.

Eradication operations involve a number of difficulties:

- They require a great deal of resources either in terms of machinery (which is not always easy to get to isolated areas), or in terms of labour (to destroy the harvest manually). Furthermore, eradication needs to take place at a precise moment to be effective and the window of opportunity only lasts two or three weeks.

- There is a great deal of corruption, such as the police (CNPA) taking bribes in exchange for not reporting fields which could be eradicated. In a way, this acts as a mechanism for redistributing wealth among the actors involved.

- The objective of making eradication a means of introducing risk into the decision of whether or not to cultivate poppy does not appear to have been achieved: only 1% of all the farmers interviewed by UNODC mentioned fear of eradication as a reason for not cultivating opium, and only 2% of the farmers in the South (UNODC, 2009).

- The relations between eradication and compensation, and the political implications of these are not easy to manage. The Afghan government and the members of the international community involved in military operations in Marjah were faced with a dilemma once the Taliban had been chased out of the area: it was full of opium poppy fields about to reach maturation. To eradicate these fields was to run the risk of turning the population against them. The US army decided to offer to pay the opium producing farmers the price of their harvest if they destroyed the crop and replaced it with licit crops. (Reuters, 21 mars 2010)
5.2 Interdiction and repression

5.2.1 International and regional cooperation to reduce cross-border trafficking

The objective of this pillar is to improve international and regional cooperation to disrupt and reduce the flow of illicit drugs and precursor materials across borders.

This cooperation is based on the Paris Pact for which UNODC developed the Rainbow Strategy including seven areas for action presented in seven documents. Implementing this strategy includes providing support to the border police to which UNODC contributes (with funding from the European Union and other donors) as does the United States via its Homeland Security Department.

The existence of such cooperation is a positive step in that it places the problem of opiates in a broader, international context. It has had some positive effects in several of the strategy’s areas for action:

- The strengthening of cooperation between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan: three joint operations have been coordinated and implemented and a joint planning unit has been set up to facilitate the exchange of information and regional coordination.

Operation TARGET (phases 1 and 2) led to the seizure of 28 tonnes of acetic anhydride, which is enough to make 13,300 kg of heroin worth 29.3 million US$ (on the Afghan markets). This initiative has contributed to multiplying the price of a kilo of precursor by seven since 2006 (from 50 US$ in 2006 to more than 350 US$ today), which has repercussions for the cost of processing and the price of heroin. The annual UNODC World Drug Report (2009) states, "There are indications that precursors have become a major cost factor for clandestine laboratories producing heroin in Afghanistan".

However, the implementation of this strategy remains difficult and the effectiveness of regional and international cooperation is limited by a certain number of constraints:

- The complexity and extent of drug-trafficking (and money-laundering) networks in Iran, Central Asia, Russia, Europe, Dubai, etc. The opiate industry has functioned in a fluid and flexible way for more than 50 years because it knows how to adapt to new constraints.

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40 The Blue Paper – Afghanistan’s Opium Poppy Free Road Map and Provincial Profiles
The Green Paper – Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan: Border Management Cooperation in Drug Control
The Yellow Paper – Securing Central Asia’s borders with Afghanistan
The Violet Paper – The Caspian Sea and Turkmen Border Initiatives
The Red Paper – Targeting Precursors used in Heroin Manufacture: Operation TARCET (Targeted Anti-trafficking Regional Communication, Expertise and Training)
The Orange Paper – Financial Flows linked to Afghan opiates production and trafficking
The Indigo Paper – Preventing and treating opiates addiction and HIV/AIDS epidemics in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries

41 Presentation by UNODC at the conference on counter narcotics activities on 25 February 2010 organised by ISAF.
42 Interview with Thomas Pietschmann, UNODC, Vienna, January 2010.
- Lack of political will: the big drug traffickers and heads of mafia networks are often present in political and/or police authorities or have close links with these, whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere. There is therefore a need for a great deal of political will to address this issue.

- Lack of transparency between countries: the Paris Pact encourages collaboration and sharing of information between countries which are sometimes suspicious of each other and therefore not very inclined to share strategic information.

- Different approaches: whereas certain actors like the regional dimension of the Rainbow Strategy, others criticise the fact that there are not more activities which focus on Afghanistan. They feel that it is easier to deal with the source of the problem rather than an extremely broad network.

### 5.2.2 Law enforcement (arrests)

The objective of this pillar is to establish institutional capacity to increase drug trafficking risk through law enforcement.

The main organisation in this pillar is the U.S. government’s Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, the European Union and France, also contribute to this pillar, but to a lesser degree. The activities carried out essentially involve building the capacity of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) and the three investigation units (the Narcotics Investigation Unit, the Sensitive Investigation Unit and the Technical Investigation Unit) to identify and arrest traffickers.

These activities have had some success and have led to several arrests. However, some weaknesses and constraints persist, making a possible handover to the Afghan government difficult:

- Building the capacity of police personnel is difficult, particularly due to the low level of education of the officers. Law enforcement requires analysis and investigation skills which are difficult to transmit in a short space of time.

- The logistical costs of law enforcement operations are often high (helicopters, weapons and the cost of capture operations). These are essentially covered by the United States for the time being.

- A great deal of political will is needed to pursue and arrest top level drug traffickers. Many of them have close links with the authorities or are part of the government. This corruption makes operations of any real scale difficult.

- Law enforcement operations need to be backed up by a strong judicial system, but the Afghan judicial system also has weaknesses (see below).

- This pillar is run by the DEA rather than the Afghan government. It would appear that the DEA plans to remain operational in Afghanistan for the long term.
5.2.3 Criminal Justice

The objective of this pillar is to establish a criminal justice system which can support drug law enforcement.

The Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) was established in May 2005 to deal specifically with drug-related cases. It is responsible to the Supreme Court, the Procurator's Office and the Ministry of the Interior. Its mandate is to carry out investigations and instigate judicial proceedings for any major drug-related offences in the country, in accordance with articles 34 and 36 of the anti-drug law of November 2005.43

The CJTF is made up of 156 civil servants, including 50 investigators of the Anti-Drug Police, 28 procurators of the Procurator General's Office, 14 Supreme Court judges and 64 administrative staff. Different international advisers provide technical support and training to the CJTF staff. The main donors are the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway.44

The CJTF has established a Counter-Narcotics Tribunal which deals with all cases involving the seizure of more than 2 kg of drugs.

From March 2008 to March 2009, investigations were carried out by the CJTF's investigation department and laboratory on more than 397 cases involving 442 suspects. The Primary Justice Court found 259 people guilty of narcotics offences and acquitted 134. The Appeal Court found 355 people guilty and acquitted 66. The effectiveness of the CJTF appears to be improving in terms of the number of individuals that it deals with who have mid- to high-level responsibility in drug trafficking (which represents an increase of 300% compared to last year and 10% of the cases dealt with in the year).45

The United States recently financed the construction of the Counter Narcotics Justice Center (CNJC), a secure building where the CJTF and the Anti-Drug Tribunal are located. The centre also houses a police investigation unit and a laboratory. In March 2010, this unit was reformed to include all the Counter-Narcotics Police's specialised investigation units (the Narcotics Investigation Unit, the Sensitive Investigation Unit and the Technical Investigation Unit).

The CNJC also includes a high security detention centre for convicts with medium to high responsibility in narcotics trafficking. Its capacity is currently limited to 36 beds, but this is due to be expanded to 150 beds in 2010. An audit by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in July 2009 expressed concern that the centre was...
essentially occupied by convicts of minor importance and that this did not leave much room for any potential high responsibility convicts (SIGAR, 2009).

At the provincial level, the U.S. government also provides technical assistance to the judicial system via the Justice Sector Support Programme (State Department/INL). Teams are present in Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar and Kunduz to train criminal investigation police and procurators in judicial procedures in general and counter-narcotics in particular (US Department of State, 2007, p.63). The aim is to ensure that the main traffickers are referred to the CJTF. The British government has also deployed judicial advisers within its PRT in Helmand.

Even though the work of the Criminal Justice system has achieved some results, these have been limited by a number of constraints which are outlined below:

- Counter-Narcotics Law is not adapted to the context and has many weaknesses. As a result, some are beginning to challenge it. The biggest weakness is the clause on sentencing which is based only on the quantity of drugs seized and not the level of responsibility in narcotics trafficking. No distinction is made, for example, between a taxi driver and a drug baron who has set up a whole network if they are carrying the same amount of heroin.

- Some criticise the fact that a distinct criminal justice system for drugs has been put in place separately from the general criminal justice system.

- Some question the efficiency of the system in relation to the investments made. The number of cases treated by the tribunal is considered by some to be low in relation to the personnel involved and these cases essentially concern small-time offenders.

- Corruption hampers the system. As the big traffickers have close ties with those in power and are well protected, it is difficult to bring them to justice.

- Judges and procurators need a high level of protection to do their work, as the murder of judge Alim Hanif in 2008 showed. A Judiciary Security Unit (JSU) has been set up in the Ministry of the Interior within the Counter-Narcotics Police, but it needs to be reinforced and it needs to be provided with better logistical and technical support (SIGAR, 2009).

### 5.3 Public Awareness

The objective of the NDCS’s awareness-raising activities is to inform, educate, deter and dissuade the population from involvement in the illicit drugs trade, cultivation of opium and abuse of opiates. Several actors, including UNODC, the Counter Narcotics Advisory Teams and ISAF, provide the government with support to carry out public awareness campaigns.

General awareness raising campaigns (posters, radio messages, campaigns aimed at young people and/or school children) are implemented before the harvest period.

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47 Interview with Matt Walters and Patrick Davidson-Houston, February 2010
However, these operations often have a limited impact because they are implemented on too small a scale and without – or with very little – collaboration with community and religious leaders, whereas it is important that they should be involved in the preparation and dissemination of campaign messages. The integration and synchronization of these campaigns with other counter-narcotic strategies at the local level (rural development, eradication, reduction of drug abuse) is rare and should be increased.

5.4 Demand reduction

The objective of this pillar is to reduce Afghan demand for drugs and offer addicts treatment.

Drug abuse is a growing problem in Afghanistan. Though opium has been used in a traditional way for a long time by certain Afghan communities such as those in the North (Badakhshan), this is increasing rapidly and is spreading to new sections of the population. A study carried out by UNODC in 2005 assessed the number of heroin users in Afghanistan to be 50,000 and the number of opium users to be 150,000. The same study was conducted in 2009: the preliminary results are not yet available but it would appear that they show a massive increase in the number of drug users, with more than a million opium users48. Young people are particularly affected by the problem as well as former refugees who have returned from Pakistan and Iran. Opiate use has also brought new practices such as the injection of heroin which contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The use of illicit drugs, including opiates, is part of a broader addiction problem, including the abuse of pharmaceutical drugs (tranquilisers and analgesics) which concern 180,000 people according to a study by UNODC in 2005 (MacDonald D, AREU, 2008).

Since 2003, the provision of treatment for drug addiction49 is growing and detoxification centres and reintegration programmes are being set up. Some of the main treatment programmes which exist are:

- The Integrated Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Project in Afghanistan (IDPA) run by GTZ and initially funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then by the British Foreign Office (until 2009). In partnership with local NGOs, it has led to the creation of 5 centres in the provinces of Kabul, Badakhshan, Paktia, Kandahar and Herat.
- The Colombo Plan, supported by the US government, funds projects such as the IDPA programme’s centres in Helmand, Kandahar and Paktia.
- The Afghan Ministry of Health which runs 15 centres, often within hospitals. These centres were funded by the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund and UNODC up till the end of 2009.

48 The definitive results will only be available in June 2010.
49 Treatment, as defined in the NDCS, only refers to therapeutic strategies for detoxification and withdrawal. A department of the MCN is entirely devoted to this (the Drug Demand Reduction Department).
Centres run and supported by NGOs such as the Aga Khan Trust Fund in Badakhshan, from Nejat to Kabul, Wadan in Helmand (funded by the British Foreign Office then the Colombo Plan).

On average, each detoxification centre has provided between 1 000 and 2 000 drug addicts with treatment between opening\(^50\) and mid-2009. Most of them provide treatment in several stages (pre-treatment motivation, detoxification, primary and secondary treatment phases, then post-treatment monitoring and support) which can take place either in the centre or at home.\(^51\)

A study carried out by GTZ involving a sample of 509 people who had received treatment in 6 IDPA centres concluded that there was a 40\(^{\%}\)\(^52\) relapse rate. The study highlighted the following difficulties and weaknesses of treatment programmes:

- **Insufficient funding:** not only are there not enough centres to meet demand, but the long term funding of existing centres is not certain. For example, the centres of the MoPH and the IDPA have not received funding since the withdrawal of the British Foreign Office and the CNTF.

- **Incomplete treatment:** effective, long-term treatment of drug-addiction requires various forms of care whereas the current centres only provide certain treatment methods. Opiate substitution, for example, with methadone (cf. box 5), is not used for cases of severe drug addiction. Forms of accompaniment such as discussion and support groups, psychosocial support and post-treatment peer monitoring are also insufficiently used.

- **No help with reinsertion,** through training or help in finding employment. According to employees, under-employment is the cause of 20\(^{\%}\) of relapses.

Other professionals who were met in the course of this study also expressed the need to improve the links between the treatment centres which are not managed by the Ministry of Public Health and the public services and to build the capacity of these services. Finally, the primary causes of drug abuse (unemployment amongst the young, difficulty in gaining access to training, the economic and psychological consequences of the conflict and also the development of the drug trafficking network in the country) have by no means been dealt with and it is therefore highly probable that the problem will continue to grow.

\(^{50}\) Most of centres opened between 2003 and 2005.

\(^{51}\) Waller *et al*, IDPA Treatment Effectiveness Study, GTZ, June 2009

\(^{52}\) Ibid. But the rate is probably much higher, according to Dr Zafar, the Vice President of the MCN, who stated during a conference on risk reduction organised by MDM in Kabul in April.
Box 5. The Harm reduction program for drug users

On the basis of these points, Médecins du Monde (MDM) has decided to promote an alternative approach to treating drug addiction. Because, on the one hand, detoxification strategies have clearly shown their limits, and, on the other, signs of an HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C epidemic amongst intravenous drug users have been identified, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has begun to encourage an alternative approach to the repressive approach to withdrawal/detoxification applied by the MCN as part of the NDCS. This is known as Harm Reduction (HR). Another institutional reference text has also come into being via the national anti-HIV/AIDS strategy which was adopted in its initial version in December 2005 and is being revised at the time writing. This text is also based on a certain number of pillars, one of the most important being the implementation of a HR strategy. Among other things, this HR strategy mentions the implementation of needle exchange programs and opiate substitution treatment (OST). These HR strategies aim to control the spread of HIV and hepatitis epidemics but also contribute to reducing the number of illegal drug users by providing them with OST.

Due to the lack of experience on this issue in Afghanistan, MDM opened a model HR programme in Kabul to promote good practice in HR in Afghanistan, including the use of OST. Alongside this treatment programme, a national resource and training centre has been opened since February 2010 to train the staff of local Afghan NGOs, including those who until now were only involved in withdrawal and detoxification. This program has already led to antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS being used in the country since May 2009 and OST using methadone since February 2010. The lessons learned show that an alternative approach to that of the NDCS programmes is possible and effective in Afghanistan. They have also consolidated the MoPH’s position in the counter-narcotics field. It was the MoPH who promoted the National Consensus Conference on OST proposed by MDM in November 2007, despite opposition from the MCN.

5.5 Institution building

The objective of this pillar is to build counter-narcotics institutions that provide for effective governance at the centre and in the provinces.

This essentially involves building the capacity of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the provincial governors’ offices.

53 Especially because, in this area as in others, Afghan health professionals are not sufficiently qualified to implement effective healthcare programs in keeping with good practices as promoted by the WHO and UNODC.
There was a great deal of debate about the creation of the MCN: was a ministry or a drug department attached to the president’s office needed to define policy and manage coordination? In 2005, it was decided that given the scale of the problem and the need to collaborate with different ministries, the body should have a certain amount of weight and should therefore take the form of a full-blown ministry. The United Kingdom invested a great deal in this ministry, both in terms of technical assistance, but also via the creation of the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF) managed by the MCN, thus strengthening its political weight.

This has come up against the following difficulties:

- As the MCN is a small ministry, it struggles to get the attention and respect of other ministries like those of the Interior, of Justice, of Rural Development and Agriculture, which are the “heavyweights” of the government. This is even more the case since the CNTF has been closed and the MCN no longer has a budget for its own operations.
- Like all the other ministries, the MCN struggles to recruit and keep competent staff due to the differences in salary between the Afghan government, international NGOs, the United Nations and consultancies. Staff provided with technical training do not stay.
- Corruption exists within the institutions involved (MCN, MoI, MoJ)
- The MCN is the result of the will of the international community, rather than an endogenous institution. And yet, donors, and particularly the United Kingdom, have an ambiguous attitude towards it. It is probable that they will stop providing direct technical assistance to the MCN and will finance UNODC instead so that it can provide the MCN with support. This change in strategy is partly due to the fact that the United Kingdom (FCO) argues that it will not necessarily be needed to maintain a ministry to carry out these functions in the long term. Nevertheless, the consequences of this change in strategy are not clear in terms of the coherence and continuity of institutional support to the MCN. There is a risk that this will contribute to weakening this body at a time when, on the contrary, there is a need to strengthen coordination mechanisms and ownership of the problem of drugs by the Afghan government.

5.6 Constraints for a genuinely integrated approach in the fight against opiates

5.6.1 An integrated approach or parallel pillars?

It is still difficult to measure whether the implementation of the NDCS as a whole has really had a positive impact, firstly, because there has been little evaluation of the results of each pillar or they are not easily available, and secondly, because it has been implemented pillar by pillar rather than in an integrated manner. Attempts to establish an integrated strategy at the local level have been rare. The counter-narcotics strategy in

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56 This is partly in reaction to the nomination of the new minister who they consider to be incompetent, and even corrupt.
Helmand, which was developed by the British, is one of the rare examples of an integrated approach at the level of a province.

Much remains to be done to improve the links between development activities and other counter-narcotics activities, and particularly awareness-raising and interdiction and eradication operations. This lack of integration seriously compromises the effectiveness of the fight against opiates, and is perhaps even counter-productive, especially when repressive activities are not sufficiently accompanied with economic support. David Mansfield and Adam Pain have shown in numerous publications how harmful these approaches can be, underlining, for example, that “attempts to strengthen and diversify the licit elements of household livelihood strategies in Nangarhar have become all the more difficult due to the multiplier effect the ban has had on the wider economy. A 95 percent reduction in levels of cultivation in the province represents potentially 8 million fewer labour days”. The poverty and resentment which this produces within the population contribute to perpetuating a climate of insecurity and defiance vis-a-vis the government.

A relatively positive point in recent years is the way the balance between the different pillars has evolved, and more particularly, how it has evolved between those which involve a “repressive” approach (eradication, interdiction, criminal justice) and those based on supporting the population (public awareness, development, demand reduction). This has notably been made possible by the change in strategy of the United States in 2007 which called into question the priority given to eradication and placed more emphasis on supporting development, raising awareness and law enforcement.

5.6.2 Different perceptions, different approaches: the difficulty of coordination

The difficulties mentioned above are due, in part, to coordination problems between actors both within each pillar and between the pillars.

Coordination is weakened by the absence of a major actor who is recognised by everyone as being responsible for coordination. The MCN’s capacity to take charge of coordination has proven to be too limited, both because of the lack of recognition from other ministries and its weak capacity. For several years, the British government was recognized as the leader on counter-narcotics issues, following the distribution of responsibilities between the G8 countries in Tokyo in 2002. Little by little, this distribution of tasks has become obsolete and the British have slowly withdrawn to be replaced by UNODC.

The sharing of responsibilities between UNAMA and UNODC has been difficult to establish. UNAMA proposed to facilitate coordination by setting up a unit for this purpose, but UNODC opposed this move. Certain actors would have preferred UNAMA to play this role, worried that UNODC, which implements programmes and is dependent on donors, is not neutral. Others consider that, due to its technical expertise in this domain, UNODC is the legitimate organisation for this role. Coordination therefore remains the responsibility

57 Mansfield and Pain, Alternative Livelihoods: Substance or Slogan (AREU, 2005).
of UNODC, but it has yet to prove that it has the capacity to provide coordination. No meetings to this effect had been organised in the months leading up to March 2010. The current ISAF team which is responsible for anti-narcotics issues happens to be very active and has already organized two large gatherings since the beginning of 2010, making up for this lack of information sharing. As the ISAF team changes every 6 months, it remains to be seen whether those who replace the current team will be as dynamic.

In addition to operational aspects, coordination is especially made difficult by differences in perception between the organisations involved, and the different approaches that they advocate. The United States traditionally place a lot of emphasis on interdiction, criminal justice and eradication, and this still has a considerable effect on their programmes even though their strategy is changing towards greater support for communities. They are also making a considerable effort to integrate the different agencies involved in the fight against drugs (INL, DEA, DOJ, USAID, USDA) more effectively. The United Kingdom’s approach combines that of the Foreign Office, which places the accent on interdiction, eradication and counter-narcotics policy, and that of DFID, which promotes livelihoods development. These two institutions consider drug problems to cut across factors of governmental instability and vulnerability, including corruption. They advocate an integrated approach like the one they apply in Helmand. Canada deals with the issue mainly from a security point of view. The European Union supports interdiction efforts, such as border control (via UNODC) and considers that the problem should be addressed via development programmes in general. As for ISAF, it sees its role as being to support government policy. The current ISAF team is very pro-active and particularly appreciated by the other actors. Lastly, the MCN is above all concerned with responding to the needs of the Afghan population, both in terms of development and demand reduction.

These different priorities and approaches do not make collaboration between institutions easy. However, there is a clear willingness amongst all the actors to work together, improve information sharing and support the government. Furthermore, it would seem that, even though it could be improved, the sharing of lessons learned is slowly helping to create greater consensus and shared understanding of the problem. Efforts of this kind should continue.
Conclusion

Considerable effort has been put into the fight against opium poppy cultivation and the production of opium in Afghanistan. The actors involved have tried to integrate lessons learned in other countries and have drawn up and implemented a strategy based on complementary pillars which combine repression (interdiction, eradication, criminal justice) and providing communities with support (awareness-raising, socio-economic development and demand reduction).

Slowly but surely, practices are evolving and Afghanistan has become a learning context with new lessons emerging. “Alternative development” and “alternative livelihoods” programmes are gradually being abandoned. It is increasingly recognised that only economic and political development can lead to a sustainable reduction in opium poppy cultivation. Past lessons concerning the harmful effects of a purely repressive approach are gradually being integrated as is illustrated by the change in priorities which appears to be taking place in the US strategy: eradication is taking a secondary role and the accent is being placed on development.

Nevertheless, numerous obstacles remain. The effectiveness and long-term stability of these efforts remain uncertain for a large number of reasons, and in particular because:

- Corruption is present at every level and undermines the efforts made in all areas, and particularly with regard to criminal justice, interdiction and eradication activities.
- The political will of Afghan leaders is weak with regard to opiate-related problems. This comes as no surprise because many politicians or people with close ties to the authorities are involved in drug trafficking and it is not in their interest to support anti-opium activities. But it also reflects the fact that the fight against drugs is primarily a preoccupation of Western countries and is not really in the (economic) interest of the Afghans and their government. However, this position is gradually changing notably with the growing awareness that the Afghan population is itself becoming a victim of the drug.
- Despite the many papers on the subject, there continues to be a lack of understanding of the political economy of drug production and trafficking. In addition to these strategic weaknesses there are also operational weaknesses.

The following sections present recommendations of a strategic order followed by operational recommendations for anti-opium projects which focus on the aspects which are most relevant to the French Development Agency.
7. Recommendations

7.1 Strategic recommendations

Weaknesses in the understanding of the political situation and the political economy of drugs in Afghanistan lead to confusion about the links between drug production and economic development, the security situation and governance. The production of opium is considered by most actors to be, amongst other things, the cause of security problems, corruption and insurgency. In fact, it is more a symptom of much more serious problems, which are the source of the Afghan economic and political crisis. For many farmers, opium poppy cultivation is a mechanism for managing this crisis.

Attacking the symptom of a crisis rather than its fundamental causes is to run the risk of deteriorating the economic situation (loss of an essential source of revenue for farmers and businesses which depend on the opium industry) and the political situation (increased corruption, resentment on the part of farmers against the government and the international community which reinforces the insurgency). Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy argues that opium poppy is no doubt a lesser evil: "The opium economy is not a predatory economy. Attempting to eradicate it could lead to the development of other illicit activities which are much more predatory for the environment and the population". He explains that, "we are putting the cart before the horse. We want to solve the problem of opium in order to solve the problem of corruption and combat the insurgency. But before we solve political problems and develop the licit economy, the conditions which favour the production of drugs will continue to exist".\textsuperscript{58}

The government and the international community should concentrate their efforts on the factors which lead to the production of drugs, such as those linked to the security and political situation and those linked to the socio-economic situation (cf. Part I). Problems directly linked to the opiates industry will be much easier to manage when progress has been made on these other fronts.

During the London conference in January 2010, the international community and the Afghan government decided to give priority to reconciliation and negotiation in order to resolve the conflict. Certain actors are worried that this decision will compromise counter-narcotics efforts (in relation to interdiction and criminal justice), as resolving the conflict will inevitably involve negotiations with actors involved in the drug economy. However, it is necessary to have a long-term vision and to establish priorities. It seems obvious that

\textsuperscript{58} Personal communication
political stability is a pre-requisite for sustainable socio-economic development and, consequently, for a reduction in opium production.

One of the reasons why actors focus on opium production rather than on its fundamental causes is due to the use of UNODC data on opium cultivation and opium production as the main (if not only) indicator of progress. And yet this data does not give any indication of the sustainability of changes observed or improvements in the living conditions of Afghans. It would be much more appropriate to measure progress made using indicators based on the socio-economic situation (including health) and the security and political situation (governance, corruption). This would allow the efforts of the international community to be refocused on improving the living conditions of the Afghans, which is a social, economic and political issue.

### 7.2 Operational recommendations for socio-economic development programmes

1. In order to improve the effectiveness and impact of development programmes implemented in connection with the fight against opiates, there needs to be recognition that their success depends on investment over time. Projects with a rapid impact create political incentive, but they need to be accompanied by operations which are planned with a ten or twenty-year perspective.

2. The planning and implementation of operations needs to be flexible in order to respond to the needs of different population groups and adapt to different situations which evolve over time.

3. The appropriateness of operations will depend on how well factors influencing opium poppy cultivation at the local level are analysed and how well they integrate different components – economic development, security, governance – as part of strategies which are adapted to the local context.

4. The fight against opiates should be led alongside harmonious economic development throughout the country to avoid problems simply moving from one area to another. It is therefore important to contribute (financially and technically) to national development programmes in different key sectors, such as agriculture, rural development, job creation, and industrial development. The earmarking of aid by donors should either be avoided as it creates difficulties for the government to adopt harmonised national strategies or it should be managed as part of a national development plan.

5. Providing support to rural development and agricultural programmes implemented by NGOs – particularly by partners of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) - remains pertinent. The use of integrated approaches by certain NGOs (AKDN, AfghanAid, Solidarités) makes it possible to compensate for the major weaknesses which continue to exist in local public services and to create links between the different sectors (governance, rural development, agriculture, education, health). It is therefore important to establish links between these cross-sector programmes and the
government’s sector-based development programmes particularly as long as local authorities have no inter-department collaboration mechanisms.

Furthermore, given the security problems which limit the government’s access to certain parts of the country and the problems of corruption within the government, it is possible that NGOs – particularly Afghan NGOs – will play an increasingly predominant role in the implementation of development programmes. If the conflict continues to deteriorate, NGOs may once again take up a humanitarian role similar to the role they have played in previous phases of the conflict (in the 1980s and 1990s). Certain NGOs are trying to establish links with the opposition to negotiate access to the population.

6. It is important to continue to diversify and develop agricultural sectors, while taking care with the following points:
   - the choice of products, by asking who will benefit from them (big land owners? small farmers?) and if they will allow jobs to be created for households without productive resources
   - the quality of market studies with reliable estimates of the competitiveness of Afghan products
   - the risk of creating artificial markets and dependence (on suppliers or clients paid with international aid, for example)
   - the need to implement, as early as possible, processes which allow the different actors involved in a sector to gain autonomy (particularly via training in quality control, marketing, management, etc.)
   - the need to establish a sustainable system for the supply of quality inputs (for example, by avoiding free distribution)

The successful development of a sector depends not only on the choice of the product but also the development strategy adopted. Actors who support the development of a sector must make sure that it has every chance of success because failure could increase the vulnerability of farmers. Partnerships between development and private sector organisations from the earliest stages are a way of measuring and sharing risk more effectively.

7. The development of new products on a large scale can not only be based on investment in the production tool. Investment in other infrastructure such as processing and packaging factories and electric plants, for example, is necessary, though very little has taken place to date. It is therefore important to identify the main bottlenecks which are holding up the development of food industry products and other potential industrial activities, and to support initiatives which aim to overcome these. Many Afghan entrepreneurs are interested in this kind of investment, but often need some help with initial capital, guarantees on their investment and technical support.

8. Financial and technical support should be provided to develop rural and agricultural credit mechanisms and products. Different products need to be made accessible to households, smallholders, small and medium-sized businesses and also big investors. The development of these systems needs to take into account the absorption and

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59 See Counter-Narcotics In Afghanistan: the Failure of Success? (December 2008)
deployment capacity of existing credit institutions. It would also be a good idea to keep track of developments regarding the Agricultural Development Fund, an initiative proposed by the United States government, and to consider ways of supporting it.

9. Supporting **rural infrastructure development projects** (roads, bridges, dams, etc.) which require a **large amount of labour** is a way of reducing the labour available for poppy cultivation in the short term, if these projects are implemented when the need for labour in the opiate sector is at its highest (for example, during the harvest). These projects are a way of providing communities which are dependent on opium poppy cultivation with employment and increasing the cost of production for large-scale opium producers.

10. It is important to increase the support provided to demand reduction programmes in order to increase the quantity and quality of services provided to drug addicts whose number is increasing at an alarming rate with tragic consequences for the well-being of the Afghan population.

11. For all operations, monitoring systems need to be improved and indicators need to be adopted which measure improvements in living conditions (revenue, food security, access to basic public services, security, etc.) and the sustainability of the results obtained.

12. Finally, coordination will remain difficult due to the complexity of the situation, the diversity of the actors involved and the wide range of operations underway in Afghanistan. It is principally the responsibility of the United Nations (UNODC and UNAMA) to provide the government and particularly the MCN with support in its coordination efforts. It is nevertheless important that each actor contributes to improving inter-organisational collaboration, both at the national and local levels. This implies first **integrating their operations with the actions of the relevant ministries**, then continually and pro-actively **sharing information** with the other actors involved.
ANNEXES

Annex 1.

Bibliography

This annex is organised into two sections:
- a reference section which lists works which were directly referred to in writing this document.
- a works consulted section which includes all the publications and books on the issue of drugs which the authors consulted.

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### Annex 2:

**People consulted**

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Annex 3:

Opium poppy cultivation in five provinces

- Helmand

The province of Helmand has a plain economy structured around an irrigation system in its main valley. The Helmand-Arghandab irrigation system, which was developed with substantial investment from the USA in the 1950s, was designed to sustain export-oriented agriculture based on cotton. Beyond the river valley, the Lashkar Gah area in the South is essentially desert with arid and stony land. In addition to the intensive agriculture economy which is centred on the river and produces surpluses in cereals (also referred to as the "food zone"), there is a zone in the North at a higher altitude with small farms based on karez-type irrigation systems and livestock farming, where there are periods of cereal shortages.

In addition to these two types of economy, there are two important points which affect the province’s social identity. The first is the location of Pashtun tribes which is an important factor in social networks and power structures. And the second is socio-economic inequality within the population. There are major differences in terms of land ownership between the big landowners who own a large proportion of the land and the many smallholders or the landless who live as tenant farmers on the big landowners’ property.

With good access to water and irrigation in certain zones, Helmand is historically an opium poppy producing region and for years has been either the biggest or second biggest producer in Afghanistan with almost 70 000 ha cultivated in 2009, which represents 59% of the total area of opium poppy cultivated in the country (UNODC, 2009). Opium production has exploded in the province in the last decade: from 29 950 ha in 2002, it leapt to 103 950 ha in 2008.

Due to its location, on the border with Pakistan and close to Iran, Helmand has a border economy. Smuggling and trade have been common for many years. The State’s limited presence in these areas is favourable to trade in illicit products and the exporting of drugs to drug-using countries in Asia and Europe. The processing of opium poppy into drugs has also become more common. In 2009, of the twenty-seven laboratories destroyed during counter-narcotics operations, seventeen were in Helmand.

The explosion in the production of opium poppy in Helmand is closely linked to insecurity and the presence of the Taliban insurgency. The insurgency seriously limits population movement, making trade in licit products more difficult and dangerous. It has also caused the destruction of the infrastructure and institutions needed to develop licit and profitable agriculture. Farmers do not have access to either quality inputs or technical support. Opium, which traffickers buy directly from the producers, becomes their only alternative.

Repressive operations against the production of opium poppy remain limited in this province and only 6% of estimated opium production was eradicated in 2009. The ISAF’s operations in the province target insurgents rather than opium producers. The ISAF, which is trying to win the hearts of the population, does not wish to be associated with eradication activities which could have negative repercussions. Operations to counter...
opium poppy cultivation in the food zone such as eradication campaigns and wheat seed distributions have resulted in a reduction in the area cultivated of 37% (UNODC, 2009), but, on the other hand, have resulted in an 8% increase in production in neighbouring areas.

- **Ghor**

The province of Ghor is characterised by a series of high mountains and narrow valleys. It has a continental climate and periods of drought regularly have serious consequences for the province. The long winters isolate the population from centres of economic and social activity. It is recognised as one of the poorest regions in the country with a great deal of land which is not very fertile, most farming land principally made up of unirrigated fields with low yields.

The people of the province get by thanks to a complex network of activities based on the cultivation of irrigated and rainfed land as well as livestock farming. In the face of the risks and numerous constraints linked to crop and livestock farming, the population have developed non-agricultural strategies such as seasonal migration to other provinces or countries. The majority of the farming systems are not sustainable and are dependent on the climate. More than 50% of households are food insecure, even in years when the harvest is good. It is very common for people to sell their goods as a coping strategy.

Opium poppy cultivation has only recently come to the Western province of Ghor. Traffickers started to come in the early 2000s offering farmers seeds and organising production (Johnson & Joylon, 2003). After some promising trials, opium poppy cultivation developed in the region, where labour with no other source of income was readily available. The area cultivated fluctuated between 2200 ha and 5000 ha between 2002 and 2006. In 2007, production began to fall and it has been declared poppy-free since 2008.

The low level of production since 2007/08 has been caused by environmental and commercial factors (Mansfield, 2009). Opium poppy yields have been poor and its price has gone down while the price of wheat has gone up sharply. As such, opium poppy cultivation has become less attractive and the only farmers who have continued to cultivate it are those without any other source of income.

- **Badakhshan**

The province of Badakhshan is characterised by high mountains and steep valleys. These mountainous areas cut the province off from the rest of Afghanistan for several months of the year.

It is rare for local agricultural production to satisfy the population’s food needs. In the 1970s, before the war, the province already suffered from food insecurity. Today a large number of farmers have chronic cereal shortages. The majority of land is not irrigated and is therefore very vulnerable to drought even though this varies a great deal depending on the district (mountainous zones or irrigated valleys). The sale of livestock and seasonal migration of labour are two essential strategies used to make up for shortages in wheat, particularly in the mountainous zones. When irrigated land is available, there is a broader range of strategies to respond to needs in terms of cereals, including opium poppy cultivation. (Mansfield & Pain, 2007).
Opium poppy has been cultivated in the province for several centuries. However, the development of a real opium economy is more recent and initially happened in the context of the war economy and as a coping strategy in the 1990s. In 2000, the national ban on opium poppy cultivation decreed by the Taliban resulted in its development in Badakhshan, which was not under their control.

After 2001, opium poppy became the main cash crop, with a considerable increase in quantities, both on irrigated and rainfed land. In 2005, more than 15,000 ha of land was being used for opium poppy cultivation. Since 2007, there has been a sharp drop in production. Only 200 ha are reported to have been cultivated in 2008, principally in the rainfed agricultural zones and adjacent valleys, and 500 ha in 2009 (UNODC, 2009).

In parallel to the increase in cultivation, the processing of opium into morphine and heroin developed considerably and a large number of clandestine laboratories were set up. Furthermore, as Badakhshan is on the border with both Tajikistan and Pakistan, it is in a favourable position to gain access to trafficking networks.

Operations to counter opium production have played an important role in the reduction which has taken place since 2007. Other factors have also probably affected levels of production in certain districts, such as the drop in the price of opium and the recovery of the livestock market in 2006 (and consequently, higher demand for wheat straw and fodder) as well as a drop in opium poppy yields (due to frost in the spring and unseasonal rains during the harvest). According to UNODC, the increase in cultivation observed in 2009 is due to a lack of strategy for preventing spring cultivation.

- **Balkh**

The agricultural landscape in Balkh is dominated by a major irrigation system which comes from the Balkh river and is more than a thousand years old.

Until the beginning of the 2000s, very little opium poppy was cultivated in Balkh province. Production was limited to a few areas and was for local use. The population generally had little know-how or understanding of cultivation methods and methods of extracting opiates. From 2002 to 2006, opium poppy cultivation grew in the province. This can be explained in terms of the attractiveness of the price of opium poppy, newly available know-how and labour for cultivating opium poppy brought by migrant workers from Nangarhar and good availability of water (even though there are major variations depending on the zone and whether upstream or downstream of the river). In 2005 and 2006, production reached a record high with more than 10,000 ha cultivated (UNODC, 2009) compared to 1000 ha at the end of the 90s. Since 2006, the province has experienced a very sharp drop in production and was declared poppy-free in 2008 and 2009.

The main reasons given by UNODC to explain this drop in production is the success of an awareness-raising campaign run by the local governor before the cropping season.

- **Nangarhar**

The province of Nangarhar is situated on Afghanistan’s Eastern border with Pakistan. The three provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar form a geographical basin which is crossed by the valleys of the rivers Kabul and Kunar. South of Nangarhar are the Spin Ghar mountains to the north of the Hindu Kush mountain range. Nangarhar is one of the most
densely-populated provinces in the country. The estimated population is 1.8 million essentially made up of Pashtuns. The provincial capital is Jalalabad, which is situated where the Kabul and Kunar rivers meet. The province of Nangarhar has a sub-tropical climate, with mild winters (except in the mountains) and warm summers. A wide range of crops are grown in the main river basin of the province, including citrus fruit and olives. Double cropping can be carried out in the areas irrigated by the Kabul and Kunar rivers. In the areas which depend on seasonal flooding of water courses and “karez” underground irrigation systems, water shortages are more frequent and the range of crops is more limited.

Nangarhar is a traditional opium poppy producing region. Between 2002 and 2004, production was very high and, depending on the year, it was either the biggest or second-biggest opium producing region (with a cultivated area of between 18 000 and 28 213 ha). Since 2004, production levels have been very erratic, with alternating increases and decreases. A very large decrease took place between 2004 and 2005 (from 28 000 to 1 000 ha cultivated). In 2006 and 2007, the area cultivated went back up (4000 ha in 2006 and 18 000 in 2007) before dropping again in 2008 when the province was declared “poppy free”. In 2009, a slight increase in the area cultivated was observed.

The reasons given for the major reduction in production between 2004 and 2005 are:
- the existence of stocks from 2004 and a drop in the price of opium
- pressure on the farmers from the traffickers not to sow in the autumn of 2004 in order to make the price of opium go back up
- priority given to food security by farmers who therefore planted wheat (very expensive on the market)
- a very dynamic campaign by governor Mohammed Din based on concertation with tribal assemblies to gain their support for the ban on sowing opium poppy
- the coalition’s many anti-terrorist operations at the Pakistani border which dissuaded farmers from cultivating opium poppy due to the risk of being targeted
## Annex 4:

### Typology of opium-producing areas and farmers within them

This table is taken from the Economic incentives and development initiatives to reduce opium production (WB, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 1 Non dependent</th>
<th>Type 2 Dependent</th>
<th>Type 3 Very dependent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to markets/services/Governance</strong></td>
<td>• Close to district and provincial centers&lt;br&gt;• Government can impose will with minimum reaction</td>
<td>• Accessible but limited physical infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land cultivated (winter + summer)</strong></td>
<td>• Larger cultivable land (&gt;15 jeribs)</td>
<td>• Medium sized (&gt;7.5 - &lt;15 jeribs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irrigation</strong></td>
<td>• Canal or main river&lt;br&gt;• Landlord&lt;br&gt;• Owner cultivator</td>
<td>• Canal and river but also karez and mountain spring&lt;br&gt;• Owner cultivator&lt;br&gt;• Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Crops</strong></td>
<td>• Double Crop</td>
<td>• Double crop, limited in summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cropping</strong></td>
<td>• Diversified&lt;br&gt;• Poppy 30-50%&lt;br&gt;• Wheat&lt;br&gt;• Vegetable for sale&lt;br&gt;• Fruits/nuts for sale</td>
<td>• Poppy 50%+&lt;br&gt;• Wheat&lt;br&gt;• Vegetables – some for sale&lt;br&gt;• Fruits/nuts – some for sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population density</strong></td>
<td>1 - 1.5 per jerib&lt;br&gt;• Sale of dairy products and cattle</td>
<td>2 - 3 per jerib&lt;br&gt;• Some sale of dairy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livestock</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Off farm</strong></td>
<td>• Limited</td>
<td>• Daily wage labour – poppy during harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non Farm</strong></td>
<td>• Salaried (NGO, Govt), trade, transport</td>
<td>• Construction&lt;br&gt;• Semi Skilled&lt;br&gt;• Some accumulated debts&lt;br&gt;• Variety of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credit</strong></td>
<td>• Little debt&lt;br&gt;• Various sources of credit</td>
<td>• Pre harvest, some surplus&lt;br&gt;• Pre harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opium Sales</strong></td>
<td>• Some time after harvest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 5:

Lessons from alternative development and alternative livelihoods (AL) programmes

This annex is taken from the report *Licit Livelihoods in an Opium Economy Project Discussion Paper 2* (FAO / AALP, February 2007).

**Civil society**
1. AL should be an integral part of regional and national development programmes.
2. A strong and stable national institutional framework including security, administration and public services is required.
3. Long-term political and financial commitments are essential for the sustainable elimination of opium poppy (see also 10).
4. Inclusive approaches should address community needs including those of landless and female-headed households and involve participation, local ownership and transparency.

**Coordination / cooperation**
5. Coordination and transparency among different actors (donors, government, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, NGOs and villagers) increases the chances of success.

**Eradication / law enforcement**
6. There is little evidence of long-term impact of eradication unsupported by AL.
7. Sustainable economic and social development should be in place before eradication is implemented.

**Civil society**
8. AL activities should not be directly linked with eradication and law enforcement.
9. Drug control legislation and eradication should only be enforced once sustainable economic and social development is in place.

**Agricultural development**
10. A long-term commitment to funding, technical support and implementation is needed to create long-term sustainable results.
11. Programmes should build on local knowledge and experience.
12. AL should be designed and evaluated on the same criteria as mainstream rural development activities.
13. AL needs to be innovative by expanding market opportunities, mobilising the private sector, empowering rural households, emphasising value added and establishing trade links.
14. Comprehensive approaches are necessary to address the complexity of the rural economy, including access to land, inputs, markets, credit and debt.
15. Approaches should be tailored to different socio-economic situations.
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