



REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH ASIA

2024-2028

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The **Regional Programme (RP) for South Asia** outlines the scope and strategic focus of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) programmatic action and cooperation in South Asia from 2024 to 2028. As the region continues to be affected by drugs and crime-related risks, including the expansion and evolution of transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism, the RP has been designed to address both present and emerging needs in South Asia and provides a strategic framework for UNODC work in support of Member States. **Its ultimate objective is to secure and reinforce the rule of law, strengthen regional cooperation and protect vulnerable groups and communities from the threats posed by drugs and crime.**

SOUTH ASIA

With over 1.6 billion people, **South Asia** encompasses over **20% of the global population**, with youth below 24 years of age constituting over 40% of its demographic. Despite commendable progress in meeting development goals and navigating through conflict and crises, the region grapples with instabilities and uncertainties influenced by global dynamics.

South Asia also ranks among the most vulnerable regions to climate change challenges, impacting its peace, security, and sustainable development prospects. Considering emerging global threats, the region faces **considerable challenges to health, the rule of law and human security**.



The RP is aligned with the overall **UNODC corporate strategy (2021-2025)** and harmonized with the wider UN system's approach to promote sustainable development in the region. The RP serves as a framework for UNODC action to support Member States in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, as they pertain to the Office's mandate. The RP is also fully inscribed within the UNODC inter-regional approach and is linked to other Regional Programmes and global strategies, such as the **UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2022-2026)**.

The RP has been designed and developed through **extensive and inclusive consultations with key counterparts** and on the basis of various assessments, workshops, project evaluations and capacity-building initiatives, as well as the **lessons learned** and the **best practices** identified during the implementation of the previous **Regional Programme for South Asia (2018-2023)**.

SUB-PROGRAMMES

In line with the UNODC Strategy 2021-2025, the RP is structured to serve as an overarching framework for programming along **five outcomes/sub-programmes** that address the **interconnectedness of crimes** and their relation to corruption, justice, health, human security, and the rule of law. By fostering increased **synergies and cooperation** between these sub-programmes, the RP aims to **better serve Member States** and enhance overall effectiveness.

Sub-Programme 1: Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem



Outcome: South Asian governments and non-government actors respond to the issue of drug production, trafficking, and use, as well as their social and health consequences, based on evidence and in line with international standards and norms.

Sub-Programme 2: Preventing and Countering Organized Crime



Outcome: South Asian governments develop and apply effective legal and policy frameworks, and respond effectively to TOC, utilizing detailed analyses of crime trends.

Sub-Programme 3: Preventing and Countering Corruption and Economic Crime



Outcome: In line with UNCAC and UNTOC, South Asian governments implement a whole-of-society approach to counter corruption and economic crime.

Sub-Programme 4: Preventing and Countering Terrorism



Outcome: Member States more effectively prevent terrorist attacks and the spread of violent extremism, using human rights-compliant, gender inclusive and accountable approaches.

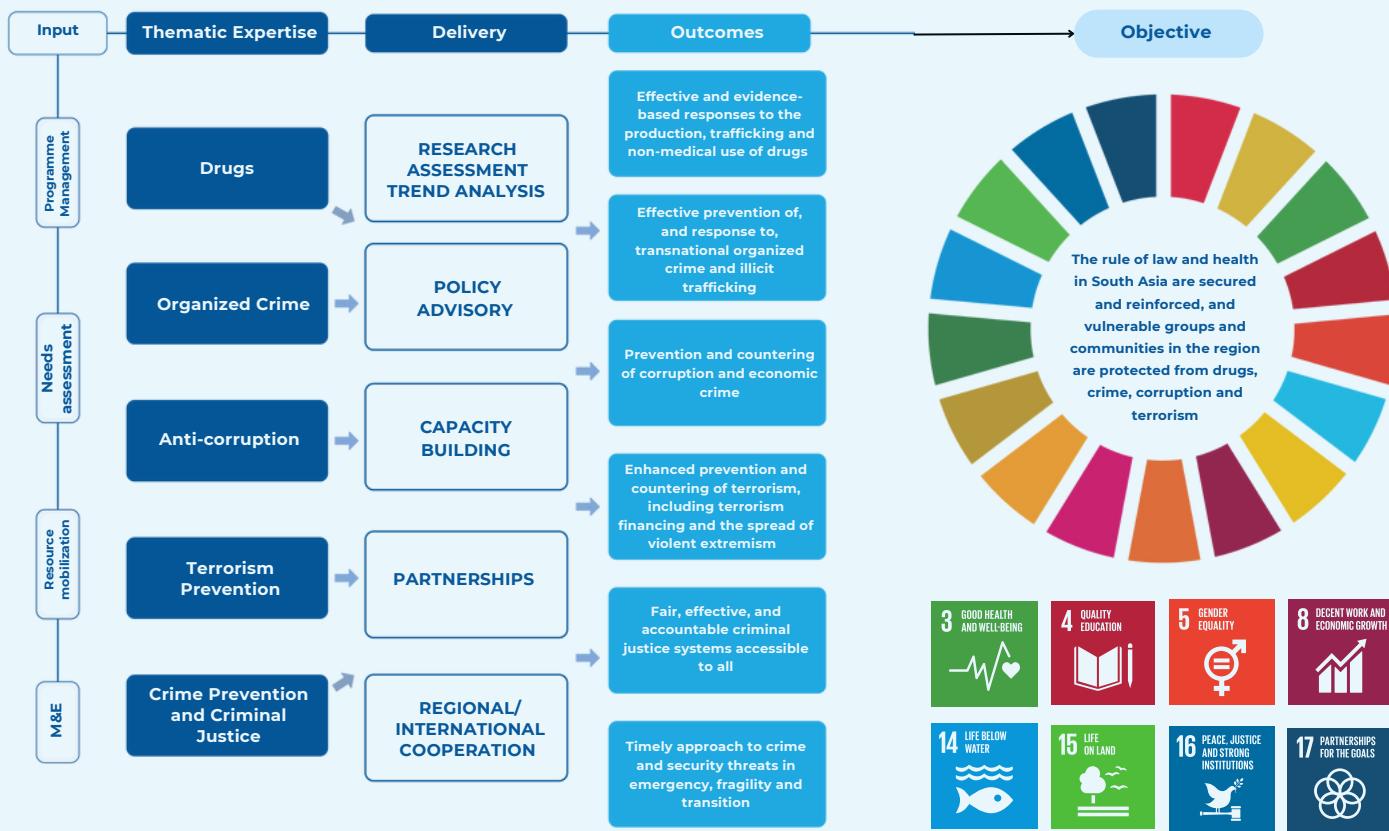
Sub-Programme 5: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice



Outcome: Member States address and prevent crimes in a fair and accountable manner.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The **Theory of Change** of the RP outlines the **strategic approach** that UNODC will adopt to **drive meaningful change and advance justice, health, human security, and the rule of law in South Asia**, based on **key assumptions** of collaboration, policy reforms, stakeholder capacity, and engagement benefits and considering **external factors** like political and financial commitments, societal changes, government anti-crime efforts, public entity rotations, stakeholder interest, and disasters impact.



The RP has embedded **three cross-cutting commitments**: human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women, and the protection and empowerment of children and youth. Rather than assigning specific outputs/outcomes to these considerations, the RP mainstreams these considerations throughout its design and programme implementation.



Empowerment of youth and protection of children



Gender equality and women's empowerment



Protection and promotion of human rights

Building on **UNODC's unique set of capacities and skills**, the **RP seeks to diversify and expand UNODC's current work in South Asia** into a broader programme, while taking into account the nature and scope of the key challenges identified by the Governments in the region. The new RP will strive to:

- invest in the **generation of reliable data and research products** and in their dissemination;
- promote the **adoption of legislation, strategies, and policies** that comply with international standards;
- further **strengthen the capacities** of public officials and practitioners; and
- **foster cross-border, regional, and inter-regional cooperation**.

REGIONAL PROGRAMME DETAILS

Thematic Areas as per UNODC Strategy:

World Drug Problem; Organized Crime; Corruption and Economic Crime; Terrorism; Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Target Groups: Governments, civil society organizations, academia, media, private sector.

Location of End Beneficiaries: South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka)

Implementing Partners: Governments, civil society organizations, academia, media, private sector, UN and other international organizations.

Total budget: USD 22.8 million.

UNODC COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Strong normative mandate, including by being the guardian of key international conventions and treaties such as the UN Convention Against Corruption, the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Supplementary Protocols, drug-related conventions, 19 international legal instruments against terrorism as well as UN standards and norms on crime prevention and criminal justice.

Significant in-house expertise on all the thematic areas identified in the Regional Programme.

Widespread field presence through several Programme Offices and longstanding trust and relationships with key actors which enable the joint identification of solutions to the problems identified.

Launch Event of the UNODC Regional Programme for South Asia (2024-2028) | May 7th, 2024 | UN House, New Delhi





United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime



REGIONAL PROGRAMME
For South Asia 2024-2028

MAKING THE WORLD SAFER FROM DRUGS, CRIME, AND TERRORISM

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