INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT
IN THE SILK ROUTES COUNTRIES

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

This document offers an "easy reading" package on the recent developments in the area of Integrated Border Management (IBM) in the "Silk Routes" countries.

The overall objective of the IBM Silk Routes project is to support the countries of the region (as per original Description of the Action in 2019: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan) in building more effective and efficient border management systems, using as a reference the Integrated Border Management concept.

The project was originally planned to span 4 years, between 2019-2022. The COVID-19 pandemic and collapse of the government in Afghanistan with its subsequent consequences led to a project extension until the end of 2024. Thus, the project has been implemented for a total of 6 years. This paper covers 3 of the original 5 countries, where the majority of project activities were implemented: Bangladesh, Iraq, and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, project implementation and development of IBM framework was promising until summer of 2021 when the country's government collapsed and the Taliban regime assumed power.

Border management is not isolated from other functions of modern societies. Therefore, the concept of "Integrated Border Management" has been endorsed and put into practice in the European Union (EU). IBM's elements cover a wide spectrum of actors and domains across geographical, functional and hierarchical spectrums.

A prerequisite for the success of the IBM Silk Routes project was cooperation with respective border agencies. In all three countries common ground between the project and the beneficiary agencies was identified. Along with the running of the project's activities, inter- and intra-agency cooperation as an essential elements for IBM have materialised, leading to a more intense collaboration across administrative boundaries at various levels of administrations. The benefits of international cooperation in the project's framework became evident through study visits to various EU Member States, including Lithuania, the Netherlands and Denmark, whilst mutually beneficial operational cooperation with international partners was initiated through communication with the Local Schengen Cooperation network.

Through the successes of the IBM Silk Routes project, it is evident that the project has contributed to better implementation of all aspects of IBM in each of the three countries. Through engagement with key institutions working in the migration spheres; through engagement of relevant counterparts and through fostering cooperation across the region, the project has made significant steps towards combatting irregular migration. The following paper aims to present what shaped the project, what it was able to achieve, and what impact they have had on migration management in the region. The initiation of positive developments, with strong local ownership and certified results, has provided excellent potential for growth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project Integrated Border Management in the Silk Routes countries (IBM Silk Routes) project was initiated in January 2019 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, and Pakistan against a context of complex security, political and economic landscape in the region. Alongside regular migratory flows and entrenched humanitarian challenges in the region, border authorities in the Silk Routes countries also had to deal with multiple threats facing their borders: trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants, irregular migration, as well as cross-border smuggling of arms and narcotics, and terrorism.

Fast-forward six years to 2024, and the working environment for border agencies in Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan is, if anything, even more challenging. As well as the above-mentioned threats, the period 2019 – 2024 saw the emergence of diverse new challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic existentially challenged the very concept of international, globalised travel and trade, and raised the prominence and importance of health security in the border management framework as never before. The instrumentalization of migration as a type of hybrid warfare was observed for the first time, testing the limits of both international legal frameworks and international cooperation between destination and origin countries. The Taliban take-over of Afghanistan drove a new wave of pressure on neighbouring countries' border management and migration frameworks, particularly Pakistan, to effectively balance humanitarian reception with the duty to guarantee the security of the state. And in the past two years, the impact of conflicts in Europe and the Middle East has driven a global rise in inflationary pressures and new barriers to global trade that have rippled across the region, driving political instability and hurting the economic prospects of a growing middle-class and especially young demographic who feel increasingly hopeless about their opportunities and options in life. The fundamental conditions that drive migratory attempts, regular and irregular, are stronger today than in 2019, and the corresponding burden on border authorities in the region to effectively manage these flows is equally high.

During this period, the IBM Silk Routes project, with its emphasis on promoting a comprehensive Integrated Border Management framework, modelled on and inspired by the European Union framework, was ideally positioned to support the Silk Routes countries. Protecting the borderline from illegal activities or checking travel documents of persons attempting to cross the border at a Border Crossing Point (BCP) are activities just at the tip of the iceberg. All of the new challenges now faced, whether pandemics, the rise of digital technologies and related cybercrime, new irregular migration modus operandi, terrorism or the instrumentalization of migration, cannot be dealt with at the border by any single agency. The EU IBM concept's emphasis on coordination and cooperation was perfectly suited to support the border agencies of the Silk Routes countries strengthen their national border management frameworks in a way that effectively addressed these challenges.

An IBM strategy with accompanying Action Plan is considered as a tool for sustainable development in this specific area. It contributes to the stability and credibility of actors in the field, provides a mechanism and platform for effective, transparent and efficient governance of borders. Drafting a joint strategy, with all relevant actors, which consequently reached discussion at national adoption level, is a remarkable undertaking from all involved interest groups. In both Iraq and Pakistan, the strategy drafts have reached the juncture of the final (political) adoption, thus offering a solid platform for horizontal and international interactions with relevant stakeholders.

Together with the noted high-level strategy work, capacity building activities which supported operators in the border management sphere in the respective countries including procurement of equipment and materials, facilitated steps taken towards an enhanced understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various IBM actors. Reflecting these advancements, the project has succeeded in supporting both operational and strategic capacity building. As an example of the former, Iraq has established a sustainable, functioning National IBM Committee. When it comes to operational capacities, statistics have shown that both in Bangladesh and Pakistan, document security trainings and related institutional development led to the enhanced performance of Immigration Officials.

For national border agencies, effective management of national borders is a constant battle against a many-headed hydra, with one threat being minimised only for two new ones to emerge. Effective communication, efficient utilisation of resources, and workable partnerships within and between agencies and at the international level are no longer in the "nice to have" category, but are the fundamental, minimum requirement for border agencies seeking to secure their borders. The most important emerging issue in the domain of border management is the role of information, data and new technologies to support a smarter, more efficient approach to border management. Just as artificial intelligence is posed to disrupt multiple aspects of society, so too will this become an issue that border agencies must both utilise for their benefit, and counter in their adversaries in the future.

In Bangladesh, the project successfully supported the Bangladesh Immigration Police developing a second line of travel document control at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, as well as training 80 Immigration Police officers from international airports and from the main land border crossing with India on document security. Since February 2023, there was a significant increase in the detection of forged and counterfeit visas and other travel documents by Bangladeshi authorities. The detection rate surged by over 200% from February to November 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Most fraudulent falsified and counterfeit travel documents including Schengen visas detected in 2023 and 2024 were identified by the project's trainees and Master Trainers. The foundations to sustain this improved capacity were laid, with the graduation of a cadre of eight specialist "Document Security Master Trainers", along with the formal adoption of a Basic Document Security curricula within the Special Branch of Police's School of Intelligence's Basic Immigration training course.

In Iraq, the drafting of the *Iraqi National IBM Strategy* can be characterised as an excellent achievement of Iraqi authorities, who ensured that the full spectrum of the IBM strategy was evaluated and that all IBM partners were present, resulting in a common reporting and agreement on a way forward. A National IBM Committee, led by the National Security Advisory, was established to oversee the development, implementation, and governance of the Strategy. It holds regular formal meetings, as well as ad-hoc, needs-based, sessions. The approval of the Strategy by the National Security Council marks a new era in Iraq's border management. The Border Port Commission (BPC), an agency that had been established only shortly before the project began, meanwhile consolidated its mandate and strengthened its capacities to become a leading implementing agency of the National IBM Strategy.

The IBM Strategy process also served as a gateway for other forms of support, including *operational capacity development activities and the provision of equipment;* whether this was the provision of radiation detectors for the border crossing points or night vision devices for the land border patrols, to a tailored Border Force Information Management System developed to enable the Border Force to harmonise its reporting, data collecting, and risk analysis functions.

Additionally, multi-agency training programmes played a crucial role in building a pool of highly specialized national trainers. These trainers now independently initiate and deliver training across various agencies of the Ministry of Interior and the Border Port Commission, significantly reducing reliance on international support. The programmes also strengthened inter-agency cooperation, information exchange, and collaboration during operational tasks, enhancing the performance of border officials across the entire IBM ecosystem.

In Pakistan, the project's highlights include significantly contributing to an increase in the Federal Investigation Agency's immigration control capacities at BCPs. The establishment of a *2nd line office at Islamabad International airport* is a showcase to the Pakistani public administration on development of comprehensive improvements to operational immigration control. Operational since October 2023, with 9 assigned officers staffing the airport, the pilot initiative highlights the way ahead nationwide. In the ten months preceding the opening, there were 35 detections of fraudulent documents at the airport, in total. In the following eight months, the detections reached 60, which almost doubles the monthly figures.

The impact of training activities in Pakistan was also notable. A 119% increase in the number of detections of fake documents was observed between 2020 – 2023 at the three main airports where the project delivered training to FIA Immigration Officers. When assessing the impact of the project's training programme during the same period, it was also noted that 66% of the training events targeting specific border crossing points were followed, within 3 months, by an increase in the number of passengers offloaded from departing flights. While multiple variables affect such trends, an average increase of 79% in the knowledge and skills was recorded in training participants, suggesting the project was successful in making a meaningful contribution to supporting improved capacity across the FIA.

Finally, an effective model for sustainability was pioneered in Pakistan, with the development of a national cadre of 21 *Master Trainer* qualified to educate peer officers on document security, behavioural analysis, and BCP leadership and management-related topics. These master trainers succeeded in participating and delivering training in 40 separate training events, to over 670 FIA officials, in cooperation with ICMPD, but also other international organisations, as well as the French and US embassies. Highlights included: a piloted Immigration Wing Training Plan demonstrated the potential of the FIA to organise an annual training cycle using master trainers, with 144 officers independently trained across 9 BCPs in a 6-month period. Post-training testing indicated an average of 150% improvement in the knowledge and skills of officers receiving the training, suggesting a comparable impact with basic training delivered by international experts. Furthermore, the national training events cost 70% less than standard training events organised by international partners. Finally, in a virtuous circle, and good example of international cooperation, FIA master trainers developed in the project went on to organise and deliver training to visa officials from European embassies in Islamabad on the security features of Pakistan national identity documents used in EU visa applications.

While the project made meaningful achievements, there remains much at stake in the future. The IBM Silk Routes has played a strong role in developing a common, minimum standard across the Silk Routes region, in terms of strategic frameworks and border governance, the adoption of operational good practices and systems, and the design of innovative, but potentially truly sustainable training solutions. For future regional and international cooperation, it may be said that there now exists a common language, in terms of capacity and expertise, across all three countries, from which partnerships may be further strengthened.

In considering what true sustainability would look like, the goal is for the current achievements in the project to be fully integrated and adopted within national institutions, to be reflected in annual budgets, as well as in the organisational hierarchies, job descriptions, training systems and information exchange mechanisms and databases of Border Management frameworks of the Silk Routes countries. The current achievements of the IBM Silk Routes project, whether establishment of national IBM Strategies, new second line control or Risk Analysis functions, or the development of national training teams, are all in their relative infancy, as pilot initiatives or ad-hoc innovations. Support and ownership from senior managers in border agencies is strong, but these new capacities have yet to be fully integrated as mature business-as-usual functions.

The trajectory towards improved capacities and performance is not linear. The first step is to establish the tools and resources necessary for improved capacity, whether a curriculum, strategy, 2nd line office, or governance framework. The second step is to support its usage and application in practice. This is the task the project has begun to support in the previous 18 months. The third step is quality control, to build on this, to ensure the new capacity provides added value and is working efficiently and effectively to deliver the performance desired, and to connect this improved capacity with partnerships, nationally, regionally and internationally. This is what is needed in the future, and these are the conditions and opportunities that the IBM Silk Routes project has fostered.

Continued support to strategic, operational and educational capacity development at the national level in all three countries is needed, both to deal with the challenges of today, and to be ready for those coming over the horizon.

1. HOW DID THE WORLD CHANGE 2019-2024: FOCUS ON MIGRATION AND BORDERS

Migration trends and analyses are tracked by a number of institutions and organisations through in-depth statistics. One example of the data collected by IOM, highlights that in 2020, there were more than 280 million migrants globally[1], which is 3.6% of the total global population. Europe's share of the number is almost 87 million, with a growth of 43% between 1990 and 2020. The Silk Routes countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan were ranked among the top 10 "corridors", with the destination countries being India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, USA, Iran, Pakistan, and Germany [2]. These statistics indicate that there are several motivating factors for potential migrants when selecting the country of destination (or transit), these include: proximity and easy access; job opportunities and welfare; family ties; and bridgehead position for the potential next step.

The combination of shrinking legal pathways and restrictive migration policies in both the Gulf and Europe has created a volatile situation, pushing more migrants to resort to risky migration routes in search of work and stability abroad.

These economic, political and security challenges all contribute towards a situation where *irregular migration* will continue to be a viable option for economically vulnerable and desperate citizens. The structural conditions exacerbate the inherent vulnerabilities of this same group to exploita-

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1   Foreign residents regardless of their legal status
2   IOM World Migration Report 2024

tion, scams and other forms of harm during irregular migration attempts.

According to FRONTEX, irregular migrants from the Silk Routes countries are predominantly using the Eastern and Central Mediterranean and the Western Balkans routes. This means that migrants are 1) using the "natural" land-based route through Middle Eastern countries and Türkiye and then trying to cross the land or sea border to the EU, or 2) they are taking the more hazardous trips to reach the northern shores of the African continent and then undertaking an extremely dangerous boat trip towards Southern European coasts, or 3) a combination of routes 1) and 2), then finding their way through non-EU Western Balkans countries and on towards Central Europe. Since the inception of the project in 2019, the share of detected migrants from the 3 Silk Routes countries has remained around 10%, with a range of plus/minus 2 percentage points. This translates to 20 000 – 34 000 detections annually. Thus, whatever measures have been taken in the Silk Routes countries, locally and regionally achieved successes do not necessarily reflect statistically to the overall figures with almost 13 million detections in total during 2019-2024. The Gulf countries remain the most attractive target for labour-based migration from the Silk Routes countries, and these statistics are not reflected in FRONTEX data.

Bangladesh represents the sixth-largest migrant sending country in the world, with more than 7.4 million of its citizens—roughly 4.4 percent of the total population— residing overseas. Migration remains a pillar of the country's economy, thanks in large part to remittances sent home from citizens abroad, which have topped about 5 percent of GDP[3] annually for the past 3 years. Alongside established regular pathways exist well-travelled irregular migration routes from Bangladesh. Recently, an increasing numbers of Bangladeshis have been seen along mixed migration routes to Europe.

Iraqis continue to be propelled towards outward migration due to poor socio-economic prospects and other vulnerabilities. In 2023, 26,131 asylum applications by Iraqi nationals were recorded in the EU. Since 2015, over 760,000 people have migrated from Iraq and its Kurdistan Region. In particular, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is seen as having a higher share of the overall outward migration from Iraq and is consequently a higher recipient of returning migrants. Smuggling remains a primary method for leaving the country while human traffickers continue to prey on vulnerable people in both urban and rural areas, especially regions which have been most affected by conflict.

Pakistan remains one of the world's most important countries of origin and destination for international migration. More than 11 million Pakistani nationals work abroad as labour migrants. It is estimated that around 800,000 Pakistanis left their homeland to work abroad in 2023, mainly to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar. European countries are also important destinations but can often only be reached irregularly due to the scarcity of legal migration channels. In 2023, Pakistani nationals ranked 10th among persons detected crossing a Schengen border in an irregular way, and 8th among applicants for asylum in the EU with a total of 30 440 applications.

All borders can be subject to change. These changes can prove difficult to predict, and can happen gradually or suddenly. The border authorities conduct constant monitoring, maintain situational awareness, and perform risk analyses which look forward, mapping the likelihood of future events. Despite these efforts, it is not possible to prepare for unforeseen changing circumstances and the reality is that the resources and legislative framework must be balanced with financial possibilities and operational risks and consequently states accept a certain level of risk at their borders. The above is particularly relevant when thinking about respective legislative frameworks: unexpected developments at borders lead to

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3   Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) | Data

legislative processes, which take a significant amount of time to consolidate, that when they are ready for implementation, the original phenomenon is already over or has altered ed to a different kind of threat. As such, there is a tangible risk that operational levels (e.g. the second line of control at BCPs) deal with such threats without proper legal or political back-up.

The COVID 19 pandemic is a good example of an unforeseen global phenomenon that had implications which affected all aspects of global functions. The emerging life-threatening and fast-spreading disease triggered drastic measures across the world and had a direct impact on border management. It directly affected: international travel across borders, and border crossing points consequently became focused on public health related measures to an extent that had not been experienced before. In lieu of the pandemic, extraordinary requirements to obtain permission to travel, including vaccination certificates, pre-travel COVID test certificates, and on-site testing upon arrival at BCPs, were some of the most stringent measures taken at borders. The pandemic led to challenges within border authorities with regards to human resources and occupational healthcare, intra-agency and international cooperation, and imposed requirements to cope with the rapidly evolving situation with little or no intelligence information and strategic or operational guidance. Ongoing consequences in many countries include court cases regarding the proportionality and legality of measures taken during the pandemic. Commercially, the pandemic was a disaster for many carriers and attached services which transported across border, as their businesses were halted in light of the stringent measures taken to decrease the spread of COVID- 19; the recovery of such is ongoing.

According to UN Tourism Agency, in 2020 and 2021 international travel decreased by approximately 70 % less compared to 2019. In April 2022 the numbers exceeded those of 2021, signalling a return to global travel patterns demonstrated before the pandemic. However, figures from 2019 have not yet (by end-2023) been matched. Statistics on detections of irregular migrants at EU external borders do not, however, follow this trend: increase in both global and Silk Routes-specific statistics remained at the level of 2019 throughout 2020 and continued to increase in 2021. Thus accordingly, even a shallow statistical analysis highlights the fact that the drivers of migration potentially overshadow health and life-threatening conditions and related restrictions.

Both public and private sectors endeavour to prepare for the re-occurrence of such a global threat, however, experience has demonstrated that such lessons learned tend to fall out of focus during times of stability. It is strongly recommended that the updating and 'rehearsing' of threat related plans is essential for resilience and contingency in times of instability.

It is of course well documented that instability in countries of origin and transit drives people to move from their original places of residence. During the project duration the Silk Routes countries and their surrounding regions have dealt with constant and/or a repeated state of instability, caused by changes in political regimes, outbursts of violence, terrorism, poor economy, natural disasters and changes in the outlook of human rights; in reality, the cause-and-effect relationship in this list could be presented in any order. The take-over of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the summer of 2021 is probably the most prominent example of this as it propelled Afghan migrants to flee to neighbouring countries, in particular Pakistan, which burdened the already stretched socio-economic capacity. These circumstances were subsequently noticeable at European borders, with the number of irregular migrants tripling between 2020 to 2022, and continuing to remain high in 2023.

Terrorism is one of the main factors which can affect the stability and security at national and international levels. The defeat of Daesh in Iraq in 2017 and its last strongholds in Syria in early 2019, were preceded by enormous human suffering and a phenomenon of refugees, irregular migrants and internally displaced persons in Iraq, as well as in the region, and globally. Europe saw a huge inflow of migrants from Daesh-affected areas in the second half of the 2010's, in turn, attracting irregular migrants from other countries in its wake. To date the governments in the region are still dealing with dispersed cells of remaining Daesh operators, thus the threat to public safety has not been completely disappeared. Pakistan is also among the top countries globally which is most affected by terrorism and militancy and at present the country is experiencing a deadly escalation in militant violence. In the first eight months of 2024, 757 people were killed and nearly as many injured. Reflective of this, it is acknowledged that governments' drastic responses to terrorism or violence towards civil society and governmental services may also become a push-factor for irregular migration.

Hybrid warfare or hybrid threats have become familiar vocabulary in the international security and safety sphere and indicates the use of a variety of methods to complement traditional weaponry. This could be inter alia affecting public opinion through social media channels or enforced espionage activities. There have been cases of interference with aviation and maritime GPS navigation systems, leading to interruptions and additional risks in air and sea transport. Unexplainable disruptions in telecommunication, electricity networks and water supply systems may also happen as an occurrence. Hybrid threats are not easily detected as their source, and the target or purpose cannot be easily identified. These hybrid activities may seek to target a country which is not directly involved in a conflict but potentially represents a group of like-minded countries or a related interest group.

In the Border Management context, *instrumentalization of migration* has become one of the hybrid activities weaponised at the borders and has been positioned to represent a threat to internal security and stability in Europe. Facilitation of irregular migration has been used as narrative by some governments in campaigns against the European Union, of which their direct and immediate purpose is to cause confusion and dissension among national and international actors, draw attention to secondary issues, and benefit from it. The most prominent example of such a government-run operation was the systematic import of migrants mainly from Middle East and Africa to Belarus, and their further facilitation towards the EU external borders of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. With false information campaigns, ungrounded promises, increased air travel options, and visa facilitation, tens of thousands of migrants especially from Iraq's ethnic and religious minorities were imported to these EU external borders. Those who were facilitated by the Belarussian government to these borders were the ones who suffered the most and the action triggered drastic measures from some EU Member States, with fences, obstacles, and full closures of borders and border crossing points.

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) and Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) has remained at high. In a nutshell, THB involves exploitation of the victim usually in the destination country, while SoM is transporting persons illegally across borders. The border control authorities in the Silk Routes countries largely have limited capacity to differentiate between the two phenomenon, and struggle to distinguish between the perpetrator and victims in cases of THB. All forms of trafficking and smuggling are lucrative business for criminal networks, as the risks are far lesser than for instance in drugs or weapons smuggling, where a lost cargo may lead to grave consequences to the smuggler. When the "cargo" or "merchandise" is comprised of human beings who are totally at the mercy of the criminals, the risk to business remains low.

More than 380 000 irregular migrants were detected at the EU borders in 2023 and is a 47% increase from 2021. However, the numbers arriving from Silk Routes countries started to decrease in 2022 after the 3rd year of the project, with 25% less in 2023 and 45% less in comparison of Q1-Q3 of 2023 and 2024. Most of these persons were assisted, advised, and/or facilitated against a fee when crossing the areas and borders of transit countries; quite a few do not have the money, so they (or their families) remain in debt to the facilitator(s) for a long time, in some cases for life. The fee depends on the origin and destination but commonly varies between 2 000 and 10 000 USD per person per journey.

Taking into consideration the above statistics and narrative, it remains to be said that positive developments in the Silk Routes countries are somewhat clouded by the background noise of global statistics, even if regionally and locally there has been a notable impact.

2. PROJECT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Bangladesh

The work of the IBM Silk Routes project in Bangladesh was slower to commence. The Bangladesh's Ministry of Home Affairs agreed to implementation of the IBM Silk Routes project in the country only at the end of 2022, when ICMPD, in collaboration with the Immigration Police, developed the Capacity Development Initiative (CADIn) framework for the country's border agencies. This was already in the project's No Cost Extension period, meaning that Bangladesh missed almost four years of project implementation. Against this context, a very focused approach was subsequently adopted. The CADIn framework forms the foundation for the IBM SR project's border management activities in Bangladesh.

The CADIn framework encompasses a wide array of capacity-building measures, including the implementation of a Document Security (DocSec) training programme and the establishment of a second line of travel document control at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

From 2022-2024, the bedrock of IBM SR's activities in Bangladesh remained limited to CADIn framework's activities. Within the framework, a *Document Security training programme* and the establishment of the second line of travel document control took place at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. The establishment of the second line of control not only included procurement, but also training on the new equipment; drafting of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for data collection, sharing, and reporting, and communication between the first and the second lines of control; and drafting of job profiles for the first and second line of control officers. The Immigration Police have also allocated almost a hundred square meters space in the new terminal for ICMPD to establish the new second line of control, which is a unique opportunity to implement border management good practices at the inception of the new terminal.

80 Immigration Police officers from international air BCPs and from the main land border BCP with India were given basic document security training. At the beginning of 2024, carefully selected officers received further education, including advanced level training, and consequently eight of them became "Master Trainers". Encouraged by the well-received concept, the Special Branch of Police's School of Intelligence's Basic Immigration course's trainers received advanced and training-of-trainers workshops on document security. This is extremely effective as the incoming migration control officers enter their positions through the school's refresher training, the curricula of which is out of date and lacking

modern approaches, methodology, and equipment. The project supported the school by additionally providing a Training Manual and some *essential equipment and other materials*, such as document specimens. The Master Trainers network is currently operational, and their capacity has been further enforced by three study visits to EU Member States in 2024 (Denmark, Poland, and the Netherlands).

Since February 2023, there has been a significant increase in the detection of forged and counterfeit visas and other travel documents by Bangladeshi authorities. The detection rate has surged by over 200% from February to November 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. The majority of detected counterfeit visas belong to countries such as Italy, Canada, France, Germany, the UK, Malaysia, and South Africa. Notably, Italy leads among the counterfeit European Union Member States' visas. Most fraudulent falsified and counterfeit travel documents including Schengen visas in 2023 and 2024 were detected by the project's trainees and Master Trainers.

2.2. Iraq

According to the involved experts from the EU Member States, the drafting of the *Iraqi National IBM Strategy* can be characterised as an excellent achievement of Iraqi authorities, who ensured that the full spectrum of the IBM strategy was evaluated and that all IBM partners were present, resulting in a common reporting and agreement on a way forward. Considering notable hardships along the way, such as the COVID 19 pandemic, several occasions of public safety and security deterioration, and the temporary absence of a functional government, the commitment of all partners progressed the process towards its anticipated goals. As a result, the Strategy was eventually approved in June 2024 by the National Security Council.

A National IBM Committee, led by the National Security Advisory, was established to oversee the development, implementation, and governance of the Strategy. It holds regular formal meetings, as well as ad-hoc, needs-based, sessions. The Committee maintains close communication with the ICMPD, which serves as an observer to the Committee, thus benefiting from project progress updates and proposals.

The full implementation of the Strategy and the related Action Plan lies in the future. However, it is worth highlighting that during the drafting process different authorities came together to collaborate,

brainstorm and find solutions in matters related to border security, looking forwards into the future and fostering cooperation. The jointly prepared Strategy, which is currently in the implementation phase (despite lacking final political endorsement), increases Iraq's credibility in the border security sector. It paves the way for strategic and operational partnerships, domestically and internationally.

The IBM Strategy process also served as a gateway for other forms of support, including *operational capacity development activities and the provision of equipment*. Based on a thorough needs assessment, the equipment offered relevant border authorities examples of modern technology application. The procured items range from hand-held radiation detectors for the border crossing points and night vision devices for the land border patrols, to a tailored Border Force Information Management System. This system was specifically developed to enable the Border Force to harmonise its reporting, data collecting, and risk analysis functions.

An example of institutional development observed since 2019 is the progress of the Border Port Commission (BPC). At the inception of the IBM Silk Routes project, it had only recently been established as an agency tasked with overseeing the governance of border crossing points. Through its continuous engagement in the IBM dialogue, a coherent strategic approach was developed, and now the BPC is a leading implementing agency of the National IBM Strategy. The BPC has also benefitted from a targeted and highly specialised training programme delivered by the project. This programme was designed to support the establishment and operation of a centralised X-ray scanner image monitoring and interpretation facility at the HQ in Baghdad, enhancing governance and transparency at Iraqi borders.

To integrate capacity-building activities into institutional training cycles, the project aimed not only to enhance the skills and knowledge of attending participants, but also to equip relevant training institutions with curricula, training materials, qualified national trainers and modern facilities. Examples include the establishment of a modern, specialised training room at the Passport and Residency Directorate (PRD) of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) or renovation of the training school of the Border Force in Basrah. Today, the PRD training room is utilised by the MoI not only for their internal purposes, but also to deliver the document security related trainings to other ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Defense Ministry. These trainings are conducted by master trainers, using the curricula, equipment, and facilities provided through the project's compre-

hensive the Train-the-trainer (ToT) programme. The initiative led to the graduation of 12 Master Trainers, representing 5 international airports across the country, including 2 in the Kurdish region of Iraq.

The European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAM-I) has been familiar with the IBM Silk Routes projects since its inception in 2019. As the project progressed, the Mission participated by contributing expert input and co-organising events. The EUAM-I benefited from the project's access to strategic level officials and the progress made regarding the IBM strategy. This collaboration enabled both the project and the Mission to identify and implement mutually beneficial course of action, effectively complementing each other's activities. This serves as a rare example of beneficiary and donor coordination in Iraq.

As a closely connected and complementary project, *Rights-based Border Management in Silk Routes Countries*, funded by the Kingdom of Denmark, has further supported IBM Strategy implementation. It has delivered key framework documents, implementation guidelines and training sessions on Risk Analysis, Human Rights, and Contingency Planning, - all essential elements of the IBM Strategy.

It is also worth noting that during the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, when travel and activities came to a sudden halt, the project adapted by reallocating part of its budget to procure protective equipment. This initiative aimed to enhance occupational safety of the frontline officers at Border Crossing Points.

2.3. Pakistan

As a common cornerstone of such projects, aiming at sustainable processes on development and institutional reform, the *IBM Policy and Strategy* have been in the focus. The relevant documents are finalised, but adoption at the governmental level and introduction of a new governance structure is still pending. This is quite often the case as the final endorsement, not to mention the implementation of the plans requires political consensus, and operational commitment. However, both strategic level documents fall under the governance of the Ministry of the Interior, aiming at bringing together almost 20 agencies from 4 ministries. Strategic priorities include open and secure borders, operational and technological capacities, well-functioning IBM environment, and protection of fundamental rights at the borders.

Regarding immediate impact, the project's support to the establishment of a *2nd line office at Islamabad International airport* is a showcase to the Pakistani public administration on development of comprehensive reform to support operational capacity on immigration control. This was achieved through the development of operating guidelines, a detailed training programme, new HR management and structures, dedicated infrastructure, and installation of essential IT and technical equipment. The pilot, supported by the IBM Silk Routes project, highlights the way ahead nationwide. The office has been operational since October 2023, with 9 assigned officers staffing the airport. The 2nd line office initiative benefited from sustained support by the management of the FIA, resulting in the dedication of physical space at the airport for the 2nd line office, the formal designation of 2nd line officers from within the FIA's ranks, and the issuance of the 2nd line operational guidelines as administrative orders. All of these measures reinforce the capacities developed by the project in a sustainable and fully integrated manner. In the ten months preceding the opening, there were 35 detections of fraudulent documents at the airport, in total. In the following eight months, the detections reached 60, which almost doubles the

monthly figures. Expansion of the 2nd line office to other airports (Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Peshawar) was a natural continuum, and this was achieved through the complementary RBM Silk Routes project funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ICMPD continues to provide mentoring and evaluation support to assess the impact of the 2nd line offices and support their full implementation.

Widespread training of front-line FIA immigration officers (568 officers in total) was delivered throughout the project lifespan to support broad improvements in the performance of border management tasks. These included document security, behavioural analysis, gender mainstreaming and leadership and management skills. Significantly, between 2020 – 2023, the number of detections of fake documents made by the FIA at the airports that received training from the project, based on available data, increased by 119%. When assessing the impact of the project's training programme, it was also noted that 66% of the training events targeting specific border crossing points were followed, within 3 months, by an increase in the number of passengers offloaded from departing flights. While multiple variables affect such trends, an average increase of 79% in the knowledge and skills was recorded in training participants, suggesting the project was successful in making a meaningful contribution to supporting improved capacity across the FIA.

The development of a national cadre of *Master Trainer* was a marked success in Pakistan. So far 21 master trainers are qualified to educate peer officers on document security, behavioural analysis, and BCP leadership and management-related topics. These officers are supported by dedicated training curricula and materials in these areas, as well as a specialised Trainers Toolkit focused on adult learning methodology. The need for master trainers arose to address the operational needs within the FIA to deliver continuous, on-the-job training for BCP based officials, in parallel with developing in-house training capacity. Master Trainers were supported to deliver subsequent training to their colleagues, firstly with the project's support, and then with increasing independence and sustainability as a training resource within the FIA. On top of the training delivered directly by the project, mentioned earlier, the FIA Master Trainers succeeded in participating and delivering training in 40 separate training events, to over 670 FIA officials. This included ICMPD and FIA organised training, but also as national experts in training events organised by other international organisations and embassies. This programme culminated in two highpoints, demonstrating the potential of the master trainer programme:

- The first was a FIA Academy hosted training for visa officers from European embassies based in Islamabad in November 2023, delivered by the FIA Document Security master trainers, on how to check the authenticity and security features of national Pakistani documents used in visa applications. This event demonstrated the potential of the master trainer programme as a platform for international cooperation, as well as the quality of FIA national trainers to deliver high quality training events.
- The second high point was the completion of an FIA Immigration Wing Training Plan in 2023-2024. This was a monitored training plan of 10 events, developed with the FIA, designed to simulate the delivery of an annual training plan using the master trainer cadre, to independently organise training to officials from multiple border crossing points on the topics of document security, behavioural analysis and leadership. The Immigration Wing Training Plan resulted in 10 training events for 144 officers from across 9 border crossing points being trained between December 2023 – June 2024. Post-training testing indicated an average of 150% improvement in the knowledge and skills of officers receiving the training, suggesting a comparable impact with basic training delivered by international experts. Furthermore, Immigration Wing Training Plan events cost 70% less than standard training events organised by international partners, indicating sustainability and cost-benefit of developing master trainers. As such the master trainer programme in Pakistan suggests a model for meaningful empowerment of national experts, built around sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

The aim, stretching beyond the project's mandate, is to fully institutionalize the master trainers within an annual training cycle system and support them with digital tools and dedicated management resources to operational needs at all BCPs.

2.4. Way ahead

In *Bangladesh*, limited timeframe and drastic changes in political scheme, negatively affected the development of a comprehensive approach towards Border Management. However, elements of improvement of the system through training and equipment are already in place. Encouragement and support to the government and to the relevant agencies would potentially lead to further development. The training of document security experts should be continued, and it could also trigger similar initiatives in linked sectors. In Bangladesh, considering the current instability, bottom-up approach is probably better than top-down, at least until the political environment is stable enough for strategic visioning.

Another initiative that was proven useful is the dialogue between Border Management authorities and the representations of EU Member States through Local Schengen Cooperation (LSC) network. LSC would offer a platform for practical solutions and exchanges of information, especially when it comes to trends and phenomena on travel documents, and related statistics. As it is an existing forum, stipulated by the Visa Code (Regulation (EC) No 810/2009), it would be cost-free and potentially bring cooperation to a new level.
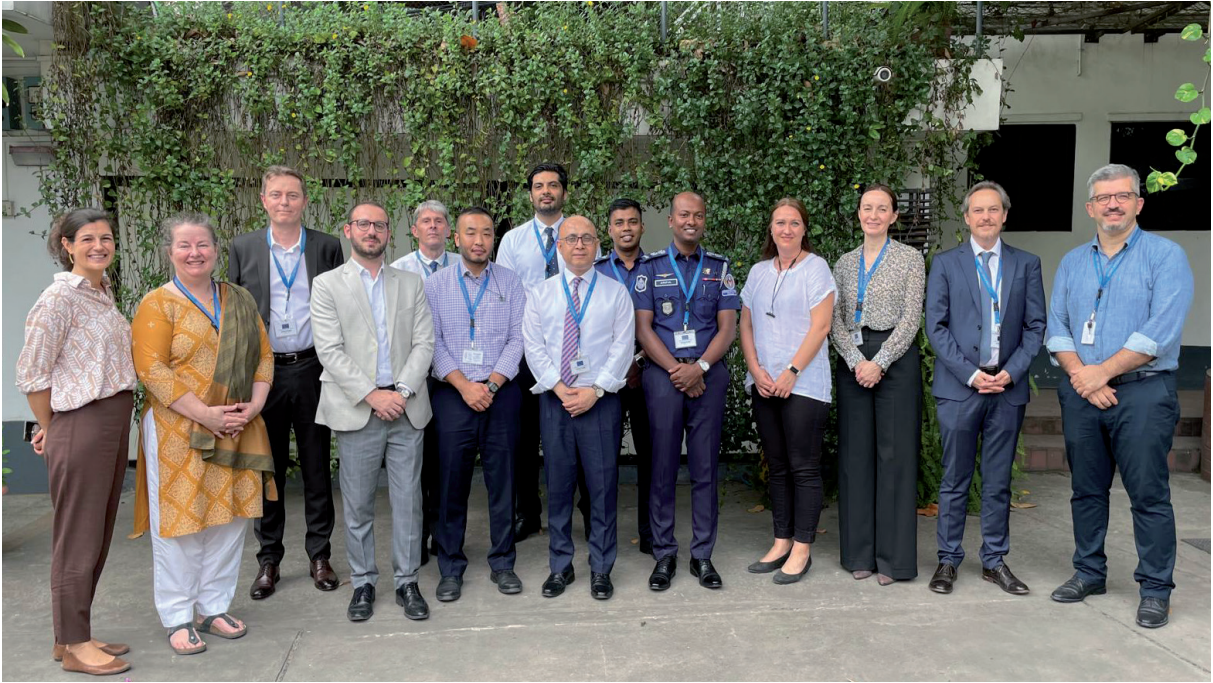
Iraq enjoys a wide variety of support from international communities. The presence of quite a few EU Member States, as well as other countries and governmental, non-governmental, and international organisations indicates the willingness of the international community to support the recovery of Iraq from the plague of terrorism. At the same time this is a challenge both to the donors and the beneficiaries, as coordination of all the different support actions throughout the variety of sectors of the government and civil society is complicated. IBM strategy and implementation plan provide a good platform for coordination, which has long been requested by both donors and beneficiaries. Coordination between EUAM-I and the ICMPD-led project could serve as an example of complementary and mutually beneficial coordination between two actors, both funded by the European Union.

Re-engineering the processes require business analysis, know-how, specialised technical expertise, experience, international examples of good practises, and capacity development skills, thus require international support. The project's legacy, including the strategy papers, offers a solid foundation to build upon.

In *Pakistan*, the Project created new IBM capacities in the governmental services of Pakistan, specifically on increasing performance of border control and detection of false documents and imposters at airports, and on delivering training and fostering internal expertise. The project began the process of embedding these new capabilities into the institutional functioning of the Border Management agencies, creating pathways towards real sustainability and integration as business-as-usual practices. All of this lays the foundation for sustained improved performance of border agencies. However, it is important to note that true sustainability will only come with culture change and professionalisation, which is a much longer process. Therefore, the adoption of IBM Policy and Strategy is the key position for further development and international credibility of Pakistani Border Management system and its performance. The donor community are requested to seek opportunities for further support in this area, to safeguard the results already achieved.

3. REFERENCE INFORMATION

3.1. Political and security situation in the Silk Routes countries

In Bangladesh, migration and mobility issues have remained critical, as the country has faced multiple challenges related to climate change, political unrest, and economic instability. Moreover, the lack of a durable solution for the Rohingya population in the country also resulted in secondary movements. The country remains vulnerable to natural disasters, sea-level rise, and environmental degradation.

In advance of the January 2024 general elections, a series of events by opposition parties - such as the countrywide road-rail-waterway blockade - disrupted supply chains and significantly pushed up the cost of transportation. The resulting disorder (from October – December 2023) exacerbated a weak domestic economy that continues to face import dependency, high inflation, lowering share of formal remittance transfers, and shrinking foreign currency reserves. With its weakened economy, poverty reduction and income diversification are the main motivations driving emigration.

The turning point came in June 2024, when Bangladesh's High Court re-instated a quota reserving 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans from Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence. With government jobs in high demand due to elevated graduate unemployment, students protested the quota, which they also viewed as favouring supporters of Prime Minister Hasina's Awami League party. The army eventually withdrew its support after refusing Hasina's order to open fire on civilians to enforce

the curfew. On 5 August 2024, with many angry protestors heading to her official residence, Hasina resigned and fled to India.

The interim government – consisting mainly of civil-society representatives and two student leaders of the protests – is constitutionally mandated for a 3-month period and enjoys the support of Bangladesh's army.

Worsening conditions in Bangladesh and a lack of global attention on the plight of a displaced community has meant that, those that were forced to leave Myanmar in 2017, have resorted to extreme measures. According to UNHCR and Bangladesh's Immigration Police, around 4,500 Rohingya people took boats across the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal in 2023, with an estimated 730 dying or going missing (the highest it has been since 2014).

In Iraq, both the Iraqi and international security forces continue tackling the remaining cells of Daesh, which are mainly operating in rural areas. In urban areas, reported acts of violence have decreased but still exist. Any threats against international actors in the country are mainly concentrated at targeting the US presence.

During the past few years, the political scene in Iraq has been comparatively stable. After the most recent parliamentary election in 2021, it took some time to establish a fully functioning government and during this period many protests, demonstrations, and violent clashes against the political establishments and between interest groups with political and/or religious backgrounds in major Iraqi cities occurred. Since late 2022, to date, there has been a coalition government, enabling a relatively stable environment for economic growth, safety, and security.

Iraq's public economy is almost fully dependent on oil revenue with more than 90 percent of Iraq's government budget coming from oil. Almost 40% of the labour force is employed by public sector[4] with 28% of the national budget for 2024 allocated to public servants' salaries. This dichotomy leaves the country very vulnerable to the potential changes in the global prices of oil, as well as any other disruptions in the energy sector. These factors have left the country vulnerable and thus exposed to public unrest as a result of the collapsing economic situation.

The balance in the relationship between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government has directly influenced potential economic growth in both Iraq and in Kurdistan Region of Iraq and has impacted unemployment rates, which has led to disproportioned share of Iraqi migrants coming from Kurdish Region, and in turn exposes these migrants to the instrumentalisation of migration and other types of exploitation.

Over the past few years in *Pakistan*, the difficult economic situation and low expectations of a return to growth were compounded by political unrest. Last year political uncertainty persisted, and the country saw a surge in violence, witnessing terror attacks and counter-terror operations, which resulted in nearly 1000 fatalities among civilians and security forces personnel. This marked 2023 as the deadliest year in the country since 2017. Over 90% of the casualties were reported in provinces bordering Afghanistan. This deteriorating security situation prompted Pakistan's government to announce an Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan in October 2023. The plan applies to all foreigners residing in the country illegally but mainly affects Afghan nationals. At the time of adoption of this Plan, Pakistan hosted an

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4 Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) and International Labour Organization (ILO): Iraqi Labour Force Survey 2021

estimated 3.7 million Afghan immigrants, refugees, and undocumented migrants, 600,000 of whom arrived in the wake of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. On 3 October 2023, all

irregular immigrants were ordered to leave the country by 1 November, otherwise they would face deportation.

Pakistan's economy faced significant challenges in 2024 with the World Bank projecting GDP growth slowing down to 1.8%.[5] Although inflation has declined from its peak of 38% in May 2023, it remained high at 11.8% as of May 2024 resulting in high cost of utilities, food and other essentials, hitting low-income households the hardest.[6]

Pakistan's socio-economic and political realities have further exacerbated the drivers of migration. The economic crisis, marked by high inflation and unemployment, has pushed many below the poverty line, with approximately 40% of the population living in poverty. The economic downturn is expected to persist. Politically, the aftermath of the 2024 elections has not brought the anticipated stability. The political landscape remains volatile, with the potential for further unrest as the opposition continues to challenge the legitimacy of the election results.

The combinations of a dire economic outlook, a tense security situation and continued implementation of the repatriation policy will affect both emigrants from Pakistan and vulnerable immigrant populations in the country. The potential for primary and secondary movements from the country towards Türkiye and further European destinations in increased. The vast majority of both Pakistani intending migrants and Afghans ordered to leave the country will have to rely on irregular patterns.

3.2 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

EU regulatory framework

There is a wealth of binding EU-level legislation covering different areas of border management in Europe. Depending on the approach taken by State actor and institutions, position, and task, ranking of those may vary. In the project's context, the cornerstones of EU regulatory framework are the Schengen Borders Code (EU 2016/399), and regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard (EU 2016/1624 and 1 January 2020 onwards 2019/1896), later EBCG Regulation.

As previously noted, there are a variety of other directly or indirectly connected legislation covering topics including Schengen Visa, EUROSUR, EUROPOL, asylum, and large-scale IT-systems.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) was established in 2004 and became operational in 2005. Its full name was originally "European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders". In the aftermath of the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the agency's role was elevated and strengthened, and compliance of and contribution from Member states expanded to reach the level of binding EU regulation. European Member States have since burdened the Agency with new tasks, which has been accompanied by an expanding budget. Even when Member States are responsible for their part of the external borders, the Agency locates "standing corps" of its own, to

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5 https://www.brecorder.com/news/40308046#:~:text=The%20report%20noted%20that%20activity,in%20the%20
   previous%20fiscal%20year
6 https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/6/12/is-pakistans-crisis-ridden-economy-finally-recovering

be deployed in support of a Member State facing an extraordinary pressure or crisis at their border(s). The current regulation also defines the twelve (12) components and three (3) horizontally over-arching components of the European IBM model. It is however important to highlight that these developments have taken more than two decades to develop, and that some of the components can be attributed to the birth of the concept, have been whilst others have been integrated over time due to both global developments and the needs of the Member States and the Union.

Measures in the EU Member States

Member states amend their national laws, practises and procedures in line with the binding EU legislation, but also based on their national needs and domestic political pressure. Many EU external borders have been closed in order to focus on tackling hybrid threats, of which instrumentalisation of migration included. There have been legislative proposals, including those which have been successful, to limit or tighten asylum-seeking possibilities and proposals.

In many countries *fortification of borders* has become the new standard. At the South-Eastern borders of the EU, for more than ten years, fences have been erected along the borderline. In more recent years, especially after 2022 and the phenomenon of instrumentalisation of migration, fences and other physical obstacles have been built or planned at the more northern parts of the eastern external border. These fences are commonly equipped with other elements of surveillance, such as various sensors, lighting, and patrol roads/paths.

While ground-based surveillance elements continue being the backbone of border control, the importance of *aerial surveillance* is increasing, with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), commonly called "drones", becoming increasingly popular. As with any other element of border surveillance, the use of drones requires integration into other systems, such as operational planning, situational awareness, rapid response capabilities, and logistics. Grass root impacts against any illegal activity at the borders still require, however, a patrol consisting of trained professionals. Drones are, however, an excellent novelty to increase situational awareness, safety at work, internal security and maintain operational impact.

Biometrics and electronic border surveillance are following the overall technical development. New generations of automated border checks have been installed at major airports, aimed at enhancing security and the smooth flow of passengers with a decreased workforce. Biometrics, supported by extensive registers, smart software, and Artificial Intelligence are increasingly being used to monitor passenger flows at migration hubs to detect anomalies and behavioural patterns of individuals among the crowds supports authorities in their efforts to prevent illegal activities. Well educated and experienced law enforcement professionals remain in key positions, while advanced technologies support their mission, as they are able to monitor and process massive data.

New and emerging threats at the land ("green") borders have led to the improvement of the utilisation of the monitoring of electromagnetic radiation e.g. the surveillance of transmissions of data through wireless applications and devices. This covers inter alia social media, calls and text messages used in smartphones and other mobile devices. The contents of the transmissions, or the identification of the senders/receivers is not relevant, while the profiling of devices, frequencies, locations and movements of devices is. This has resulted in the availability of pre-arrival intelligence information from the proximity of the areas across the border. The technologies in this sector are developing and as this area is relevant to the protection of personal data, diligent drafting of regulatory framework is necessary.

Cooperation between national and international authorities has become a cornerstone for all IBM related operations.

The exchange of information internally, externally, and internationally is not a goal per se but it facilitates proper management of information flows and storages, data analysis and joint risk analyses, leading to joint operations, or actions taken by authorities in their own domains. This results in the closing of gaps and avoiding any overlaps; the former improving the quality of border control, and the latter saving human, financial, and other resources.

ICMPD's approach towards Integrated Border Management

ICMPD has been working intensively with the EU Commission and the Member States since late 1990's to improve and harmonize the concept of IBM in the EU external cooperation. Considering the EU's legal framework, ICMPD has been highlighting the essence of national and international coordination and cooperation among all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security to establish effective, efficient and coordinated border management, in order to reach the objective of open, but well controlled and secure borders. ICMPD approach in the area of IBM has been always based on addressing specific needs of the partner countries and design IBM that fits into national legal and operational environments, while at the same time embedding essential and applicable elements of the European IBM. This kind of approach has proved to be successful in several countries where ICMPD operates, however, it also requires constant monitoring and evaluation. Ensuring a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation, and considering there are IBM governing bodies in place, allows national authorities to promptly react on new challenges and adjust their daily operations at borders.

GENERAL

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Institutional Strengthening

4 IBM Assessments conducted, including Training Gaps and Needs Assessments.

25 IBM Awareness and Strategy development workshops/engagements.

38 IBM and law enforcement agencies engaged in Strategy Development and IBM awareness raising.

2 IBM Strategic frameworks drafted in Iraq and Pakistan.

Border Policy and Strategy drafted in Pakistan.

Iraq IBM Strategy approved by Iraqi National Security Council.

Human rights reflected in 100% of strategic policy documents.

Operational capacity

1810 border officials trained.

105 training events.

62% average increase in knowledge and skills developed across all training activities.

Gender and human rights integrated into all training, with dedicated gender workshops in Iraq and Pakistan.

Forensic examination, IT equipment, databases, software, hardware, border control equipment, Covid-19 PPE provided to border agencies.

Border Force Information Management System developed in Iraq.

Improved BPC Operations Centre performance in Iraq.

2nd line offices established in Islamabad and Dhaka international airports.

Sustainable training systems

10 training curricula/ manuals developed:

• DocSec, Behavioural Analysis, Operational Equipment manuals, Trainer toolkit

6 training rooms established/ refurbished and equipped, and in regular use.

58 national Master trainers developed.

5 national trainer teams established.

21 Support Pilot Training events organised to mentor national master trainers.

68 training events delivered by national master trainers.

1314 local officers trained by national master trainers.

Training tools institutionalised into local training agencies and other materials in regular use by local Master Trainers.

Inter-agency and international cooperation

4 study visits to EU Member States.

Participation in 6 International BM conferences, and **2 Identity Weeks** conferences.

4 complementary initiatives with European partners developed.

Budapest Process thematic meeting in Sofia.

Master Trainer community of practice and joint study visit organised SR countries.

Engagement with national coordination platforms in all countries:

• Security Sector Reform platform in Iraq.

• ILO network in Pakistan.

• Local Schengen Cooperation Network in Bangladesh).

FIA master trainers trained European visa officials on Pakistan document security features.

BANGLADESH

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Institutional Strengthening

IBM landscape, gaps and needs assessed.

Comprehensive Capacity Development Initiative designed with Bangladesh Immigration Police.

Gender and human rights integrated into all curricula.

Refurbishment of Document Analysis Lab (third line of border control) at the HQ of Special Branch of Police.

Procurement of the IT and technical equipment for the second line of control for HISA's terminal 3.

Operational capacity

273 total immigration and customs officers trained.

65% increase in knowledge and skills, average across all training activities.

Training tools institutionalised with Document security curriculum and materials embedded into the School of Intelligence training programme, being used for new cadets.

Sustainable training systems

2 training rooms equipped and refurbished in School of Intelligence and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

100 officers trained in document security from HSIA.

15 officers developed as trainers from Immigration Police (8) and School of Intelligence (7).

223 operational officers trained across 8 pilot training events by national master trainers.

Inter-agency and international cooperation

Working bilateral relationships established between Immigration Police leadership, and the Dutch, Spanish, and Italian Embassies.

Bangladesh expert delegation attended **Identify Week in June 2023**, and a **study visit** to Denmark's National ID Centre in October 2024.

IRAQ

Institutional Strengthening

IBM Assessment and Training Gaps and Needs Assessment conducted.

National IBM Strategy drafted and approved by the National Security Council.

Comprehensive **IBM awareness raising campaign** delivered and an inter-agency working group formed.

The **strategy development process** is facilitated through the thematic workshops, filed visits to Iraqi borders, study visits abroad and focused group discussions.

The National IBM Committee is established under the leadership of the National Security Advisory with ICMPD holding an observer status.

IBM strategic frameworks drafted to inform the work and decisions of the National IBM Committee:

- **National IBM Action Plan;**
- Recommendations for border crossing points;
- **Recommendations from the feasibility study** conducted in Basra region in 2023.

Operational capacity

700 border officials (MoI, BPC, GCC, INIS, ICAA) trained on document security, behaviour analysis, image analysis, customs risk management, trade facilitation, cross-border crime.

42 training events conducted.

Fundamental rights integrated into all training materials.

Provided operational equipment contributes to combatting smuggling and irregular migration (radiation detectors, night vision devices, forensic equipment).

Border Force Information Management application improves and digitalises the data flow from the border **enhancing situational awareness.**

The cooperation included:

- Software development;
- Provision of hardware for the HQ and 20+ regional units;
- Extensive training programme;
- Piloting phase;
- Development of SOP, manuals for different user categories.

Sustainable training systems

24 national Master trainers developed.

20 training events delivered by MoI and BPC master trainers as part of ICMPD or independently organised trainings, **to a total of 348 border officials.**

Independent training delivery is supported by:

- Curricula;
- Training equipment;
- Training manuals;
- Mentoring sessions;
- Training plans.

Training room is established in PRD's HQ (MoI) and utilised for document security sessions all across the ministry and beyond.

Border Force training school in Basrah extensively refurbished and digital training equipment installed.

Operations centre of the Border Port Commission (BPC) commenced its work with the support of a high-specialised ToT Programme.

Inter-agency and international cooperation

Inter-agency processes built in a form of government-led National IBM committee, meeting regularly and establishing quality control measures.

International cooperation and donor coordination events to discuss the National IBM Strategy.

Bilateral linkages established and strengthened through visits to Lithuania, Lebanon (in cooperation with the NL) and Jordan – all with the focus on IBM Strategy implementation.

Multi-lateral exposure increased by participation in 4 international border management conferences, and 2 Identity Weeks.

Intra-regional cooperation initiated through experience sharing with Bangladesh and Pakistan.

PAKISTAN

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Institutional Strengthening

IBM Assessment and Training Gaps and Needs Assessment conducted.

Policy Brief, Border Management Policy and National Border Management Strategy drafted.

100% of draft documents reflect fundamental rights.

2nd line office at Islamabad International Airport established to allow identification of fraudulent documents

- Operational frame work for 2nd line control developed.
- IT and forensic examination equipment installed.
- Access to international document checker database.
- 9 Document Security 2nd line experts trained and appointed by FIA.

Operational capacity

706 border agency staff (FIA, Customs, MoI) trained, on document security, behaviour analysis, strategic planning, leadership, gender.

43 training events conducted.

3 Gender workshops for inter-agency border agency.

Gender and fundamental rights integrated into all training materials.

79% increase in knowledge and skills across all training activities.

66% of training events targeting BCPs were followed, within 3 months, by an increase in the number of passengers offloaded from departing flights at these locations.

Sustainable training systems

FIA Training Room refurbished, digital training equipment installed.

21 national Master trainers developed.

3 national trainer teams and training curricula developed:

- Document security
- Behaviour Analysis
- BCP Leadership and Management (funded by Austria BMI)

40 training events delivered by FIA Master trainers as part of ICMPD, FIA or third party organised training, to **a total of 743 border officials.**

FIA Immigration Wing Training Plan implemented between December 2023 – June 2024, to 144 FIA officers from 9 BCPs.

Inter-agency and international cooperation

Intra-agency cooperation improved on training between FIA Immigration Wing and Academy.

Bilateral linkages established and strengthened through technical study visits on document examination to Netherlands and Denmark.

Multi-lateral exposure increased by participation in 6 International BM conferences, and 2 Identity Weeks.

FIA master trainers trained European visa officials on Pakistan document security features.

INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT IN THE SILK ROUTES COUNTRIES