

## Documentation

### Dataset A6-A7-A8. Database of Development Aid in Borderlands in Afghanistan, 2002-2018

Database of development aid interventions and investments for Nangarhar, Nimroz and Badakshan provinces for period 2002-2018. Data have been compiled from existing paper reports, digital reports and digital databases obtained from donor agencies, ministries, local authorities and NGOs.

The purpose of compiling the database was to gather evidence on whether or not interventions and developments influence the drugs economy. There is a belief that tackling drugs and promoting development are mutually reinforcing, assuming that development will generate viable alternative livelihood options for those engaged in drug economies. Official and NGO strategies thus follow the assumption that if lack of development fosters illicit activities such as drug crops, this can be alleviated by economic development interventions and state-building projects.

Aim was to record all development organizations active in the borderland areas and record the scope, scale, location and monetary investment of programmes, projects and interventions they fund – not just drug control interventions but also mainstream development interventions in general – for the period 2002 to 2018.

Dataset owner: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU).

### Context

Afghanistan is a low-income country ranked 169 out of 188 in the Human Development Index<sup>1</sup>, with an estimated 39% of the population living below the poverty line and some 2.9 million Afghans internally displaced. The country is in the high alert category of the Fragile State Index<sup>2</sup>, and has experienced more or less constant warfare since the Soviet invasion of 1979. The US-led invasion of 2001 toppling the Taliban regime briefly brought hopes of a sustainable transition to peace. But instead, it marked a new phase of armed conflict that has intensified and become more widespread over time. Afghanistan emerged during the war years as the global leader in opium production. The chronic insecurity and institutional weakness means there is no, or inadequate, regulation. And poverty and poor infrastructure prevent the development of alternative livelihoods.

Internationally supported and Afghan government-led counter narcotics efforts were stepped up from 2004 onwards. This was based on the assumption that state-building, reconstruction, counter insurgency and counter narcotics are mutually reinforcing. Since 2001, the US government alone has spent some US\$7.28 billion on counter-narcotics programming for scant return in relation to the goals of its policy<sup>3</sup>. Whilst in the mid-2000s opium production declined there has been a sharp rise since and by 2017, opium

<sup>1</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fundforpeace.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/counternarcotics/index.html>

poppy crops extended over a record 328,000 hectares<sup>4</sup>, up from 201,000 hectares in 2016 and some 70,000 ha in 1994. This generated between 20–32% of GDP and the value of the opiate economy far exceeded that of licit exports of goods and services.

The Drugs and (dis)order project has conducted research in Afghanistan in three borderland regions: Badakhshan province near the Tajikistan and Pakistan border, Nangarhar province on the Pakistan border and Nimroz province on the border with Iran (Figure 1).

There is a belief that tackling drugs and promoting development are mutually reinforcing, assuming that development will generate viable alternative livelihood options for those engaged in drug economies. Official and NGO strategies thus follow the assumption that if lack of development fosters illicit activities such as drug crops, this can be alleviated by economic development interventions and state-building projects.

The purpose of compiling these databases of development aid investments in the Afghan borderlands studied was to gather evidence on whether or not interventions and developments influence the drugs economy. Aim was to record all development organizations active in the borderland areas and record the scope, scale, location and monetary investment of programmes, projects and interventions they fund – not just drug control interventions but also mainstream development interventions in general – for the period 2002 to 2018.

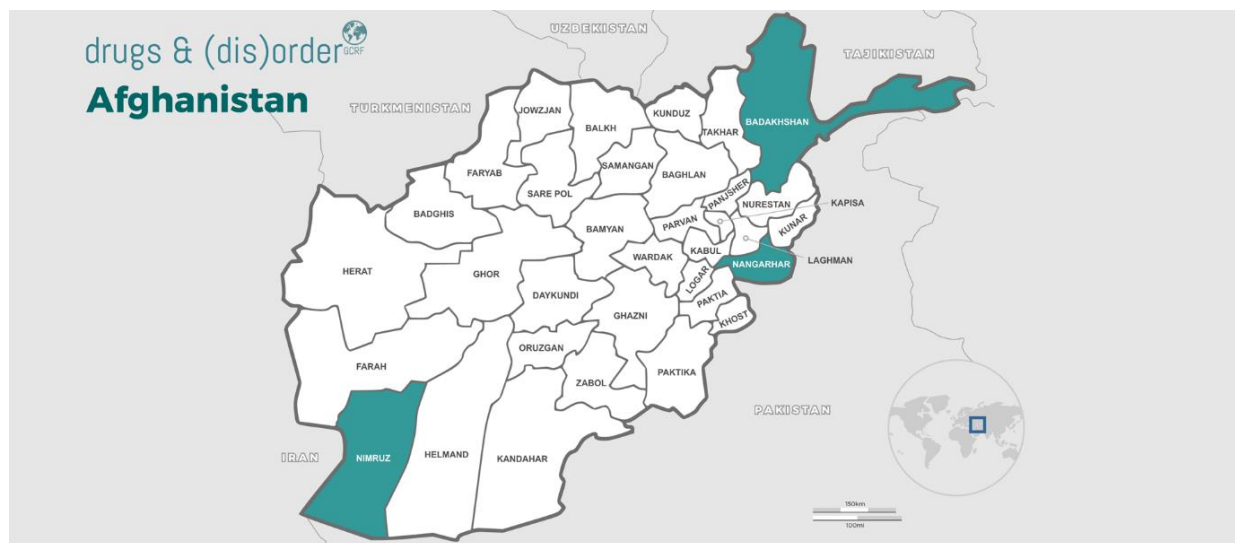


Figure 1. Map of Afghanistan showing the borderlands studied

## Methodology

Data have been compiled from existing resources (Table 1). These include paper-based reports, digital reports, digital databases and documents obtained from donor agencies, Afghanistan ministries, local authorities, independent national and international research organizations and NGOs. Data from

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2018/May/last-years-record-opium-production-in-afghanistan-threatens-sustainable-development--latest-survey-reveals.html>

ministries were often obtained by visiting them and copying information directly from their records. Often ministries contacted did not have an existing list of data on funding, so had to create this information on request. The main source of information was the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). MRRD records didn't indicate the funding agencies of investments, but those can be deducted from the programme (Table 4).

Information received was mostly in Persian and then translated into English. Only information supplied by MRRD was supplied in English. Funding amounts were sometimes given in USD, sometimes in Afghani. This was then converted to USD based on the exchange rate of that year.

Records have also been extracted from the online Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD) via the National Budget and Aid Management Systems Afghanistan application (dadafghanistan.gov.af), but have been listed separately as they do not specify in which district of the province the investment was made.

In addition, interviews were carried out with government officials, community representatives, donors and NGOs in Kabul and the provinces of Nangarhar, Nimroz and Badakshan, in order to elicit information and data sources on development aid funding in the provinces<sup>5</sup>.

*Table I. Sources of information for the databases, with the number of record obtained from each source*

Organisation	Nangarhar	Nimroz	Badakshan
Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)	34		77
Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN)	40	7	17
Ministry of Economy	61	8	
Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)			131 <sup>6</sup>
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	4969	1246	5029
Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL)			18
Office of State Minister for Disaster Management (OSMDM)			6
Agriculture Directorate of the province	4	51	
Economy Directorate of the province	39	11	
Education Directorate of the province	81	47	
Finance Directorate of the province	42		
Health Directorate of the province		13	
Public Health Directorate of the province		7	

<sup>5</sup> Nemat, Orzala and Suroush, Qayoom and Mirzada, Gulsom (2022). *Drugs and (Dis)order Interviews with Donor Organisations, Afghanistan, 2018-2019*. [Data Collection]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Service. [10.5255/UKDA-SN-855854](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/10.5255/UKDA-SN-855854)

<sup>6</sup> info given for period 2002-2019 without specifying the years, as copies from their original books, given by the Directorate in Badakshan (Ministry in Kabul did not want to provide information)

Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development of the province		1523	
Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development – Facility (CARD-F)	1		
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	4		
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	1		
UN Refugees agency (UNHCR) Directorate of Women Affairs	4		
Development Project of Women Affairs Department			9
Development Projects of Municipality Department of Fayzabad			8
Pajhwok Aghan News (www.pajhwok.com)	7		
Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD)	271	704	213

An existing database held at AREU library, on the activities of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, set up in 2002 to provide security through development and reconstruction (and disbanded in 2013), was used as comparison source of information. This showed data to be consistent with those retrieved from donors and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

## Databases

Information has been compiled into tabular databases in MS Excel format. The database records all projects that have been carried out in each province, recording:

- Project name
- Start and end year
- Budget (US\$) and budget per district (if available)
- Implementing agency
- Funding agency (Table 3)
- Sector as applied by the funding agency (Table 2)
- Location: district and village (if available)
- Source of information

For Nangarhar, the mapping of all development aid/projects from 2002 to 2018 compiled 5,287 development projects across its 23 districts. The total amount of development aid to Nangarhar province is USD 268,283,066; with investment ranging from USD 70,000,000 (alternative livelihoods) to just USD52 (distribution of text books for school) per project. Due to limited access to the PRT/Military project database, these projects could only be compiled for 2006 to 2009. From the Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD) an additional 271 entries were retrieved, totaling USD 493,643,868 of investment / aid.

For Nimroz, the mapping compiled 2913 records for development projects for 2003-2018 across its 6 districts. The total amount of development aid to Nimroz province is USD 135.819.396 with investment ranging from USD 27,931,414 (road construction) to just USD 90 (vocational training). From the

Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD) an additional 704 entries were retrieved, totalling USD 638.223.729 of investment / aid.

For Badakshan, the mapping compiled 5,325 records for development projects from 2002 to 2018 across its 28 districts. The total amount of development aid to Badakhshan province is USD 927,456,559, with investment ranging from USD 112,473,101 (construction of retaining wall) to just USD106 (organizing of social committee for forest protection). From the Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD) an additional 213 entries were retrieved, totaling USD 10,359,759,944 of investment / aid.

Sector categories included in the databases (Table 2) are those applied by the donor agencies. This shows discrepancies being used between different agencies. In particular the categories ‘development’, ‘rural development’ and ‘urban development’ give some confusion.

*Table 2. Categorisation of sectors for investments*

<b>Nangarhar</b>	<b>Nimroz</b>	<b>Badakshan</b>
Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Capacity Building	Capacity Building	Capacity Building
Culture, Media & Youth	Culture, Media & Youth	
Development	Development	Development
Economy		
Education	Education	Education
Energy	Energy	Energy
Good Governance		
Health	Health	Health
Human Rights	Human Rights	
Justice	Justice	
Livelihood	Livelihood	Livelihood
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	Natural Resources
Private Sector Development and Trade		
Public Works	Public Works	
Refugees/IDPs	Refugees	
Religious Affairs	Religious Affairs	
Rural Development		Rural Development
Security	Security	
Social Protection	Social Protection	
Transport	Transport	
Urban Development		Urban Development
		Water Resource Management
	Water Supply & Sanitation	Water Supply & Sanitation
Women Affairs		

Table 3. Categorisation of funding agencies

Nangarhar	Nimroz	Badakshan
Afghan government	Afghan government	Afghan government
American nation	American nation	
Asian Development Bank	Asian Development Bank	Asian Development Bank
Asian nation	Asian nation	
Charity	Charity	
Cooperative	Cooperative	
Combined Security Transition Command		
European nation	European nation	European nation
European Union	European Union	European Union
Pacific nation		
Private Sector		Private Sector
United Nations	United Nations	
World Bank	World Bank	World Bank

Table 4. Programs with their sources of funding

Nangarhar	Nimroz	Badakshan	Funding
		Comprehensive Agricultural and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F)	DFID (UK)
Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CC)	CC		Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (multi-donor)
National Area-based Development Program (NABDP)	NABDP	NABDP	World Bank and Ministry of Finance
National Rural Access Program (NRAP)	NRAP	NRAP	World Bank and Ministry of Finance
National Development Programme (NDP)			UNDP and Ministry of Finance
National Solidarity Programme (NSP)	NSP	NSP	World Bank and Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
		Social Protection Programme (SPP)	World Bank
Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Irrigation Program (WATSIP)	WATSIP	WATSIP	Ministry of Finance, UNICEF and USAID

## Quality issues

Accurate and comprehensive information on all investments could not always be collected. The lack of trust and willingness to share information for some ministries and NGOs limited the information provided. Also limited state capacity, changes of governmental staff over time and the lack of institutional memory in terms of systems for comprehensive data records mean that the database may not be comprehensive. Different government ministries keep parallel databases and don't share them, draw upon different methodologies, definitions and categorisations, and have varying levels of technical skills in collecting, storing and analyzing data. In the borderland regions itself access to local authorities and organisations was difficult because of major security risks. International actors are similarly fragmented with projects run on short time frames, regular turnover of staff, limited institutional memory and competition between different parts of the international effort. Actors involved in development aid spanned traditional aid donors, but also different parts of the military, international and local NGOs and private sector contractors. In addition, much funding allocated was off budget. All these constraints contributed to difficulties in collecting reliable quantitative data on aid flows.

The information gathered from offline resources is considered to be reliable. The information collected from the Development Assistance Database for Afghanistan (DAD) may not be as reliable.

Weaknesses in the database are

- Not all development investments contain locational information at the level of a province or district
- For various sources, specific information on start year or funding agency may be missing, as this was either not available from the resources, or provided without detail by the agency (e.g. MEW providing start dates unspecified as 2002-2019 for Badakshan)
- No controlled list of sector categories is being used by different agencies / ministries
- Projects with missing budget information were excluded

## Location

Nangarhar province, Nimroz province, Badakshan province.

## Time period

The database was compiled during 2018-2021.