

INTERNATIONAL BORDER SECURITY AND CUSTOMS ASSISTANCE INITIATIVES: A GUIDE TO THE STIMSON DATABASE

By

**Jessica L. Anderson,
with Alix J. Boucher and Hilary A. Hamlin**

**Stimson Center
Washington, DC¹**

March 2010

¹ This work was made possible by the generous support of the Herbert Scoville, Jr., Peace Fellowship program and by the United Kingdom Strategic Support to International Organizations program. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Borders demarcate the geographic boundaries of a political territory. Borders are critical to a state's security and carve out its physical place in the international system. When a state cannot control its borders, derive revenue from trade that flows through them, and ensure that illegal trade in commodities (and people) is minimized, the integrity of that state is undermined. Insecure borders can ultimately jeopardize stability and increase the likelihood of conflict.

Post-conflict countries rarely have a robust border security system, which is especially important for preventing spoilers from destabilizing the state. Borders can either be prosperity-generating as cooperating states transfer goods, or they can be a porous membrane through which, small arms, and human trafficking pass easily. Fragile states need to protect themselves internally and engage internationally through the legitimate transfer of goods, peoples, and services, or else they are vulnerable to sliding back into conflict. Building and reforming the border security system in post-conflict states is necessary for a successful peacebuilding process.

Securing borders is a complex task that involves many different government agencies and professional skill-sets. Border guards, customs, import and export controls, and monitoring of land crossing, air and sea ports, as well as control of transactions are all critical to manage threats from illicit trafficking and facilitate legitimate movement and trade. This range of actors must coordinate to effectively manage borders and promote the state's security.

There is no common definition for border security and there are also several competing terms used to define the range of border activities. Border security typically refers to core security actors and functions. The *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* lists customs and immigration personnel as well as border guards as core security actors (OECD DAC 2007, 5). The World Bank Group's Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade has used *integrated border management* to include border guards, customs and immigration officials, as well as civilian oversight and governance of these functions (World Bank Group, 2005).

The updated online database that this paper describes addresses the range of activities included in integrated border management and the relevant donor initiatives that address these activities, although its primary focus is on *border security systems* (DCAF 2008, 1). It is designed to be a resource for policy analysts, researchers, and field practitioners on current and long-term border security management initiatives.

UPDATING THE DATABASE

The 2007 Stimson report, "Border Security, Trade Controls, and UN Peace Operations," surveyed over 140 border-related initiatives. The survey was a comprehensive assessment of ongoing international cooperative initiatives that enhance border security, customs, and export control operations (Walsh).

The database identified existing international assistance programs and organized the initiatives on a single data sheet. The initiatives were listed alphabetically by row. Columns offered information on state sponsor or other sponsoring organization, program start date, program description, implementing partners, status, and sources of funding. Each initiative was also coded by main focus (border security; export control; or customs) and by types of activities underwritten (technical support; financial support, information sharing; and “other”).

The 2007 database did not, however, include efforts that the United Nations considers border control initiatives (such as monitoring ceasefires, addressing the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, and monitoring arms trafficking and trade in embargoed goods) (Walsh, 2). Instead, the database focused on initiatives intended to build local border security and/or customs capacity. The 2007 database also focused on long-term, program-based initiatives and did not capture many border initiatives that were more ad-hoc or short term.

The analysis that accompanied the 2007 database concluded that border management is important for reinforcing peacebuilding efforts, restricting spoilers, and strengthening state legitimacy in post-conflict states. It also observed that border security initiatives were not coordinated and tended to overlap. Still, the analysis found convergence of interest among stakeholders involved in border issues and a need for leadership to coordinate the efforts of aid providers. For peace operations, it found that UN peacekeepers should reach out to donors and stakeholders and encourage them to establish a coordinated approach to border security system initiatives that would also benefit and complement peacekeeping efforts (Walsh, 20).²

The updated database has been reorganized to supplement the original. In addition to an alphabetical list of program initiatives, it includes separate worksheets organized by donor and by regional focus, the use of which is described below.

Assistance initiatives completed since the original database was published were removed from the updated version and new initiatives were added. A survey of border security system donors was carried out through internet-based research and follow-up communication with national donors and development and humanitarian organizations. The revised database includes not only bilateral and multilateral assistance programs (reflecting one-way flows of funds, training, or materiel) but also agreements on standards or collaborative arrangements (reflecting two-way or N-way flows of information or mutual assistance). In other words, the database is more than a catalog of aid, which is why we label each row entry an “initiative” rather than a “program.”

GUIDELINES FOR USING THE DATABASE ON INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES IN BORDER SECURITY MANAGEMENT

The first spreadsheet in the database is a master list of international border initiatives, organized alphabetically by initiative name, each with its own row. The second spreadsheet is organized by region, and the third is organized by donor institution. The fourth spreadsheet is a glossary of

² Recommendations specific to the functions of peacekeeping operations and border security were addressed in Part II of the 2007 Stimson Report (Andrews, Hunt, and Durch, 2007).

abbreviations. Note that the database does not assess the quality or effectiveness of initiatives listed.

Each initiative is described in fifteen columns. Six contain the following key information:

- **Initiative Donor/Sponsor:** These may be national governments, regional organizations, other international institutions, or humanitarian organizations. In some instances the initiative is a standard-setting or other agreement that facilitates cooperation on borders- or customs-related issues. In most cases the cell entry is hyperlinked to the initiative's homepage on the Internet.
- **Thematic Focus:** Highlights the primary theme of an initiative, such as small arms, drug trafficking, human trafficking, or counter-proliferation.
- **Initiative Start Date:** Lists the year when the initiative began.
- **Recipient/Partner:** Lists the recipient/partner(s) of the initiative, which includes the states or partner institutions with whom the initiative is collaborating.
- **Initiative Description:** Briefly describes the main objectives and content of an initiative.
- **Sources:** Provides further links for information on the initiative.

There are seven additional columns that highlight certain common features in border security management initiatives. A column contains an "x" if the initiative involves that activity; a given initiative may involve several activities. The seven activities are:

- **Border Control and Security**
- **Export Control and Customs**
- **Technical Support:** Provides either equipment, various forms of technical expertise and services, or computer software and hardware.
- **Financial Support:** Provides funding to a recipient/partner.
- **Information-Sharing:** Includes policy advice, intelligence, communication among stakeholders, or other forms of information exchange.
- **Capacity Building and Ownership and Ownership:** Labels initiatives by how robustly they promote local capacity-building and ownership, that is, efforts to improve the ability of the recipient/partner community personnel to provide either border security or customs and export assistance. There are four levels of effort:
 - "Assistance" refers to various forms of technical, financial, and other forms of aid that are short-term projects that do not necessarily provide skills-building or training, and do not promote ownership over the border security field for host nation staff.
 - "Assistance and training" refers to programming that combines assistance with training of some sort that strengthens the skill set of host nation staff.
 - "Robust training" refers to programming whose primary aim is to promote the long-term capabilities of host-nation staff.
 - "Local leadership and ownership" refers to programming whose primary aim is to support nationals in owning and leading the border security field without international assistance, with an emphasis on leadership training or local control of border processes.

- **Coordination:** Identifies initiatives that aim to share knowledge, create common standards, or otherwise harmonize procedures among multiple nations or institutions.

Viewing the Database³

The basic alphabetical listing of initiatives is straightforward to use. It is designed with a “freeze pane” feature that will keep the column headings and initiative names in view as one scrolls through the spreadsheet.

The spreadsheets organized by region or donor also include a collapsible/expandable feature for rows that allows the user to focus on one specific region or donor, several regions or donors, or all of the regions or donors at once. The header rows visible to the user when the sheets are fully collapsed can be expanded one at a time by clicking the “+” buttons to the left of the header rows. Alternatively (as indicated in Figure 1), all rows can be expanded to a given level by clicking on the numbers positioned at the top left corner of the screen. Once expanded, the rows can be collapsed by clicking on the numbers on the top left or the “-” sign above the columns or to the left of the rows (see Fig. 2).

Figure 1: Region Spreadsheet with Rows Collapsed

	A	B	C
1	International Cooperative Initiatives fo		
3			
4	Database Regions	Initiative	Sponsor(s)
5	AU Member States		
12	East Africa		
16	Southern Africa		
19	North Africa		
21	West Africa		
26	Middle East		
30	Mexico and Central America		
35	Caribbean		
39	North America		
44	Southern Cone		

Regional Spreadsheet

Figure 1 shows the regional initiative spreadsheet, which is organized according to the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) regional categories.⁴ There are four major

³ When downloading and opening the Database in Excel, you may be prompted to ENABLE MACROS, which is necessary for the Spreadsheet to be fully functional. If your copy of Excel has set macro protection to Very High or High, you will need to change that to Medium or Low prior to opening the spreadsheet. Macro security is set by opening Excel and from the menu bar choosing Tools -> Macro -> Security. On the resulting popup, check either the Medium or Low option. Click OK, exit Excel, and re-open it to have the revised setting take effect. With the Medium setting, users are prompted as to whether they wish to enable macros. With the Low setting, macros will be enabled without prompt.

regions (Africa and the Middle East, Europe, The Americas, and Asia and Oceania). Each region also has several sub-categories. IOM sub-categories are only included when there are ongoing initiatives in that sub-region. The regional categories expand to show the sub-categories by clicking on the region. The sub-categories then expand to reveal all of the initiatives in that region.

There are several exceptions to using the IOM regional framework. Several international institutions have their own “sub-category”: African Union, European Union, Organization of American States, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Also, initiatives that specifically reference assisting “Russia and the Former Soviet Union” are listed as a separate sub-category from “Eastern Europe.” And initiatives that range beyond one region are grouped under “Global.”

Figure 2: Donor Spreadsheet with Selected Rows Expanded One Level

Click on the “-” sign to collapse the outline.

International Cooperative Initiatives			
Sponsor	Initiative	Type of Initiative	Sub-Issue Focus
AUS			
AFACT			
AFACT	Customs Working Group	Working Group	Customs
APEC			
ASEAN			
AU			
Borderpol			
Borderpol	Borderpol International Association	Association	Border
CIDA			
EU			
EURASEC			
G8			
DCAF			
GFP			
GTZ			
GTZ	German African Border Project	Program	Border Demarcation and Capacity Building
GTZ	African Regional Institute	Training Academy	Cross-border Initiatives and Integration
IAASP			

Donor Spreadsheet

Figure 2 shows the donor spreadsheet, which includes 44 donors. US government departments are listed as separate donors due to the number of initiatives sponsored by the US government. All initiatives hosted by a specific donor can be seen by clicking on the donor.

⁴ Since many initiatives are not region-specific, the regional categories are less than perfect and the diversity of initiatives makes comparison difficult.

In some outlying cases on the donor spreadsheet, initiatives with both an implementing sponsor and a funding partner are organized by implementing partner. US initiatives sponsored by several different departments are categorized under a separate category, “US Interagency.” When there are several implementing sponsors, the initiative is organized under the largest contributor, if known.

One major distinction among donor activities is whether they are “static” or “active”: Static initiatives will not have future outputs and do not change over time. Examples of static initiatives are protocols, conventions, guidelines, and resolutions. Many of the global initiatives are “static” and do not include funded programming or assistance to recipient countries. These activities are initiated by institutions such as the United Nations, the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Customs Organization, and the OSCE, among others. Active initiatives include programming and assistance that often evolves with time and produces tangible outputs each year. The US government, the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) lead many of the active initiatives. In broad terms, static initiatives tend to support coordination and active initiatives tend to support capacity-building.

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING

- Andrews, Katherine N., Brandon L. Hunt, and William J. Durch. 2007. "A Phased Approach to Post-Conflict Border Security," Part II of *Post-Conflict Borders and UN Peace Operations*. Rpt. No. 62. Washington DC: Stimson Center, www.stimson.org/fopo/borders
- DCAF. (nd) DCAF International Advisory Board for International Border Management Program. *Benchmarking Border Management in the Western Balkans Region*. Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, www.dcaf.ch/border/Benchmarking_Border.pdf
- DCAF. (nd) DCAF International Advisory Board for Border Security. *Study on Elements of Regional Approach for Border Management in the Western Balkans*. Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, www.dcaf.ch/border/Regional_Approach.pdf
- DCAF. 2008. "Border Security Programme Factsheet." Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, www.dcaf.ch/border/BS-Factsheet_July2008.pdf
- Donais, Timothy. 2008. *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*. Geneva: Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?ord279=title&lng=en&id=95176&nav1=5
- Doyle, Michael W., and Nicholas Sambanis. 2007. "Peacekeeping Operations." In Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws (Eds.) *The United Nations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Doyle, Michael W., and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- England, Madeline. 2009. *Security Sector Governance and Oversight: A Note on Current Practice*. Washington DC: The Stimson Center. www.stimson.org/fopo/pdf/SSR_Governance_oversight_security_sector_4sept09_FINAL.pdf
- England, Madeline. 2009. *Management of the Security Sector: A Note on Current Practice*. Washington DC: The Stimson Center.
- Fjeldstad, Odd-Helge. 2009. *The pursuit of integrity in customs: Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa*. Working Paper 8. Bergen: Chr Michelson Institute.
- Gavrillis, George. 2009. *Border Management Assistance in Post-Conflict States. Global Mobility Regimes Project*. Available: http://www.globalmobility.info/pdfs/Gavrillis_short_essay.pdf
- Gavrillis, George. 2008. *The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Grono, Nick. 2009. “*Policing in Conflict States – Lessons from Afghanistan.*” International Police Commissioners’ Conference, The Hague, Netherlands. 16 June.
- Hills, Alice. 2002a. *Border Control Services and Security Sector Reform.* Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, July. Working Paper No. 37, www.dcaf.ch/_docs/WP37.pdf
- Hills, Alice. 2002b. *Consolidating Democracy: Professionalism, Democratic Principles, and Border Services.* Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, July. Working Paper No. 27, www.dcaf.ch/_docs/WP27.pdf
- Irish, Jenni. 2005 “*Illicit Trafficking of Vehicles Across Beit Bridge Border Post.*” Occasional Paper 109. Institute for Security Studies, June.
- Martin, Alex and Wilson, Peter. 2008. *Security Sector Evolution: Which Locals? Ownership of What?* Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform. Geneva: Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?ord279=title&lng=en&id=95176&nav1=5
- Nathan, Laurie. 2007. *Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform: A Guide for Donors.* Security Sector Reform Strategy. UK Government Global Conflict Prevention Pool, January.
- Nelson, Soraya Sarhaddi. 2009. “Afghan Border Police Make Progress, Slowly.” National Public Radio, March 5, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101377415
- OECD DAC. 2007. *The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice.* Paris: OECD, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/25/38406485.pdf
- Öövel, Andrus and Varga, Beata. 2003. *Recommendations on the Topic of Border Security Reform.* Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.
- Polzer, Tara. 2007. “*Special Report: Fact or Fiction? Examining Zimbabwean Cross-Border Migration into South Africa.*” Johannesburg: Forced Migration Studies Programme & Musina Legal Advice Office, September.
- Schroeder, Ursula C. 2007. “International Police Reform Efforts in South Eastern Europe.” In Law, David M. (ed.), *Intergovernmental Organisations and Security Sector Reform.* Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces.
- Tesfalem, Araia and Tamlyn Monson. 2009. “South Africa's Smugglers' Borderland.” *Forced Migration Review* 33 (September): 68-69.
- US Agency for International Development, Department of Defense, and Department of State. 2009. “Security Sector Reform.” Washington, DC: January, www.state.gov/documents/organization/115810.pdf.

Walsh, Kathleen. 2007. "Border Security, Trade Controls, and UN Peace Operations." Part I of *Post-Conflict Borders and UN Peace Operations*. Rpt. No. 62. Washington DC: Stimson Center, www.stimson.org/fopo/borders.

World Bank Group. 2005. Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade, "Integrated Border Management," Explanatory Note, June. www.gfptt.org/uploadedFiles/7488d415-51ca-46b0-846f-daa145f71134.pdf.

Wulf, Herbert. 2006. "Good Governance Beyond Borders: Creating a Multi-level Public Monopoly of Legitimate Force." Occ. Paper 10. Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?lng=en&id=18340&nav1=5