

**Mid-term evaluation of the project
“Institutional and Capacity Support to the
Parliament of Afghanistan (ICSPA)”**

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Kabul,
April 2017

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	b
Executive Summary	3
Project background.....	3
Key remarks.....	3
2. Country analysis and project background	7
2.1. Country background	7
2.2. Project background.....	9
3. The purpose and the scope of the mid-term evaluation	10
4. Mid-term evaluation methodology	11
4. Evaluation findings	13
4.1. Relevance	14
4.2. Efficiency.....	16
4.3. Effectiveness	20
4.4. Impact	41
4.5. Sustainability	44
Conclusions and Recommendations	46
Annex 1: The list of people interviewed (alphabet order)	49
Annex 2: Terms of References	50

List of Abbreviations

ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANPDF	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2017-2020
ASGP	Association of Secretaries General in Parliaments
ASGP	Association of Secretaries General in Parliaments
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
ICSPA	Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan
IPU	International Parliamentary Union
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
NAA	National Assembly of Afghanistan
NPP	National Priority Plans
NUG	National Unity Government
OO	Overall Objective
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PDG	Parliament's Donors Group
PMB	Project Management Board
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSA	Parliamentary Service Act
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAP	Reform Action Plan
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SEAL	Support to the Establishment of an Afghan Legislature
SGs	Secretary Generals
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SoV	Sources of Verification
ToR	Terms of Reference
TwG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Mission to Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

Executive Summary

Project background

The project “Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan” (ICSPA) 2014-2019 has been designed to contribute to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)’s Outcome 1 “Improved legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance at all levels that enable progressive realization of human rights.” It also contributes to the UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 2: “Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance”.

In addition, the project contributes to the UNDP Country Programme (2015-2019)’s Output 1: “Political processes are more inclusive and representative institutions are enabled to hold government more accountable at all levels”, with the indicator: Progress towards meeting International Parliamentary Union (IPU) benchmarks for democratically elected legislatures, the baseline: Legislature does not meet any IPU benchmark (2013) and the target: 50% IPU benchmarks are met.

The fundamental objective of the project “Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan” (ICSPA) 2014-2019 that was implemented in two interlinked phases, is to assist the two houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan (Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga), within the Afghan Parliament’s constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance. The first phase of the project was implemented from 2014 to 2016. The outputs of this phase of the project were: i. Self-Assessment Framework and Reform Action Plans (RAPs) developed and adopted by Parliament; ii. Staffing and financial management capacity of Parliament enhanced; and iii. The capacity of Parliament’s leadership to undertake reforms enhanced.

During this phase, the ICSPA project was effective and provided technical assistance to the National Parliament to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment and identify priority areas for further institutional development. Based on the results from the self-assessment, comprehensive Reform Action Plans were prepared, identifying numerous challenges facing the Secretariats of the Wolesi and Meshrano Jirgas. These problems ranged from lack of qualified staff in all the major departments of both Houses to severe weaknesses in ICT infrastructure, shortfalls in information management capabilities, a lack of consistency and coordination between International Relations Departments and high turnover of qualified staff.

Following the adoption of the Reform Action Plans (RAPs), the ICSPA project intervention logic was revised with an objective to fully support the Parliamentary leadership to meet the aims and objectives in their RAP. Accordingly, project objectives were revised and outputs were aligned to the activities of the Parliament’s Reform Action Plan. Hence, in mid-2016 the modified ICSPA project document was signed, focusing on the expected outputs: 1) Secretariats are strengthened to support the law-making and oversight functions, including committee management, legal and policy research, and plenary sessions; 2) Finance, Procurement, Auditing, and Human Resources capacity of Secretariats is strengthened to manage resources better and provide effective support to operational functions; 3) Representative role reinforced through support for improved communication and outreach capacities; and 4) The capacity of Parliament’s leadership to undertake reforms enhanced.

The project document has a well-structured analysis of risks and appropriate risk mitigation strategy. The risks are identified as Political, Organizational and Performance related. However, risks with high impact and likelihood are recognized at the political and organizational levels. The mitigation strategy that the project has proposed is comprehensive and proves to be adequate for the first phase of project implementation.

Key remarks

The key findings of the mid-term evaluation were the following:

OVERALL REMARKS:

- The overall conclusion from the mid-term evaluation is that the project was successful in attaining planned results during the first phase

- The overall project intervention and objectives are fully in line with the national development and strategic priorities, with particular reference to the strengthening of the governance system, with focus on greater transparency and accountability.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE

- The evaluation finding is that the mark for the relevance criterion is highly satisfactory, and the ICSPA project directly responds to the needs of the National Parliament as the target institution.
- The conclusions from the design phase that external intervention, provided through the ICSPA project was relevant when project designed and that the programming process was optimal, while design of the project was done coherently. Problem identification followed bottom-up process of collaboration and involvement of policy makers from different levels and departments from both houses of the National Parliament.
- The technical basis of project design (planning and programming) was adequate, with sound planning process that included well established “theory of change” for both phases of the project, and clearly identified key problems. Design process was comprehensive and sound resulting that the final proposed intervention was in fact clearly tied to Identification and assessment phase.
- The project has clear links with the national development and strategic plans and stated development goals for Afghanistan.
- The Project intervention logic was revised in 2016, with the adoption of the Reform Action Plan and the ICSPA project remained relevant throughout its implementation, responding to the needs of target groups and addressing national priorities.
- The project assisted with drafting of the Parliamentary Service Act and this is one of the most important steps to establish a sustainable human resource base and ensure the autonomy of parliament staff from the executive branch. Adoption and implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act is a critical requirement for the long-term institutional development of the Parliament. Still, it is expected that this process will face resistance and strong objections from the President and the Executive branch.
- There is high demand for the continuation of the support provided via the project. This is especially important considering that the project provides substantive assistance for the implementation of the Reform Action Plans of the National Parliament.

EFFECTIVENESS:

The evaluation finds that the project was effective in delivering results. Some of the key results that the ICSPA project achieved are:

- Both Houses of the National Parliament prepared the self-assessment in October 2015 and finalized the follow-up to Reform Action Plans in February 2016. The ICSPA project provided support to the leadership of the National Parliament to begin implementing politically challenging reforms. Some of the most notable achievements are publishing MP attendance records, fining and suspending MPs for non-attendance, reducing the number of committees to increase efficiency. It also included improved system to share information about the Parliament’s functions and functioning, structures and proceedings. This information is available to the public through the national media and the Parliament’s website;
- The capacity and commitment of the Secretary Generals and key personnel in both Houses of the National Parliament have increased significantly through the support of the ICSPA project. Engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was one of the most important moments, especially its assistance with the finalization and presentation of the Parliament Reform Action Plans and with the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Act. However, since the attack on the Afghan Parliament in June 2015, the IPU has not been able to identify and deploy qualified Experts to support the National Parliament of Afghanistan. Still, IPU support remains critical and is needed for successful implementation of the planned reforms.

- The project started work on establishing the required ICT infrastructure (local area network and media pool). The objective is to improve transparency by sharing parliamentary documentation and information with the media and the public as well as between departments and also to improve the financial, administrative, procurement and human resource work-flow processes;
- The ICSPA project provided the Gender Directorates in both Houses with support to clarify their job functions and prepare workplans with realistic targets they may help the parliament to achieve by working in partnership with other parliamentary departments rather than in isolation;

The effectiveness of the project has relied heavily on the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who has built a strong relationship with the leadership of both Houses of Parliament and with the international development partners in this project. However, at the time, the CTA was not present and all project activities were on hold as a result.

EFFICIENCY:

- The ICSPA project is a complex development intervention, implemented in political sensitive environment with deteriorating security situation and it required multi-layered management and steering mechanisms. The MTE finds that the steering and advisory structure of the ICSPA project is nationally owned and facilitate efficient implementation of the project. The high-level of representation and continuous engagement in the Project Management Board (comprised of the Speakers of both Houses as well as partner Ambassadors) was instrumental to generate favorable and supportive atmosphere and it serves as an excellent platform to push for the reforms.
- The distinct feature of the ICSPA project is that the implementation was driven by goals to ensure ownership and sustainability. All the project results, especially those related to organizational development and implementation of the reform priorities, are integrated in the key organizational policies (e.g. self-assessment and the Reform Action Plan) and practices of the National Parliament.
- The evaluation analysed application of a standard management tools inherent to efficient project management. Based on this, the analysis of primary and secondary data, the evaluation concludes that the project had well-established management tools and procedures that facilitated efficient implementation. The current management approach has ensured high-quality results. However, the key stakeholders did observe some gaps in project coordination and administration and the actual involvement of UNDP as implementing partner was not adequate in some periods during the project implementation. There has been some delay in the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and some of its core positions have so far remained vacant.
- The ICSPA project introduced results oriented reporting (against approved indicators) and has sound risk management system. The MTE finds some of the indicators, although captured from the Reform Action Plan, require adjustments and fine-tuning and sound monitoring system for the project and for the Reform Action Plan is needed.

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The evaluation finds that the project sustainability is satisfactory and the project ensured ownership of the leadership and employees of the National Assembly of Afghanistan.
- Capacity within the Wolesi and Meshrano Jirgas will remain in place, ensuring sustainability
- The mid-term evaluation followed general practice to validate impact looking at the expected outputs (and deliverables) and the outcome, and assuming possible impact of the ICSPA project on strengthening accountable and transparent governance and on organizational development of the NAA in line with international norms. This included the analysis at three levels: the level of individuals, institutions and the policy level. At the level of individuals, the impact could be observed among the individuals that participated in the project activities or directly benefited from them and among the project target groups. Organizational, operational and technical capacities of the key national partners, the Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga have been strengthened to embark on reforms and provide high level services.
- Qualitatively, the conclusion of this mid-term evaluation is that there is certain likelihood that the project impact will be achieved; however, as presently designed and implemented there is a high likelihood that the impact could erode without further external support to institutionalize results of the

project- this primarily relates to the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act, as the key milestone to ensure an independent Parliament.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The recommendations for the partners participating in the ICSPA project is to discuss and prepare a plan to advocate and lobby the President for the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act and its importance for strengthening Afghanistan's governance system.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act, UNDP and development partners explore opportunities to expand support to the National Parliament of Afghanistan and its two houses. The possible next technical assistance project to the National Parliament (the follow-up phase of the ICSPA project) should be conceptualized to provide support for additional three to five years

- It is recommended that the ICSPA project prepares detailed support plan for the National Parliament after the passage of the PSA, clearly indicating priorities and expected timeframe.
- In the case that the resistance for the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act prevails, it is recommended that the ICSPA project expands efforts to increase transparency and improve operational/ management processes within the National Parliament and support the implementation of the Reform Action Plan in the relevant areas. It is recommended to revise some of the project indicators.
- It is recommended to explore different options to engage in the communication and cooperation with the International Parliamentary Union, as its support remains critical and is needed for successful implementation of the planned reforms.
- It is recommended to strengthen the PMU and recruit a competent international Technical Advisor. It is recommended to revise Terms of Reference from the approved ICSPA project document. This approach will enhance delivery capacity of the PMU, while at the same time, this will help bolster the UNDP's technical advisory support and maintain strong engagement at the highest levels in the Secretariats of both Houses.

Once the P4 Technical Specialist is recruited, it is recommended that the PMU start working on a results oriented monitoring system for the ICSPA project and for the Reform Action Plan (RAP).

In the context of establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system for the Reform Action Plan, it is recommended to design and implement sound capacity development programme for strengthening parliamentarians' or secretariat staff to monitor its implementation and report on progress.

- It is recommended that the ICSPA project continue and enhance its activities to foster women empowerment and gender mainstreaming within the Afghan Parliament. Some of the recommended actions could be capacity building for female employees to increase their participation in decision-making; capacity building for all employees to understand, i.e., the basic principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in policy formulation. Support to the Gender Directorates in both Houses should intensify in the next period.

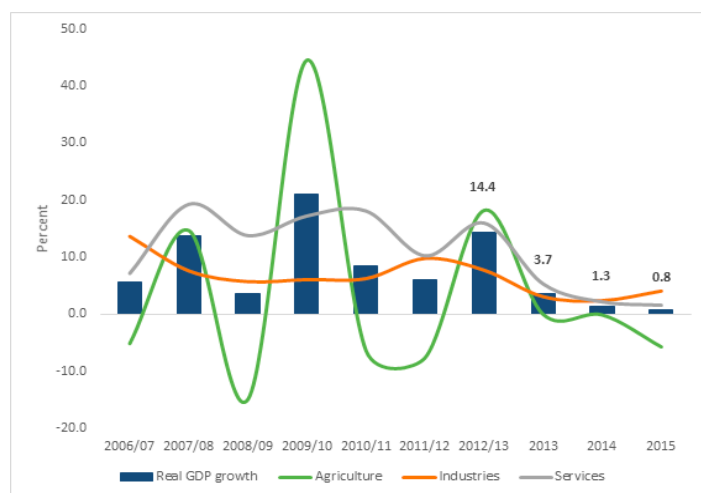
2. Country analysis and project background

2.1. Country background

Afghanistan (officially, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) is a landlocked and mostly mountainous country, with 0.465 Human Development Index (in 2015), ranked 171 (out of 188) as a low human development country. Afghanistan has been in almost constant conflict for nearly four decades, without any sustainable political settlement of the situation. In addition to a loss of life and insecurity, the conflict has had a destabilizing effect on the country's social cohesion, exacerbating ethnic divisions and weakening government institutions and rule of law. There were over 3,500 conflict-related civilian deaths and nearly 8,000 injuries in 2016, the highest on record. Some areas of the country are difficult to access because of insecurity and the political situation remains fragile.

Economic growth averaged an impressive 9.4% per year between 2003 and 2012, driven by investments in reconstruction, expansion of services supported by aid, and periodic surges in agricultural production. In spite of rapid growth between 2007 and 2012, poverty levels remained stubbornly high at 36 percent of the population. In 2014, after two years of falling growth, poverty levels had increased to nearly 40 percent. With a high concentration of households living just above the national poverty line, the risk of falling back into poverty is significant, even with a very small shock.

Graph 1: Economic growth and areas of contributions, 2006-2015



source: Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and the World Bank data

Per capita GDP increased almost three times in the last decade, reaching \$680 in 2014; the main contributors to the GDP growth were agriculture and services (Graph 1). These levels of growth were not sustainable; total security and development assistance declined to 59 percent of GDP in 2013 and will likely decline further to about 39 percent by 2020. However, growth fell sharply between 2013 and 2015 (3.7% in 2013, 1.3% in 2014, and 0.8% in 2015). The population growth rate of nearly 3% and the economic growth trends including near-term projections indicate that Afghanistan's progress is well below the level needed to create jobs for the large numbers of people entering the labor force and to reduce poverty.

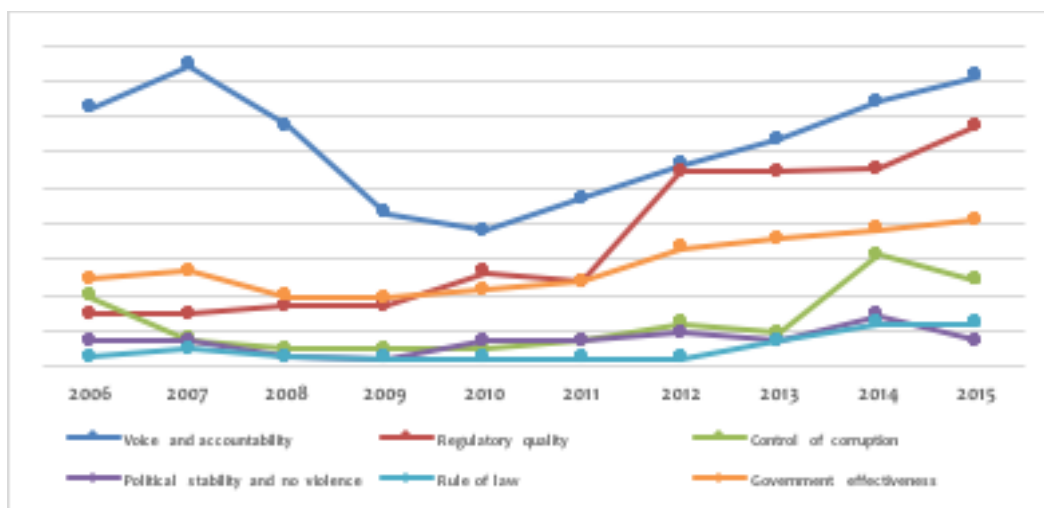
The structure of Afghanistan's economy is unfavorable: the formal private sector is extremely narrow, while agriculture remains highly vulnerable to climate variability. The country faces a decline in international development aid and domestic revenue mobilization remains limited, while security expenditures continue to increase, squeezing funding for social and economic development. Sustainable development and growth in Afghanistan would require continued strengthening institutions, improving tax management system, and establishing a favorable environment for private sector growth. Mobilization of required aid will continue to depend on adequate performance in implementing agreed structural reforms under the SMAF- Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (Signed by the government and the international community around agreed reform benchmarks that was originally defined at the 2012 Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan and recently updated for the Brussels Conference in October, 2016)

The country's political evolution based upon the changes in 2001 has been mixed and uneven. Some of the most outstanding results achieved are the new Constitution, the organization and implementation of

presidential and parliamentary elections, the creation of a legislative basis, the establishment of key national institutions.

The Constitution puts in place a tripartite system of governance. The President is elected directly every five years for a maximum of two terms. As the results of the 2014 presidential elections and lengthy negotiations between the two leading candidates after the disputed second round of the presidential election, Mr. Ashraf Ghan became the President and Mr. Abdullah Abdullah became the Chief Executive, a new post resembling that of a Prime Minister. The President has direct control and supervision over the Government, which functions mainly as an administrative body with rather limited formal authority independent from the President.

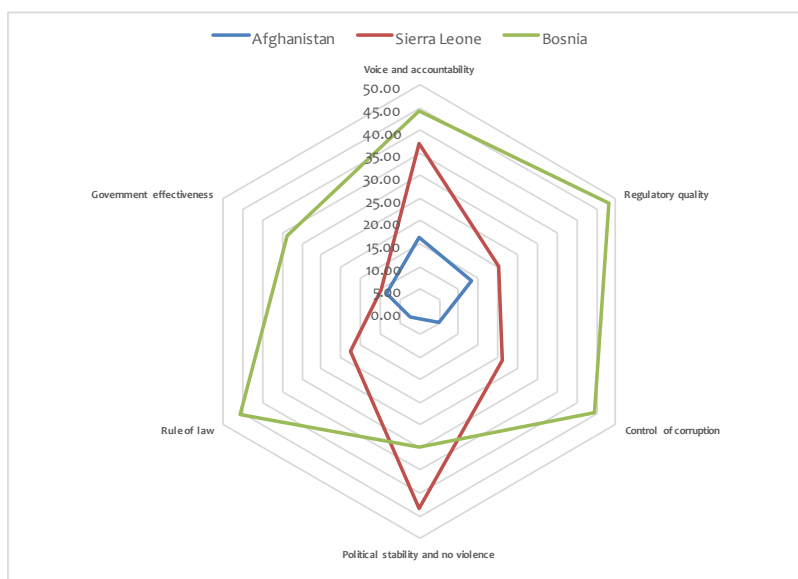
Graph 2: Overview of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for Afghanistan (2006-2015)



Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators, World Bank

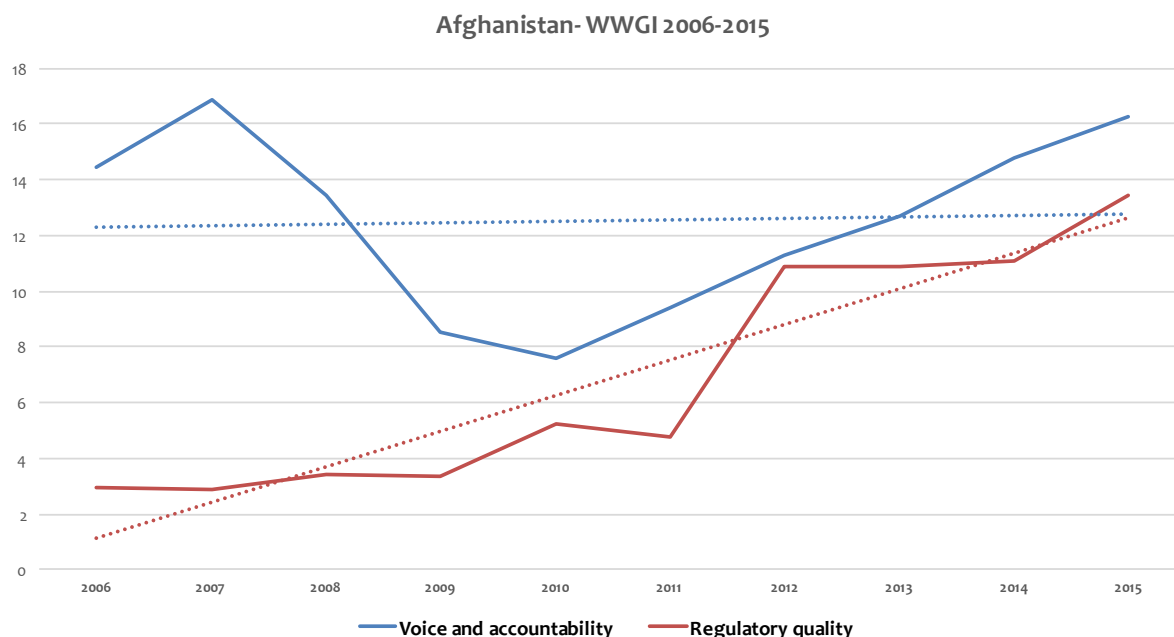
The current National Unity Government (NUG), established in September 2014 as a result of political compromise, is facing internal challenges and disagreements, which is affecting implementation of reforms. The country had adopted number of strategic and policy documents, in the efforts to regulate and facilitate sustainable socio-economic and democratic development of the country. However, there are many unresolved issues related to gaps between legislation and its implementation

Graph 3: WGI in 2015 in three post-conflict countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia&Hercegovina and Sierra Leone)



The country is facing a plethora of problems that are impeding progress towards good governance and sustainable democracy (ref to Graph 2 and Graph 3). The President and the executives interferes in work of judiciary and legislative branches, infunctoning of police and anti-corruption investigations.

The weak state and political institutions, which lack clear mandates and skilled staff, depend heavily on decisions driven by personal interests rather than by productive use of resources or accountability to citizens.



In recent years, the magnitude and pervasiveness of corruption in Afghanistan have been striking. It ranges from administrative corruption, cronyism and patronage, low pay and bribery, to drug-related and state captured corruption. Appointments and positions within the public sector are purchased and sold in lucrative poppy-rich areas in exchange for loyalty and a lump sum or monthly stipend based upon the bribes collected is paid to the recruiter or superior.

The bicameral National Assembly of Afghanistan (NAA), established in 2005, is composed of the Wolesi Jirga (WJ- House of the People) and the Meshrano Jirga (MJ- House of Elders). The Article 90 of the Constitution enumerates the law-making, oversight, and representative functions to the NAA. The Wolesi Jirga is responsible for making and ratifying laws and approving presidential decrees and actions. The Meshrano Jirga plays an advisory role but also wields veto powers.

The WJ Secretariat has eight departments: 1) Parliamentary Affairs and Plenary Sessions 2) Information and Public Relations 3) International Relations 4) Research 5) Human Resources 6) Procurement and Services 7) ICT DG and 8) Security. The ICT and Security are within the organizational structure of WJ, however, they serve both houses. The independent directorates in the WJ are: 1) Finance and Budget 2) Internal Audit and 3) Gender. The MJ Secretariat consists of five departments, specifically, 1) Human Resources 2) Finance and Administration 3) Information and Public Relations 4) Legislative Affairs 5) International Relations. There are two independent directorates in MJ: 1) Internal Audit and 2) Gender.

The Provincial and District Councils, each of them respectively, directly elects one-third of the members of the MJ. Representatives of Provincial Councils serve a term of four years, while representatives of District Councils serve a term of three years. Currently, without District Councils in place, the Provincial Councils also select an additional member in place of a District.

The President of the Republic appoints one-third of the members, out of which half must be women, of the MJ. Also the President has veto power over the the Parliament's legislative enactments. This shows that the presidential powers extend substantially into the realm of the judiciary and legislative estates.

Thus, Parliament is significantly constrained to deliver on its core functions: it lacks financial resources and institutional autonomy compounded by a weak capacity to initiate and implement reform.

2.2. Project background

The fundamental objective of the project, entitled: "Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan" (*hereafter*, "ICSPA" or "Project"), 2014-2019, is to assist the two Houses of the National

Assembly of Afghanistan, within the Afghan Parliament's existing constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance.

An initial Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan project document (PRODOC) was signed with partners in March 2014. Following delivery of the parliament's self-assessment report and its reform action plan, the initial project document was subsequently revised and replaced with a second project document in June 2016 in alignment with the NAA reform action plan.

Project aims and expected outputs as defined in the 2014 Project Document

To achieve such an objective, the Project aims to provide capacity support to the Afghan Parliament to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment to identify priority areas for support and institutional development, guided by the principles of co-equality and cooperation with other institutions of government.

The outputs in the initial project document were as follows:

- Self-Assessment Framework and Reform Action Plan developed for, and adopted by, Parliament;
- Staffing and financial management capacity of Parliament enhanced; and,
- Capacity of Parliament's leadership to undertake reforms enhanced.

Project aims and expected outputs as defined in the 2016 Project Document

To achieve such an objective, the Project aims to provide institutional development support to areas identified by the Afghan Parliament through its Self-Assessment Report (2015) and its Project Reform Plan (2016), as requiring prioritized attention, guided by the principles of co-equality and cooperation with other institutions of government. The priority areas of support identified in these two reports are the focus of this 2016-2019 ICSPA Project Document revision, which was envisioned in the original document.

Over the period July 2016 – March 2019 the ICSPA project aims to deliver the following outputs:

- Secretariats are strengthened to support law-making and oversight functions, including committee management, legislative and policy research, and plenary;
- Finance, Procurement, Auditing, and Human Resources capacity of Secretariats is strengthened to better manage resources and provide effective support to operational functions;
- Representative role reinforced through support for improved communication and outreach capacities; and
- Capacity of Parliament's leadership to undertake reforms enhanced

Key project activities, strategies and indicators are defined in the project documents dated 26 March 2014 and 23 June 2016, which were used during the evaluation process.

3. The purpose and the scope of the mid-term evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the ICSPA project (2014-2016 and 2016-2019) is to perform substantive assessment of project formulation/ design, project progress and achievements and assess challenges and risks facing during project's lifetime.

The initial project document foresaw that annual as well as mid-term project evaluations would be completed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 based on which the project document would be revised. The project document was revised in June 2016 prior to conducting the annual or mid-term evaluations. This Mid-Term Evaluation will nonetheless provide analytical recommendations for any project adjustments required here forth to better achieve targets. The MTE intended to provide inputs for future programming in the area of support to the Parliament within a broader context of good governance.

4. Mid-term evaluation methodology

The scope and the details for this mid-term evaluation are stipulated in the Terms of reference while complying with UNDP/ UNEG evaluation norms, standards, code of conduct and ethical guidelines.

This part provides a description of data collection methods and data sources that were employed, including the rationale for their selection (how they inform the MTE) and their limitations; data collection tools, instruments and protocols. It also includes discussion of reliability and validity of information and data for the evaluation process.

In general the MTE followed the steps described below:

1) Desk Phase

Mapping to ensure that nothing is missed and that available time is focused on appropriate areas:

Key sources of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents “Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan (ICSPA)” dated 26 March 2014 and 23 June 2016, also containing RRF indicators • Quarterly and Annual Project Progress Reports • Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report (2017) • The DFID Annual Reviewes (2015 and 2016) • Project Donor Group Meeting Minutes • Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes • Project Management Board Meeting Minutes • National Assembly of Afghanistan Development Partner Coordination Meeting Terms of Reference, principles of cooperation and meeting minutes • 2014-2017 Annual Work Plans and 2014- 2017 Project Procurement Plans • National Assembly of Afghanistan department and directorate self-assessment reports; and consolidated Self-Assessment Report • National Assembly of Afghanistan Reform Action Plan • Briefing Notes and Recommendations • 2016 Annual National Assembly of Afghanistan Staff Perception Survey • Other UNDP project related documentation • Web sources, video materials, etc
Key stakeholders	<p>Key national partners from the Meshrano Jirga and the Wolesi Jirga</p> <p>UNDP Senior Management</p> <p>Representatives of the international development partners that are supporting the ICSPA project: the Delegation of the European Union; the Embassy of Germany and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK Embassy</p> <p>Representatives of other non-UNDP projects and programs that are providing support to the Parliament of Afghanistan</p> <p>Representatives of select Civil Society Organisations</p>
Some of relevant documents	<p>Analytical reports on the status of good governance/ transparency and accountability in Afghanistan</p>

The products (reports and analysis) of other organizations and development partners in the area of transparency and accountability

National statistics with specific focus on governance, accountability and transparency

The MTE undertook the following activities during the desk phase:

- Review baseline and key expected results (UNDP's programme and project quality standards will be the benchmark for these reviews)
- Review documented results of the first phase of the project (ICSPA 2014-2016) and of the first year of the ICSPA's second phase
- Review the enabling environment for implementation of the project
- Identify key horizontal issues, themes, best practises, success stories, etc. for follow- up, further investigation, verification, and triangulation.
- Completion/ finalization of the mid-term evaluation approach and methodology;
- Identification of the needs for interviews

2) Field Phase

The field phase included personal interviews with with the key stakeholders:

- the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General from the Meshrano Jirga, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General from the Wolesi Jirga; the head of the ICT Department of the Parliament, etc
- UNDP Senior Management, UNDP Programme and Operations staff
- Representatives of the international development partners that are supporting the ICSPA project: the Delegation of the European Union; the Embassy of Germany and the Deperment for International Development (DFID) of the UK Embassy
- Representatives of other projects and programs that are providing support to the Parliament of Afghanistan
- The ICSPA Project Team
- Civil society organizations

The evaluation implemented structured interviews, based on questionnaires, enabling to collect in-depth information about the project, results achieved and the perception of the beneficiaries.

In the context of the National Assembly of Afghanistan and its two houses as direct beneficiaries of the project, substantive insight was ensured through the meetings and consultations. These meetings involved senior management and served to discuss and explore opinions and priorities of the NAA. The reference is made to the performance of the ICSPA project; also these meetings served as an opportunity to identify forward looking priorities that the project could address during the following years of its implementation.

The list of people interviewed during the field phase is attached to this report as Annex 1.

3) Synthesis Phase

This phase was mainly devoted to the preparation of the MTE report based on the work done during the desk and field phases and taking into consideration the results and information from the briefing meetings.

The MTE report included findings, conclusion and recommendations for each of the evaluation areas, namely, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact the of project and all criteria were rated using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory. This is substantiate in the report by facts and findings.

At the same time, the report includes more substantive analyses and assessment of the project deliverables. This ensured that the MTE report is objective, balanced and substantiated; it presents findings, conclusions and recommendations following a logical cause-effect linkage. When formulating and presenting findings and conclusions, the report describes the facts assessed, the judgement criteria applied and how this led to findings and conclusions.

Recommendations are addressing the weaknesses identified and reported; clearly indicating the measures to be undertaken and being operational and realistic in the sense of providing clear, feasible and relevant input for decision making. Furthermore, recommendations are divided into project specific and those that should be implemented in order to enhance actual impact and boost sustainability of the project results.

4. Evaluation findings

The **Terms of reference** formulated the essential area for mid-term review:

- i. Assessment of project formulation/design
- ii. Assessment of project progress/achievement
- iii. Assessment of challenges and risks facing during project's implementation
- iv. Proposed analytical recommendations for project's interventions

In particular, the Mid-Term Evaluation was focused to review the following core areas:

- Are the project interventions relevant and to what degree has the project contributed to laying the foundations for the National Assembly of Afghanistan's long-term sustainable institutional development?
- Has the project contributed to altering mind-sets and the approach of the parliamentary leadership in adopting and implementing reforms towards compliance with international parliamentary standards for the Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga secretariats?
- To what degree has the project contributed to increased transparent practices?
- To what degree are the project based initiatives driven by the parliamentary leadership and are the initiatives undertaken to date sustainable?
- Are project interventions aligned with the Afghan Parliament's priorities and coordinated with the interventions of other development partners to prevent duplication and reduce transaction costs on the parliament? Are all development partner interventions well-coordinated in support of the Afghan Parliament's priorities and driven by the parliament itself for sustainable institutional development? Do the ICSPA project interventions effectively complement interventions of other development partners?
- Has the project employed any innovative models or approaches that may be applicable to other institutional development projects in Afghanistan or abroad?
- What challenges has the project faced and has it dealt appropriately to overcoming these by proposing mitigating measures related to issues and risks in advance? Has the project received adequate support from national and international partners when and as relevant to overcome challenges towards success?
- What are the lessons learned from the project that may be applicable to similar institutional development projects in Afghanistan or abroad?

The listed areas are fully in compliance with the OECD DAC Criteria for evaluation of development programs and projects, which comprises of the 5-set of evaluation criteria:

- I. Relevance**
- II. Effectiveness**
- III. Efficiency**

IV. Impact

V. Sustainability

Each of the evaluation criteria was further organized around core questions and sub-questions, which were presented in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2 to this report). Mid-term evaluation was primarily focused on criteria I, II and III. Formally, to validate impact and sustainability of the undertaken project, it is recommended to carry out ex-post evaluation 2-3 years upon the end of the project. However, this mid-term evaluation provided an opportunity to anticipate and assess (potential) impact and sustainability.

4.1. Relevance

There are two dimensions of Relevance that are pertinent to the mid-term evaluation.

The first dimension relates to the design phase during the planning and programming. The focus is to assess the particular area and validity of the intervention logic and the elaboration of the project to meet the identified needs of the National Assembly of Afghanistan (as the target beneficiaries). This analysis reflects if the proposed implementation plan, developed during the design stage, was coherent and realistic. Also, the evaluation of the "design phase" relevance analysed if there was a clear exit strategy with a focus on impact and sustainability of the intervention beyond the life of the project.

The second dimension is related to the evaluation of the “real-time” project relevance. The focus is to evaluate project’s significance at any point during its life-cycle, hence, to analyse whether the intervention logic remained true in the context of possible changes on the demand side. Also, it included assessing the response made to adjust and fine-tune intervention as set out in the project's Results Resources Frameworks. In this context, the fundamental question was whether the project’s target benchmarks remained valid and achievable or whether there was a case for revision to take account of change in demand or the speed of delivery of services.

The MTE finds and confirms that the mark for the relevance criterion is highly satisfactory and the support provided through the ICSPA project was relevant and in line with the needs and priorities of the National Assembly.

The evaluation confirms the broad conclusions from the original project document that external intervention was relevant and responded to the national priorities for legitimate and inclusive governance and the needs to improve the functioning of the National Assembly of Afghanistan towards more productive parliamentary institutions.

Regarding national priorities, the project document highlights links with the national development and reform priorities for Afghanistan. The project complies with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004) that vests considerable power in the National Assembly of Afghanistan in terms of law-making and oversight, enabling and requiring it to interact with the Executive Branch as an equal constitutional partner. The project supports the achievement of the priorities established in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) to “strengthen democratic processes and institutions, human rights, the Rule of Law, delivery of public services and government accountability”. Under the ANDS, the 22 National Priority Plans (NPPs) have been formulated and endorsed by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). Most central to the project are NPP 2-the National Transparency and Accountability Program, NPP 6-Human Rights and Civic Responsibilities and also the NPP on Capacity Development to Accelerate Implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan. The project also supported the implementation of the Government's strategic vision to support the electoral process and establishment of transparent and accountable governance in Afghanistan, as outlined in the document “Towards Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reform and Renewed Partnership” (2014).

When stating the “identified needs,” the reference is made to the consistent planning and design process, including identification and formulation of the project. Problem identification followed a bottom-up process of collaboration and involvement of policy makers and representatives of different departments from the Wolesi and Meshrano Jirgas. The phase II project document revised in June 2016 accordingly highlighted critical problems: the lack of fiscal and administrative autonomy that affects the NAA’s ability to carry out its responsibilities effectively. The core functions of both Houses are marked by a lack of internal institutional capability, by a general inability to attract and retain qualified staff, and by a lack of infrastructure resources, including core information sharing capabilities. These issues were identified during the identification/ formulation missions, that UNDP was leading. The first mission took place during 2013 for

the purpose of formulating the ICSPA project. Also, the extensive UNDP support and partnership with the National Parliament (the references are the two phases of the projects “Support to the Establishment of an Afghan Legislature, SEAL1 and SEAL 2 implemented from 2005 until 2008) contributed to the formulation and relevance of the ICSPA project.

The initial project document foresaw its revision, based on annual reviews and changes in the external environment. Following the adoption of the NAA's Reform Action Plan, the mission performed a review of the ICSPA project, proposing fine-tuning and adjustments. Revised project document was signed in June 2016.

The MTE finds that the design process was comprehensive and sound resulting that the final proposed action was in fact explicitly tied to identification and assessment phase. The elements of the intervention logic (outcome, outputs, deliverables, and activities) were clearly formulated, with evident and strong links between them (more details in the effectiveness part of this report). This set the basis for successful implementation of the project and ensured multiplier effects.

The “real time” assessment of the project’s relevance confirmed that the focus of the project on supporting general secretariats and departments of the both houses of the National Assembly and the project intervention logic remained valid. The analysis of the national priorities and assessment of newly established project’s benchmarks (targets, indicators and sources of verification) is substantial evidence that supports this conclusion.

Based on the primary and secondary data, the overall project’s intervention logic and focus on the organizational development of the permanent (non-political) structures of the NAA, remained relevant from the start of the project. The enduring relevance of the intervention is fundamentally supported by the involvement, experience and high-level expertise of the ICSPA project team, the CTA, and the technical staff. The MTE finds that this was essential in ensuring substantive insight and adequate approach to supporting the NAA.

The review of "real-time relevance" of the project intervention logic assessed whether the adjustments were needed and fine-tuning was applied during the project implementation phase. This was done through the analysis of the ICSPA’s benchmarks -indicators, baselines, targets and sources of verification - if they remained valid and achievable or if there was a need to revise them. The completion of the comprehensive self-assessment and preparation of Reform Action Plans (RAP) for the Secretariats of the Wolesi and Meshrano Jirgas were a critical moment. The ICSPA project intervention logic was revisited to meet the aims and objectives of the RAP- its milestones are fully aligned with the activities of the Reform Action Plan, and this approach proved to be favorable for enhancing the relevance of the ICSPA project vis-a-vis the priorities of the National Assembly. Furthermore, interviews with the project partners and beneficiaries confirmed high demand for the continuation of technical assistance and support/ activities implemented within the ICSPA project. The leadership of the Wolesi and Mashrano Jirgas highlighted that the distinct feature of the ICSPA project is its direct link to the implementation of the Reform Action Plan. The dominant paradigm of the previous development assistance was only to "implement activities in the NAA" is altered with a new model “project implemented for the NAA and by the NAA,” that the ICSPA project streamlined. Furthermore, some of the practices, such as the development of nationally owned reform agenda or changes in the organizational culture of the NAA towards greater transparency and accountability, is recognized as a best practice model for replication and expansion in the future (more details are provided under the Sustainability part of this report).

The project was instrumental in implementation of some of the key national priorities as identified during the formulation process; the development priorities stated in these strategies are still relevant in the context of Afghanistan’s efforts to establish democratic governance. This MTE finds that the support provided to the National Parliament via the project remains highly relevant and needed throughout the implementation phase. The lasting relevance of the ICSPA was confirmed in the new Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2017-2020 (ANPDF), which is the central strategic document that sets the platform for the achievement of the national overarching goal of self-reliance "through addressing economic, political and security development priorities". The ANPDF is working to improve governance and state effectiveness through public sector reform, eradicate corruption and strengthen subnational governance (in the Afghan context, "subnational" refers to regions, districts and municipal structures). This additionally highlights and confirms relevance of the project.

The ICSPA Results and Resources Framework (equivalent to a "logical framework" in the UNDP's programming structure) has clear and well-established intervention logics, with well-defined, robust and SMART indicators, highly relevant to measure progress towards the achievement of objectives.

Indicators are provided at the level of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the UNDP Country Programme outcome (overall objective) and the level of specific project outputs. The revision of the ICSPA project document in 2016 entailed that the indicators were reviewed and the indicators from the National Parliament's Reform Action Plans were adopted. All these indicators contain realistic and achievable benchmarks, baselines and targets for the planned period. The data sources provided were adequate and appropriate to validation progress and achievements. Also, the revised ICSPA project has clearly articulated assessment of risks and assumptions at the level of each element of the intervention logic.

The review confirms that there is demand for the continuation of the existing activities, especially considering the intervention areas and cross-sectoral challenges within the broader good governance context that the ICSPA is addressing.

The MTE finds that the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act (PSA) remains a critical element that will substantively contribute to achieving "improved legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance at all levels, which enables the progressive realization of human rights", while ensuring sustainability of Afghanistan's accountable, transparent and democratic governance. The adoption of the PSA will increase the need for additional technical assistance provided through the ICSPA project.

Still, this (the adoption of the PSA) depends upon external factors: the formal approval by the President and the Executive branch and the official submission for the adoption. Executive resistance to the enactment of the Parliamentary Service Act has been reported.

4.2. Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the extent to which the project results have been achieved by rational use of inputs, such as financial resources, expertise, time, etc.

In the context of project management and the intervention logic, it concerns the link between results with the activities and inputs envisaged for the achievement of the result.

The analysis of overall project implementation, including management, and operational mechanisms served as a platform to validate efficiency. As part of this endeavour, UNDP provided information on the status of the project results and the budget, and on the project governance structure and mechanisms that were in place during the project implementation. The filed visit served to confirm these inputs.

i) Implementation arrangements:

Direct Implementation (DIM) is the modality whereby UNDP takes on the role of Implementing Partner, with its technical and administrative capacity to deliver outputs. Although UNDP assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for project implementation, the ICSPA project was working continuously to ensure national ownership and involvement.

The actual implementation of the project followed UNDP policies and procedures.

Considering the environment and the institutional capacity of the NAA, the MTE finds that the chosen implementation mechanisms proved to be conducive for achieving the expected results.

ii) Organizational and operational arrangements

The ICSPA project's stated objective ("to increase the National Parliament's organizational functioning, while ensuring full national ownership and leadership") twinned with its implementation environment characterized by political sensitivity and deteriorating security situation, required multi-layered management and steering mechanisms.

The MTE finds that the steering and advisory structure of the ICSPA project is nationally owned and facilitate efficient implementation of the project.

The Project Management Board (PMB) was established to provide strategic support and make management decisions to ensure that the ICSPA project remains on track. Also, the role of the PMB was the approval of project annual work plans and reports. The Speakers of the Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga

are co-chairing meetings of the PMB together with the UNDP Resident Representative / UN Resident Coordinator. In addition to the two Co-Chairs, the membership of the PMB includes all the funding donors to the Project, representatives of UNDP and the UN Mission in Afghanistan and the CTA. Donor representation is at the Ambassador level. The ICSPA project document envisaged that the PMB would convene once every three months or as often as may be necessary. Hence, the meetings of the PMB finally took place once per year due to the high-rank level of participants. The high rank of partner engagement in turn provided impetus for the parliamentary leadership to implement politically challenging reforms

The Project's Technical Working Group (P-TWG) was established as the key thematic review body for ICSPA. The principal tasks of the P-TWG are to provide technical oversight, quality assurance advice and recommendations to the PMB on priorities deriving during the project implementation. In particular, the core tasks of the P-TWG are to review progress updates and provide technical feedback on management issues related to the project (e.g. changes to the budget and staffing structure; changes in the Risk Log, and monitoring of any escalation or realization of any risk; Monitoring; reporting, etc. The ICSPA project document envisaged bi-monthly meetings or as often as may be necessary. The P-TWG was organizing its meetings every six months.

The **Parliament's Donors Group** was established as a discussion forum for international stakeholders to discuss issues about the overall implementation of the Project and the UNDP-managed fund. Project Donor Group meetings were held 3-4 times per year.

Additionally, National Assembly Development Partner Coordination Meetings were organized annually led conjointly by the Secretaires General to ensure the alignment of partners support with the Parliament's priorities and avoid duplication.

Project implementation mechanism: At the operational level, the project document envisaged establishing the Project Management Unit (PMU), and the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) is leading it. The CTA's prime responsibility, as highlighted in the project document, is "to ensure the efficient planning and delivery of Project results and to ensure that the results are of satisfactory quality and delivered within budget and on time." Regarding reporting lines, the CTA reports to the Project Board through the UNDP Country Representative.

The two "technical" members of the PMU are responsible for implementing project activities, working in close collaboration with parliamentary counterparts. Working under the direct supervision of the Chief Technical Adviser and in close collaboration with peers in the relevant Secretariats, they are responsible for supporting and ensuring the timely implementation of activities. The tasks of the International Technical Specialist were related to monitoring, evaluation and reporting for the project (Quarterly and Annual Reports). On the substantive level, the expert is tasked to support National Assembly staff to coordinate stakeholders supporting Parliament (e.g., coordination with the USAID ALBA project and relevant parliamentary activities of UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF). In addition to technical support, the PMU envisaged an Administrative and Finance Officer and two translators (interpreters).

However, there were some challenges related to establishment and functioning of the PMU. The start of the ICSPA project was marked with the extensive recruitment process and a four-month delay in deployment of the CTA from the project start date (the ICSPA's first phase). Moreover, the National Technical Expert was recruited in February 2018, more than half a year after the second phase of the ICSPA project was approved.

During the first phase, an International Technical Expert was engaged who subsequently manifest insufficient competence and expertise for the position, resulting in underperformance. Another failure of the ICSPA project related to human resources/ establishment of the PMU was recruitment of an international Monitoring Expert: after one year of the M&E expert, the monitoring framework for the project was not established; in the second phase of the ICSPA project these two positions were fused into a P4 Technical Specialist position. However due to recruitment challenges related to the security situation the post remained vacant at the time of the evaluation.

The implementation of the project has relied heavily upon the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who has built a strong relationship with the leadership of both houses on the basis of mutual trust and respect. In principle, this relationship has been the most important factor contributing to successful project implementation. However, the downside of heavily relying upon the CTA's performance was during the period when there was no CTA, as all project activities were on hold.

The MTE finds that operational support to the ICSPA project provided by the UNDP office was somewhat inadequate. Some examples could be with extended procurement or ineffective recruitments- details will follow.

iii) Application of standard management procedures

Coordination of activities within the NAA: T In 2014, 2015 and 2016 the project assisted the Secretaries General to jointly organize and co-chair meetings of their development partners – including notably a USAID funded project (ALBA), UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and the National Democratic Institute. This was the first time since the National Assembly's inception in 2005 that the parliamentary leadership led meetings to coordinate the interventions of their development partners for themselves. Prior to this, the parliament asked UNDP to organize and lead coordination of their development partners. To further support national ownership, the project prepared Terms of Reference (TORs) and principles for development partner engagement with the Parliament in order to ensure that assistance is aligned with the Parliament's priorities, prevents duplication and is sustainable. Notably the coordination principles, adopted by all partners in May 2016, require that all partners submit their work plans as well as technical TORs for the procurement of goods and services to the Secretary Generals for approval prior to the implementation of activities or procurements so that the Parliament may ensure that equipment is technically compatible and also to enable them to budget the maintenance costs.

In addition, the Reform Action Plans developed by the National Parliament has provided the Secretaries General with an effective tool to ensure that partner support is aligned with their priorities and also for ensuring the sustainability of partner support interventions.

Project monitoring system: The ICSPA project has established a sound, results-oriented reporting procedure. It includes well-structured and comprehensive Annual Reports and Quarterly Progress Reports. The ICSPA project followed results-based reporting, clearly indicating progress towards the achievement of planned results/ targets and using proposed indicators from the Results and Resources Framework ((equivalent to a "logical framework" in the UNDP's programming structure) to measure the progress.

The ICSPA project has not established a sound monitoring system, although it was a requirement from the project document. This is related to the ongoing vacancy of the P4 position. The National Parliament's institutional development is inherently linked with numerous challenges and therefore the system to monitor progress is highly important and the project should continue its support in this area. The importance of the monitoring system would become more apparent in the context of possible growth of the ICSPA project and the adoption of the PSA: monitoring only activities, without considering broader context, could affect the quality of results.

Still, the basis for a sound monitoring system is established, as the RRF of the project contain sound indicators- the revision of the ICSPA project document in 2016 enabled that the indicators from the National Parliament's Reform Action Plans were adopted. All these indicators contain realistic and achievable benchmarks, baselines and targets for the planned period. The data sources provided were adequate and appropriate to validation progress and achievements. The analysis of project reports and meetings with the Project Team and representatives of the National Parliament has confirmed that data and sources of verification for these indicators are available. The majority of indicators for the ICSPA project are similar to those in the Reform Action Plans and the same sources of verification will be used.

The indicators are sex-disaggregated wherever possible and relevant. The ICSPA project designed alternative methods of data collection, aimed at facilitating the systematization of gender-disaggregated information. For instance, the ICSPA project drafted a perception survey, which included gender-focused questions in order to identify and properly assess gender dynamics and existing inequalities within the Parliament.

The Reform Action Plans of the National Parliament has established planned targets and milestones for the National Parliament to become a more effective parliamentary institution in delivering its services. The same targets and milestones are adopted by the ICSPA project (where relevant) and the project is regularly reporting progress towards target values. These target values are realistic and achievable within the timeframe of the ICSPA project.

Project reporting practice: The ICSPA project has established a sound, results-oriented reporting procedure. It includes well-structured and comprehensive Annual Reports and Quarterly Progress Reports. These progress reports provide information and reflect on the project activities, deliverables and results during the year, at the same time highlighting priorities for the forthcoming period. Of note, the project has produced quarterly reports although donor cost-sharing and trust-fund agreements require only annual reporting and despite the ongoing vacancy of the P4 specialist responsible for reporting¹. This vacancy has deflected from the project's ability to provide greater technical assistance to the parliament. The ICSPA project followed results-based reporting, clearly indicating progress towards the achievement of planned results/ targets and using proposed indicators from the Results and Resources Framework (equivalent to a "logical framework" in the UNDP's programming structure) to measure the progress.

Management of projects risks: Preparation/ design of the ICSPA project was linked to a substantive analysis of risks, which could affect the project at any point during the implementation. This was a rather substantive analysis and a sound risk management system was put in place. However, the security situation in Kabul has been deteriorating further. The 22 June 2015 Taliban attack directed at the Parliament building has had a traumatic impact on Parliament and project staff, which resulted in the suspension of project activities while staff was recovering. In 2016, important project national counterparts were murdered in Kabul or fled Afghanistan as refugees, including the Director of the Wolesi Jirga's Human Resource Department and the Director of the Wolesi Jirga's Gender Directorate. In January 2017, at least 30 parliament staff were killed and more than 70 injured in a twin bomb attack perpetrated by Taliban terrorists in front of the Afghan Parliament administrative building in Kabul. The attacks on the Afghan Parliament further exacerbated existing difficulties in recruiting or deploying qualified experts, consultants and staff for posts supporting the Parliament in Kabul. This included Experts from the Inter-Parliamentary Union who subsequently cancelled planned missions to Kabul.

The ICSPA's intervention logic was updated to support the NP's leadership in implementing the reforms identified in the Parliament's Reform Action Plans, while at the same time considering relevant circumstances and risks in the external environment.

In addition, the ICSPA project adopted various security measures, such as, for instance, authorizing alternative work modalities, installation of a safe room at the Parliament and formulation of security-related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Parliament. In the absence of meetings with Parliament officials, the UNDP staff were also authorized to work remotely from the UN compound. All these measures granted flexibility in the completion of activities despite substantiated threats.

iv. Budget status and delivery of project funds

The resources available for implementation of the ICSPA project, which were made available in timely manner, correspond to the needs of the action and to the planned/ implemented activities. Some examples could be: procurement of IT equipment and a camera system for the main parliamentary session room are based on the feasibility study and construction/ installation plans. Planning and budget allocation for procurement of goods were based on a market study. The remuneration system is based on the UNDP salary scale, including a percentage for staff security. The funds were available on time and there were no significant delays that affected timely delivery of results.

Payment to UNDP was in line with the Financing Agreements that were effective from the start of the project. DFID and UNDP funds were available from the start of the ICSPA project in 2014 and will cover the entire project implementation phase. German funds were planned for the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016. However, as a no-cost extension was approved, these funds will be available until June 2017. The European Union Trust Fund agreement in support of the project is valid from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017.

¹ This is currently a UNDP Country Office requirement for projects

4.3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the relationship between the planned and achieved results of the project; it could be considered as a measure of the extent to which the project results have contributed towards the achievement of the project purpose (alias specific objectives).

The MTE finds that the ICSPA project was effective in achieving all planned results; while in some areas even exceeding the expected results. UNDP's long-term involvement with the National Parliament through the projects SEAL I and SEAL II and the contribution of the other project partners to Afghanistan's governance system, has ensured substantive insight and demand-driven support to the National Parliament. In addition, the effectiveness of the program has relied heavily on the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who has built a strong relationship with the leadership of both houses, based on mutual trust and respect.

Some of the key results that the ICSPA project achieved are:

- Both Houses of the National Parliament prepared the self-assessment in October 2015 and finalized the follow-up to Reform Action Plans in February 2016. The Secretary Generals (SGs) to both houses and their teams were leading the development of self-assessment reports and the preparation of the Reform Action Plans (RAPs). The fact that the SGs have led the self assessment process and preparation of the Reform Action Plans with project support has created a real sense of ownership and the desire to speed ahead with the implementation of the identified priorities. The regular engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has secured the additional commitment of the SGs: they have been able to make presentations on their progress and challenges to the IPU's Association of Secretaries General in Parliaments (ASGP) while also improving their knowledge of parliamentary best practices.
- The ICSPA project provided support to the leadership of the National Parliament to begin implementing politically challenging reforms. Some of the most notable achievements are publishing MP attendance records, fining and suspending MPs for non-attendance, reducing the number of committees to increase efficiency. It also included improved system to share information about the Parliament's functions and functioning, structures and proceedings. This information is available to the public through the national media and the Parliament's website;
- The ICSPA project in partnership with the IPU provided the National Parliament with technical assistance to design a Parliamentary Service Act. The central objective of the Act is to set the basis towards ensuring the autonomy of parliament staff from the Executive branch in alignment with international parliamentary best practice as well as towards establishing a sustainable human resource base required for its long-term institutional development;
- The ICSPA project assisted in instituting critical security-related improvements of the National Parliament - this was especially needed to mitigate attacks against the Parliament and its staff.
- The project started work on establishing the required ICT infrastructure (local area network and media pool). The objective is to improve transparency by sharing parliamentary documentation and information with the media and the public as well as between departments and also to improve the financial, administrative, procurement and human resource work-flow processes;
- The ICSPA project provided the Gender Directorates in both Houses with support to clarify their job functions and prepare workplans with realistic targets they may help the parliament to achieve by working in partnership with other parliamentary departments rather than in isolation;
- The project supported the National Parliament in establishing a Secretary General-led Meshrano Jirga ICT governance group. The role of this group is to plan, coordinate department needs and ensure the compatibility and sustainability of its ICT infrastructure (including budgeting);
- In the context of project implementation, the UNDP Security Unit carried out a security assessment of the Parliament, which led to the drafting of specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), staff training and the identification of security gaps.
- To ensure greater transparency in the work of the Meshrano Jirga and Wolesi Jirga, the ICSPA project assisted with setting their You Tube pages, through which the Parliament's Departments for Information and Public Relations share plenary session proceedings with the public;

Analysis of ICSPA effectiveness

A full analysis of the framework at the levels of both project purpose and results is given in the following tables.

	Intended Outputs	Indicators (including Baselines and targets)	Assumptions
	Output 1: Political processes are more inclusive and representative institutions are enabled to hold government more accountable at all levels	Indicator 1.1. Progress towards meeting IPU benchmarks for democratically elected legislatures Baseline: Legislature does not meet any IPU benchmark (2013) Target: 50% IPU benchmarks are met	
Analysis of the CPD Output and its verification	The MTE finds that this output is relevant for the project. The ultimate objective of ICSPA project is to support both houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance. Functional and independent Parliament will ensure that the more accountable government at all levels.	<p>The Indicator 1.1. is measurable and directly correlated to the Outputs 1. However, the MTE could not find information, value or measurable scale for the IPU benchmarks as such. The Inter-Parliamentary Union makes clear reference to a democratic parliament, as representative of the political will and social diversity of the population, and is active in its legislative and oversight functions, at national and international level. Crucially, it is also transparent, accessible and accountable to the citizens that it represents.</p> <p>These core values are set out in IPU's ground-breaking study Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice. This document provide the basis to understand and analyse democratic parliament, that is representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective. The study argues through examples put forward by parliaments themselves that a strong parliament is one that puts these values into practice (http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/democracy_en.pdf) .</p> <p>Using these principles and values, the IPU has defined the self assessment framework. http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/self-e.pdf</p> <p>However, none of these documents provided clear and definition and values for the IPU benchmarks.</p>	No assumptions at this level
Validation of specific	The analysis of the essential elements of the legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance shows that it is the range of processes through which a society reaches consensus on and implements regulations, human rights, laws, policies and social structures—in pursuit of justice and human rights, welfare, and		

objective from evaluation evidence	<p>environmental protection. Policies and legislation are agreed on and carried out by many institutions: the legislature, judiciary, executive branch and formal and informal organizations of civil society. Considering this, in this sense, democratic governance for human development brings to the fore the question of how a society organizes itself to ensure equality (of opportunity) and equity (social and economic justice) for all citizens. It stresses both the outcomes and processes of governance because the policy-making process is as important as its result. Rooted in a rights-based approach to help governments and citizens fulfil their commitments and obligations, it promotes constructive interaction among the three governance actors, and it is infused with the principles of good governance. The principles at the heart of good governance are the same as those at the heart of democracy: Equity; Participation; Pluralism; Partnership; Subsidiarity; Transparency; Accountability; Rule of law; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Responsiveness; Sustainability</p> <p>The ICSPA project is working to support the establishment of good governance in Afghanistan, by mainstreaming and promoting all principles of good governance in all its activities. This is confirmed in the primary goal of the ICSPA project: "to assist the two houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan (Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga), within the Afghan Parliament's constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance."</p>		
	Intended Outputs	Indicators (including Baselines and targets)	Assumptions
	Output 1: Self-assessment framework and Reform Action Plan developed for and adopted by Parliament	<p>Indicator 1.1 - Availability and use of a Self-Assessment Framework for Parliament</p> <p>Baseline 1.1 - No self-assessment process undertaken by Parliament since it first convened in 2005</p> <p>Target 1.1. Core Project Team established; Self-Assessment Framework designed and implemented, in collaboration with Parliament</p> <p>Indicator 1.2 - A Reform Action Plan developed and implemented</p> <p>Baseline1.2 - No institutional development plan exists for Parliament</p> <p>Target 1.2. Self-assessment framework rolled-out and implemented</p> <p>Indicator 1.3 - Continuing collaboration of Parliament with UNDP and its experts on self-assessment</p> <p>Target 1.3. The outcome of self-assessment adopted by Parliament, and the Reform Action Plan developed and institutionalized</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests 2. Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament 3. Parliament builds capacity in these areas 4. MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament's efforts 5. UNDP able to recruit and deploy high quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner 6. UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output 1
Analysis of the Output and its verification	As proposed here, the Output 1. is directly linked with the Objective 1. The self-assessment is a starting point to for a comprehensive organizational development of the Parliament towards	Indicators are weak as they only communicate the process ("something has happened") but not the result of the process and the relationship/ measure of the objective ("what has happened and	The assumptions established at the level at the Output 1 are reasonable. Still, these assumptions are rather general and broad and refer to all elements of the intervention logic.

	more inclusive and representative institution.	<p>whether what has happened is an important measure of the objectives). These indicators could be considered as targets.</p> <p>The Indicator 1.2. envisaged that the RAP is developed and implemented and this is not part of the self-assessment process.</p> <p>The targets are just linked to the indicators.</p>	The MTE finds that the Assumptions 5 and 6 are prerequisites, required conditions, to initiate the project.
Validation of the output from evaluation evidence	<p>The MTE finds that the Output 1 was implemented effectively. The project developed a self-assessment framework to analyse secretariat functions of the Parliament. This tailor-made approach supported by the ICSPA project was based to the extent possible on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's self-assessment toolkit. However, the IPU self-assessment framework strives to evaluate the political functions of parliament primarily driven by MPs and Senators. Therefore, the ICSPA project introduced changes and further elaborated the areas relevant to the Afghan Parliament secretariat departments and directorates.</p> <p>As it was highlighted by the ICSPA project "the self-assessment process, rather than a needs assessment, has importantly permit the leadership to identify areas requiring reforms which they are now committed to implementing". Through an entirely self-led process the project supported the heads of each department and their staff in both houses to complete extensive reviews of secretariat performance as well as formulate recommendations at their own pace. The ICSPA project was effective in providing technical assistance during the departmental and directorate self-assessments: experts deployed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and a Senior Committee Clerk on secondment from the British House of Commons together with the CTA were the central technical node during the process.</p> <p>The departmental and directorate self-assessment reports prepared from January through end-June 2015 were compiled and adopted by the Secretaries General and their heads of department in October 2015 (with the delay between the two a result of the end-June Taliban attack on the Afghan Parliament). The actual implementation exceeded originally planned timeframe and schedule. However, self-assessment is always time consuming exercise, whereby the importance of the process is as important as the end results. Therefore, involving all employees and enhancing national ownership was in the center of the approach.</p> <p>Assumptions established at the level of the Output 1.1 were well identified; these are key factors that are external to the project, but which represent conditions that must be met if the project is to succeed. Assumptions should be closely monitored: therefore, the project conducted a thorough project appraisal during the starting months to identify if the assumptions are still holding true. The MTE finds that the assumption 2: Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament is crucial for sustainability of the project results and is almost an objective to achieve.</p>		

	<p>Output 2: Staffing and financial management capacity of the Parliament enhanced</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1.1 - Revised Parliamentary staffing structure approved by the, Ministry of Finance and Civil Service Commission</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.2 - Optimal Parliament staffing, with the academe and other providers as a ready human resource pool for recruitment to the Parliament</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.3 Favorable perception of Parliament staff towards working with the Parliament on the following dimensions (as measured through an annual staff survey): Parliament as employer; Staff engagement; Business process efficiency</p> <p>Baseline 2.1 - Attrition of competent and development-oriented Secretariat staff is a continuing problem</p> <p>Target 2.1. Comprehensive and integrated Human Resource Development Plan for Parliament established</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Project Document has been revised based on both the PEA and the self-assessment exercise. 2. Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests 3. Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament 4.. Parliament builds capacity in these areas 5. MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament's efforts 6. UNDP able to recruit and deploy high quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner 7. UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output 2
		<p>Indicator 2.2.1 - A comprehensive Human Resources Development Plan formulated</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.2 - Number and quality of HR practices and processes improved (e.g., annual self-survey; recruitment manuals; capacity building plans; gender action plans; etc.)</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.3 - The extent to which institutional plans are developed and implemented (e.g., Reform Action Plan and other cross-cutting-departmental plans); and number of SoPs</p> <p>Baseline 2.2 - No comprehensive Human Resources Development Plan developed</p> <p>Target 2.2. Parliament's Financial Management System improved</p>	

		<p>Indicator 2.3.1 - Improved number and quality of budgeting, financial management, procurement and auditing processes observed by and for Parliament</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.2 - Parliament operates pursuant to its own, independent administrative regulations governing its financial management system, with full optimum capacity and control over its Budget</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.3 – Robust budget submissions tabled to the Ministry of Finance</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.4 - The auditor’s favorable opinions on the Parliament’s operational management</p> <p>Baseline 2.3 - The financial management system - budgeting, accounting, auditing and procurement - being observed by and for Parliament is inconsistent, unreliable, and non-compliant with existing national legislation and applicable international standards</p> <p>Target 2.3. Robust budget submissions by Parliament tabled to the Ministry of Finance</p>	
<p>Analysis of the Output and its verification</p>	<p>There is a link between this output and the UNDP CPD Output.</p> <p>The output is addressing core elements of the organization- the financial management and human resources. Hence, its achievement will strengthen organizational and functional capacities of the National Assembly of Afghanistan.</p>	<p>The MTE finds that the indicators are adequate and appropriate to measure progress in the specific areas related the Output.</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 are defined within a context of improvement of organizational aspects of human resources within the National Assembly of Afghanistan. Still, indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 could be merged in one indicator related to availability of the organizational chart, with well defined positions.</p> <p>Indicators 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 are well-established and serve the purpose to measure progress in establishment of a sound human resources management system. The indicator 2.2.1 (A comprehensive Human Resources Development Plan formulated) could be defined as yes/no indicator, although it could be a target. The target 2.2 Parliament’s Financial Management System improved is not linked with the indicators under 2.2 mark.</p>	<p>The assumptions established at the level at the Output 3 are copied from the Output 2.</p> <p>Some of the important assumptions for the achievement of this output were not identified. Examples could be: i) Leadership of the NAA remains committed to reforms; or ii) International development partners recognize importance of organizational development of the NAA and are ready to coordinate its activities; iii) Reform priorities are clearly formulated and sufficient resources are allocated to their implementation...</p>

		<p>The Indicator 2.3.1 - Improved number and quality of budgeting, financial management, procurement and auditing processes observed by and for Parliament is appropriate indicator, and well- defined. However, the indicator 2.3.2. (“Parliament operates pursuant to its own, independent administrative regulations governing its financial management system, with full optimum capacity and control over its Budget”), is a expected target related to the indicator 2.3.1. The Indicator 2.3.3. Robust budget submissions tabled to the Ministry of Finance is identical with the Target 2.3. Robust budget submissions tabled to the Ministry of Finance</p> <p>Another challenge is that sources of verification were not provided to validate indicators and follow on the progress towards the achievement of the targets.</p>	
Validation of the output from evaluation evidence	<p>During the first phase of the ICSPA project there were no activities organized within this output. It was envisaged, however, that the activities will be programmed and implemented under this output following adoption of the Parliament’s Reform Action Plan.</p> <p>The ICSPA project provided assistance to preparation of the Reform Action Plan, as the basis for introduction of a sound financial management and more appropriate system for management of human resources. Support to this output has accordingly been operationalized through the revised (phase II) project document.</p>		
	<p>Output 3: Capacity of Parliament’s leadership to undertake reforms enhanced</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1.1 – The Regulations on Internal Duties (as amended) clearly state the powers and functions available to Parliament, and who may exercise them</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.2 – High level of engagement and awareness of the leadership of both Houses in leading the reform process</p> <p>Baseline 3.1 - Weak RoP and low level of engagement by Parliament leadership offices, the Office of SGs and the Committee of Chairs in leading the reform and institutional development process</p> <p>Target 3.1. Ability of parliamentary leadership to champion reforms strengthened</p> <p>Indicator 3.2.1 – The extent to which the leadership efficiently and effectively coordinates external assistance to Parliament (measured</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Project Document has been revised based on both the PEA and the self-assessment exercise. 2. Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests 3. Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament 4. Parliament builds capacity in these areas 5. MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament’s efforts 6. UNDP able to recruit and deploy high quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner

		<p>through the number of donor meetings, quality of minutes, agenda and follow up action points)</p> <p>Baseline 3.2- Parliament's role in coordination of stakeholder activities needs to be strengthened</p> <p>Target 3.2. Parliament's capacity to manage stakeholders' activities strengthened</p>	7. UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output 3
Analysis of the Output and its verification	<p>This output is well-defined and directly linked with other two outputs and with the CPD Output.</p> <p>Organizational development and change management in organization is inherently linked with the commitment and readiness and finally the capacity of its leadership to define and implement reforms. Therefore, development of capacities of the Parliament's leadership to grasp and pursue reforms remain high priority..</p>	<p>The MTE finds that the indicators require some adjustment to adequately measure progress in enhancing capacities of the Parliament's leadership for reforms.</p> <p>For example- indicator 3.1.2 intends to measure "a high level of engagement and awareness of the leadership". Determining if the level of engagement and awareness is high remains challenging. This is becoming even more difficult as the baseline is identified as "low level of engagement". Therefore, more appropriate would be if the Indicator 3.1.2 is reformulated "Increase in engagement and awareness of the leadership of both houses in leading the reform process- measured through number of implementation of reform activities from the RAP".</p> <p>The indicator 3.2.1 is adequate to measure increase in capacities of the leadership of the Parliament to coordinate international development assistance. The proposed "units"- the number of donor meetings, quality of minutes, agenda and follow up action points as appropriate to reflect on progress within this indicator.</p>	<p>The assumptions established at the level at the Output 3 are almost identical to the assumptions for the Output 1. Even though these assumptions are resonable, the MTE finds that they are more appropriate for the CPD Output.</p> <p>Some of the assumptions relevant for the Output 2 could be: i) Leadership and staff of both houses are committed to work on improvement of human resource and financial management; or ii) Employees from the NAA are well-informed and participate in programs related to improvement of human resources</p> <p>The proposed assumption 1 is a target. The MTE finds that the Assumptions 5 and 6 are prerequisites, required conditions, to initiate the project.</p>
Validation of the output from evaluation evidence	<p>The MTE finds that the project was effective in addressing capacity gaps and providing technical assistance to boost reform abilities of the leadership of both houses of the Parliament. Some of the most significant achievements, as reported by the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the departmental/ organizational self-assessment process, the ICSPA project provided assistance to establish accountability mechanism. The structure involved the Administrative Boards in both Houses, the Secretaries General and the Speakers of the Parliament. This approach enhanced the triangulation of information required for ensuring its accuracy and relevance while also raising awareness about the main issues among the parliamentary leadership; The Secretaries General became aware of the key challenges of the departments- high-staff turnover was the primary impediment to sustainable strengthening of the departments. The need for preparation and adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act was highlighted as the crucial element for sustainable functioning of the Parliament 		

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Secretaries General engaged with their peers through the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) to share lessons learned on how to deal with Member interference in internal administration, procurement and recruitment related decisions; Members abuse of parliament staff; or political interference obstructing the SGs from publishing Member attendance or voting records. The Secretaries General made presentations of the key issues they face and engaged with their peers on potential solutions through the ASGP meetings at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies (in March and October 2015). The MTE finds that these meetings were important to further enhance commitment to reform of the Secretaries General; this was moral support and motivation to continue to pursue implementation of reforms in accordance with international best practice, as their peers explained that they faced the same issues;• The ICSPA project provided support to the Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga International Relations Department staff to work together to prepare a single database of development partners supporting both Houses; identifying their areas of support; compiling contact details; and establishing archives of development partner support to both Houses. This was an important step towards the establishment of sound coordination mechanism for implementation of the Reform Action Plan.• The project supported the Secretaries General and their staff to organize and co-chair the Parliament's first Development Partner meeting in over five years. It was the first time that the Parliament called and led a meeting of their development partners for themselves. |
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ICSPA 2016-2019 (revised document)

Outputs	Benchmarks	
	Indicators and baselines	Annual Targets
Output 1: Secretariats are strengthened to support law-making and oversight functions, including plenary, committee work, legislative and policy research.	Indicator 1.1 Availability of information (facilitated by the Secretariats) to CSOs/ constituents/ media; and Members prior to debate and votes: (a) MP attendance and absences from plenary sessions (b) upcoming parliamentary business (c) Parliamentary Papers (d) Voting records Baseline 1.1 Low. (a) No, (b) No, (c) No, (d) No.	2016: Medium-Low (a) Yes, (b) No, (c) No, (d) No. 2017: Medium (a) Yes, (b) Yes, (c) Yes (d) Yes 2018: High. Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership 2019: High. Continued support based on the project's annual workplan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership
	Indicator 1.2 (a) Level of ability of Library/Archives and Research departments to deliver services in a timely and professional manner (scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)) (b) # of policies in place governing relevant libraries/archives Baseline 1.2 (a). 1: Low. (b) 0 policies	2016: Audio-visual records digitally available to Members and the public 2017: (a) 3. Key parliamentary records are sustainably retained in digital archives and available to committee and research staff (b) 4(four) policies in place 2018: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership 2019 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership
	Indicator 1.3 Level of / functionality of Secretariats as confirmed by the Administrative Board and the Chairs Committee; as well as annual staff survey results (scale of 1-5, low-high) Baseline 1.3 low (1). Efficient and effective functioning of both Houses impeded by Members' failure to respect impartial nature of Secretariats	2016: (medium-low): Existence of a Code of Conduct for Members that provides standards for ethical conduct including related to conflict of interest. 2017: (medium) Members trained to understand the conduct expected of them as elected and accountable representatives 2018: (Medium-high) Members trained to understand the conduct expected of them as elected and accountable representatives 2019: Members trained to understand the conduct expected of them as elected and accountable representatives and acting accordingly.

Comments on output:

There is a link between this output and the UNDP CPD Output. The support that is envisaged within this output represents the core of the organizational development of the Parliament. The assistance under this output will strive to enhance law-making and oversight functions of the NAA. Some of the areas that will be addressed are plenary, committee work, legislative and policy research.

Comments on indicators:

The MTE finds that the Indicators under the Output 1 are relevant and adequate to measure improvements in implementation of the law-making and oversight functions of the NAA. The activities and improvements are expected at the levels of plenary sessions, committee work, legislative and policy research practices.

Additional value of these indicators is that they were selected from the Reform Action Plan, with clear reference to the specific areas for institutional development of the National Assembly.

However, the RRF did not provide sources of verification to validate indicators, and this issue requires attention of the PMU/ CTA.

The Indicator 1.1 measures transparency and accountability of the NAA, focusing on timely availability of some of the core information related to the work of the Parliament- e.g. MP attendance and absences from plenary sessions and voting records and different parliamentary papers. Targets for 2016 and 2017 are realistic and achievable.

The indicator 1.2 strives to measure the “level of ability of Library/Archives and Research departments to deliver services in a timely and professional manner,” with a proposed scale from 1 to 5. However, in the absence of the sources of verification, it is becoming increasingly difficult to conclude the approach to measure and validate this level of ability. Furthermore, a certain mismatch between the indicator and the targets remain. The second part of the indicator 1.2 measurable and looks at the number of policies in place governing relevant libraries/archives.

The two-fold Indicator 1.3 aims to measure level of / functionality of Secretariats- the intention was to validate this through the statements/ confirmation by the Administrative Board and the Chairs Committee. it also includes dimension that derives from the results of the annual staff survey results (scale of 1-5, low-high). In the absence of the sources of verification it is not clear the approach to validate these indicators. The issue remains the roles and frequency in commissioning staff surveys; at the same time, it is questionable the degree of neutrality and impartiality of the statements of the Administrative Board and the Charis Committee re functioning of the Secretariats. The targets are well established and could be validated.

Comments on targets:

The MTE finds that the targets for 2016 and for 2017 were realistic and achievable. Targets for 2018 and 2019 are rather broad and general- adjustments would be required during 2017 to reflect better priorities for the project and expected deliverables.

Comments on assumptions:

The project document included number of assumptions at the level of this Output:

- Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests
- Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament
- Parliament builds capacity in these areas

- MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC, and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament's efforts
- UNDP able to recruit and deploy highlight quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner
- UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output

As indicated in the previous paragraphs, these assumptions are at the level of the project outcome- not at the level of this output. Two last assumptions are more conditions internal to the project- prerequisite to initiate this intervention.

Validation of the achievements under the Output 1 (from the MTE perspective)

In the absence of the annual progress report for 2016, the MTE was using quarterly progress reports and validated findings during the field mission. The MTE finds that the ICSPA project was effective towards the achievement of this output.

Some of the key achievements that are contributing to greater transparency of the NAA are:

The Wolessi Jirga's is regularly publishing MP attendance records. The availability of this information facilitates greater transparency in the work of the NAA and enables the management of the NAA to implement the rules of procedure and pursuing fines for the MPs non-attendance.

Additionally, following support and advice from the ICSPA project, the parliamentary leadership agreed to increase transparency by i) publishing the weekly parliamentary agendas (the Order Papers) on the parliament's websites in advance; ii) publishing up-to-date Admin Board, MP, Senator and parliamentary committee composition and contact details on the websites; iii) creating You Tube channels for each House, with daily uploads of plenary session proceedings to keep the public better informed of the parliament's work.

The publication of the weekly parliamentary agenda importantly allows MPs time to consider and prepare for plenary sessions in advance as well as for CSOs and the media to raise concerns with Members before the debate.

The ICSPA project has prepared the initial Archive Policy for the Parliament; this is for the first time that to propose and adopt sound approach to capture, codify and archive information and documents that the NAA is producing. The ICSPA project is working on preparation of the Code of Conduct for Members that will provide standards for ethical conduct including related to conflict of interest. These deliverables were planned for 2016; however, the delay was due to belated start of the second phase of the project.

Output	Indicators and baselines	Annual Targets
Output 2: Human Resources, Administration, Finance, Procurement and Internal Audit capacity of Secretariats is strengthened to better manage resources and provide effective and equitable support to operational functions.	Indicator 2.1 Existence of a Parliamentary Service Act that provides for parliamentary staffing autonomy from the Executive and Amendments to the Rules of Procedures in both Houses proposed Baseline 2.1 No. (Afghan Parliament secretariat staff are members of the civil service subject to management by the Government. The Executive must confirm appointments of all heads of parliamentary departments. The lack of autonomy of parliament staff from the government undermines their ability to support Members in effectively fulfilling their oversight duties.)	2016 Yes

	<p>Indicator 2.2 Existence of Conditions of Service for the Parliamentary Service; and subsequent human resource policies and strategies Baseline 2.2 No.</p>	<p>2016: No (partial) 2017: Yes.</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.3. % of staff that declares itself satisfied with parliament as an employer <u>Baseline 2.3</u> TBD July 2016.</p>	<p>2016: TBD. July. 2017: TBD X% based on results of the baseline 2018: TBD X% based on results of the baseline 2019: TBD X% based on results of the baseline</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.4 Efficiency of the systems in place to facilitate inter-departmental financial transactions and preparation of secretariat financial reports in both Houses (scale of 1-5, low-high) <u>Baseline 2.4</u> Low (1) While the departments of finance use the national AFMIS for reporting on institution level expenditures, no systems are in place to facilitate in-house transactions or preparation of detailed internal financial reports</p>	<p>2017: medium-low (2) Automated systems in place to facilitate inter-departmental financial transactions 2018: Medium (3) Secretaries General and parliamentary leadership informed of parliamentary financial autonomy practices and structural options, including checks and balances 2018: TBD 2019: TBD</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.5 Existence of legislation for the financial autonomy of Parliament (Yes/No) <u>Baseline 2.5</u> NO</p>	<p>2016 N/A 2017 Yes. Development of a draft Financial Autonomy of Parliament Act, as required 2018: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership 2019: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.6 Level of functionality of the Heads of the Gender Units in each House to take actions to improve the equitable management of resources and support to staff (1-5) <u>Baseline 2.6</u> Low (1) The Gender units lack clear terms of reference outlining their roles and responsibilities. As a result they are unable to</p>	<p>2016: 2 Heads of the Gender Units have clarity on their roles and responsibilities; as well as clear unit objectives and targets against which to work 2017: Medium 3. Continued support to the Gender Units based on their unit targets and objectives in accordance with the Reform Action Plan</p>

	set targets and objectives against which to promote equitable management of resources and policies.	<p>2018: Continued support to the Gender Units based on their unit targets and objectives in accordance with the Reform Action Plan</p> <p>2019: Continued support to the Gender Units based on their unit targets and objectives in accordance with the Reform Action Plan</p>
	<p>Indicators 2.7 #/type of systems and policies in place to permit effective control over assets as well as efficient procurement free from conflict of interest</p> <p><u>Baseline 2.7</u> 0 (Inventory lists are prepared manually in hard copy; assets are not individually tagged; no central electronic repository exists with names and contact details of suppliers in either House; no electronic system linkages exist between the procurement and other departments, including budget and finance, through which to share documents or information required to prepare procurement plans)</p>	<p>2017: 3 (All assets in the Meshrano Jirga are tagged with inventory numbers and valued; Conflict of Interest policies; Common document management system)</p> <p>2018: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership</p> <p>2019: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership</p>

Comments on output:

There is a link between this output and the UNDP CPD Output. The output is aiming to enforce central operational and support functions of the NAA- human resources, administration, finance, procurement and internal audit of Secretariats. This output is therefore in the centre of organization development of the Parliament and its two houses.

Comments on indicators:

The MTE finds that the indicators are relevant, measurable and appropriate to measure progress against this output. Still the MTE would like to make comments on the indicators, the quality and eventual requirements for fine-tuning.

Indicator 2.1 is linked to the Parliamentary Service Act, as the pillar for institutional sustainability, financial and operational independence of the Parliament. Still, this indicator rightly measures the existence of the PSA (yes/no indicator), but not its adoption and implementation. The indicator 2.2 is focused on the Conditions of Service for the Parliamentary Service; and subsequent human resource policies and strategies- this is a valid and appropriate indicator to measure progress in the area of administration and human resources within the Parliament.

Indicator 2.3 measures staff perception about the Parliament as the employer, their satisfaction with the content and the quality of the work space. These surveys are adequate and in many ways most appropriate tools to analyze if the policies and practices within the organization facilitate greater satisfaction of employees. Initial staff survey of the Parliament showed that 74% of Wolesi Jirga professional staff surveyed (204 staff) were satisfied with the Parliament as an employer (18% were dissatisfied and 8% did not respond); while 78% of Meshrano Jirga professional surveyed (134 staff) were satisfied (19% were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied and 3% did not respond).

Indicators 2.4 and 2.5 are related to the financial management of the Parliament. The indicator 2.4 is focused on the efficiency of the finance management practices within the Parliament; in the context of the high financial unpredictability and lack of sustainable finances for the Parliament improvement of the efficiency side remains possible priority area. The MTE finds that this indicator is adequate and relevant. The focus of the indicator 2.5 is on the existence of the legislation for the financial autonomy of Parliament- the MTE finds that this indicator is relevant, although it could be observed as an objective to achieve.

The indicator 2.6 intends to measure the “level of functionality of the Heads of the Gender Units” expressed through their capacities to take actions to improve the equitable management of resources and support to staff. The MTE finds it is not clear what “equitable management of resources and support to staff” entails; furthermore, the level of functionality is difficult to measure. Therefore, this indicator requires adjustments to ensure that the gender related activities are better captured and measured.

The indicator 2.7 encompasses two distinct categories: it intends to measure number and type of systems and policies in place to permit effective control over assets”, while the second category it relates is “efficient procurement free from conflict of interest.” Although the proposed targets (for 2017, 2018 and 2019) could serve to validate/ monitor this indicator and the progress, the MTE finds that this indicator would require revision and further adjustments.

Comments on assumptions:

The project document included number of assumptions at the level of output 2:

- Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests
- Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament
- Parliament builds capacity in these areas
- MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC, and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament’s efforts
- UNDP able to recruit and deploy highlight quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner
- UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output 2

As indicated in the previous paragraphs, these assumptions are at the level of the project outcome- not at the level of this output.

Two last “assumptions” are not real assumptions (external to the project but required for project implementation); these are actually preconditions, internal to the project. These preconditions must be in place in order to initiate and implement the project.

Validation of the achievements under the Output 2 (from the MTE perspective)

The MTE finds that the ICSPA project is well-progressing towards the achievement of this output and some of the main achievements within this output are:

- preparation of a Parliamentary Service Act, that is instrumental in ensuring an autonomous parliamentary service. The MTE finds that the PSA provides the legislative framework for establishing an autonomous Parliamentary Service with sustainable human resources base and finances capacitated to deliver services and implement effective government oversight;
- the project supported the departments of Human Resources to administer a perception survey to staff in both Houses. The involvement and oversight of the project team in the collection and compilation of survey results reassured parliament staff of transparency and non-retaliation for their providing honest feedback;
- the project supported the Meshrano Jirga to establish an ICT Governance Group (working group) comprised of all department directors and chaired by the Secretary General to prepare Terms of Reference for development of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system in Dari and Pashto to streamline workflow process between the departments parliamentary with a sustainable human resource base. An electronic inventory and tagging system for all assets is being included in the terms of reference for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) planning system being developed by the ICT Governance Groups with project support

- the project supported the Director of the Meshrano Jirga Gender Unit to review and better understand her role as well as to define activities that would better contribute to targets in the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan, through which her unit was established. To date the Gender Unit's work has focused exclusively on organizing workshops supporting the development of an Enterprise Resource Planning system to improve workflow processes in all departments, including electronic inventories of assets;

Output 3: Representative role reinforced through support for improved communication and outreach capacities

Indicator 3.1.a. Existence of ICT Governance Groups in both Houses that plan for and manage ICT systems. (this is a pure Yes/No indicator)

Baseline 3.1 No (There is no internal parliament management of or planning for ICT needs, maintenance or compatibility.)

Indicator 3.1.b. Existence of ICT system to permit inter-connectivity and sharing of documents between departments and the public

Baseline 3.2 No.

Indicator 3.2 Availability of Parliamentary documentation and plenary and committee proceeding coverage to the public and journalists

Baseline 3.2 No. (The Departments of Public Information and Relations do not systematically share press releases or parliamentary documentation with the public or journalists due to limited means of electronic communication; committee proceedings are not captured or shared with the public in either House; the Meshrano Jirga has no means of providing journalists and media outlets with digital feeds of plenary proceedings)

2016 3.1.a.1 Yes

2017 3.1.a.2 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2018 3.1.a.3 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2016 3.1.b.1 YES

2017 3.1.b.2 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2018 3.1.b.3 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2019 3.1.b.4 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2016 Yes. media database; Parliament of Afghanistan You Tube pages; media pool in the Meshrano Jirga

2017: Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

2018 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership

		2019 Continued support based on the project's annual work plan prepared in accordance with the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and annual priorities set by the parliamentary leadership
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Comments on the elements of intervention logic
Comments on output:

There is a link between this output 3 and higher-rank objectives (the UNDP CPD Output and UNDAF outcome). This output is designed to address some of the weaknesses related to the overall communication capacities of the Parliament, identified during the formulation/ situation assessment phase. Therefore, this output aims to reinforce Parliament's representative role, through strengthening its communication channels and options and enforcing its outreach abilities. The MTE finds that this output contributes to the organizational and functional development of the Parliament.

Comments on indicators:

The MTE finds that the indicators 3.1.a and 3.1.b are relevant; however, these indicators measure and capture a just limited aspect of the progress towards the achievement of the output. The indicator 3.1.a is a clear Yes/ No indicator, and it refers to the existence of ICT Governance Groups in both Houses that plan for and manage ICT systems. Therefore, after the institutionalization of the ICT group, this indicator becomes obsolete, and targets for 2017 and 2018 are not valid.

Similarly, the indicator 3.1.b is a “yes-no” and focuses on the existence of the ICT system. With the establishment of the ICT system, this indicator will become out of date and irrelevant. The targets for 2017, 2018 and 2019 are not valid.

Hence, there is a need to introduce indicators that will measure relations between the ICT systems and improvements in organizational processes and delivery of services.

Indicator 3.1.b. Existence of ICT system to permit inter-connectivity and sharing of documents between departments and the public

The indicator 3.2 is related to improved transparency in the work of the Parliament; and the measure is availability of Parliamentary documentation and plenary and committee proceeding coverage. The MTE finds that this is a relevant and adequate indicator. The intention is that the Departments of Public Information and Relations systematically share press releases or parliamentary documentation with the public or journalists and enhance means of electronic communication. Also, committee proceedings will be captured or shared with the public. Still, it is recommended to measure other dimensions related to transparency of the work of the Parliament.

Comments on assumptions:

The project document identified several assumptions at the level of the Output 3:

- Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests
- Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament
- Parliament builds capacity in these areas
- MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC, and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament's efforts
- UNDP able to recruit and deploy highlight quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner
- UNDP and Parliament agree on the activities to be undertaken in pursuit of Output 3

As indicated in the previous paragraphs, these assumptions are provided for the previous two outputs (Output 1 and Output 2) and the MTE finds that these assumptions are more appropriate for the achievement of the outcome and less for the achievement of output.

Two last “assumptions” are actually internal to the project- these are actually preconditions required to initiate and implement the project.

Validation of the achievements under the Output 3 (from the MTE perspective)

The ICSPA project was effective under this output and some of the main achievements (validated against established targets):

- Following the action point 8.2 from the Reform Action Plan, the project assisted the Meshrano Jirga to establish an ICT Governance Group to plan for and sustainably manage its ICT systems. This Group was formally established through a memo from the Secretary General approved by the Admin Board with Terms of Reference for its work. The ICT Group prepared technical specifications and system requirements for establishing an Afghan Parliament Local Area Network (LAN) and Meshrano Jirga media pool to permit the sharing of documentation and information between departments and with public. The Wolesi Jirga established the ICT Governance Group in the last quarter of 2016.
- The ICSPA project has completed procurement of the IT equipment and equipment for the media pool. The LAN system and the media pool should be established by end of second quarter of 2017. The MTE finds high commitment and ownership of the process by the Parliament. During the meetings, the importance of the LAN system and media pool was clearly emphasized and prioritized, and co-financing was provided by the parliament.
- The parliament had established Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga You Tube Channels uploaded with videos of current session plenary session coverage as well as updated their respective websites with current parliamentary committee composition. The Departments of Public Information and Relations confirmed they systematically share press releases and parliamentary documentation with the public and journalists. The Meshrano Jirga started introducing digital feeds of plenary proceedings. The MTE finds commitment of the leadership of both houses to ensure availability of all materials and products of the Parliament.
- The project supported the Parliament to release information with contact details of the MPs, Senators and Admin Board members. In addition, all parliamentary agendas are regularly uploaded and available via web-site

Output 4: Capacity of Parliament's leadership to undertake reforms enhanced

Indicator 4.1 # of actions taken by the parliamentary leadership to implement reforms from the Parliament's Reform Action Plan requiring political will

Baseline 4.1 Zero (0) The Reform Action Plan prepared by the heads of department and their staff in both Houses during the 1st quarter of 2016 details action points which cannot be implemented without the political will of the parliamentary leadership

2016: 3 actions (Publication of Wolesi Jirga MP attendance records; fining members for non-attendance; Reduction in the number of Wolesi Jirga committees)

2017: 3 actions (Increased sharing of information with the public in regard to plenary and committee plans and proceedings, and TBD)

2018: Adoption of practices consistent with IPU standards for democratic legislatures as set out in the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and in project annual work plans

2019: Adoption of practices consistent with IPU standards for democratic legislatures as set out in the Parliament's Reform Action Plan and in project annual work plans

	Indicator 4.2 # of coordination meetings held by the Parliament <u>Baseline 4.2</u> Zero (0) (UNDP led coordination meetings for the Parliament from 2005-2007. In June 2015, the ICSPA project supported the Secretaries General co-chair the first Development Partners Coordination meeting led by the parliament itself.)	2016: 2 2017 3 2018 3 2019 1
<p>Comments on the output:</p> <p>The MTE finds that this output is highly relevant and directly contributes to the achievement of higher elements of the intervention logic (UNDP CPD Output and UNDAF Outcome). Organizational development and successful introduction of changes in an organization is inevitably linked with the involvement of its leadership; this is prerequisite to start with reforms. Therefore, the work of the project to enhance reform capacities of the Parliament's leadership remains highly relevant and needed for further development of the Parliament.</p> <p>Comments on indicators:</p> <p>The MTE finds that the indicators 4.1 and 4.2 are adequate to measure the progress within the output. Implementation of the RAP requires involvement of the leadership of both houses and they report to the Speakers and Administrative boards on progress in implementation. Still, the RAP envisioned some activities that would require decisions and involvement of the Parliament's leadership. This indicator is highly relevant as it captures and reflects on the decisions and involvement of the Parliament's leadership, as planned in the RAP. Annual targets that are established are realistic and achievable.</p> <p>The indicator 4.2. reflects on number of coordination meetings held by the Parliament. This is lower level indicator (compared to 4.1), as it measures only number of meetings. There is no measure of results/ products of these meetings.</p> <p>Comments on Assumptions:</p> <p>The project document identified several assumptions at the level of the Output 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal institutions and processes serve wider Afghan interests - Executive Branch does not subvert efforts to strengthen Parliament - Parliament builds capacity in these areas - MoF, MoJ, MoPA, CSC, and other agencies of Government are keen to support Parliament's efforts - UNDP able to retain high quality staff to implement activities in a timely manner <p>As indicated in the previous paragraphs, these assumptions are almost identical as for the previous outputs. Hence, these assumptions are more appropriate for the achievement of the outcome and less for the achievement of output.</p> <p>The last "assumption" is part of the UNDP management practice- UNDP is implementing this project as the partners expect that UNDP can retain high-quality staff. Therefore, this is prerequisite to starting the project</p>		

Validation of the achievements under the Output 4 (from the MTE perspective)

The MTE finds that the project was highly effective towards the achievement of the Output 4. The evidence indicates that the parliamentary leadership exceeded planned target (of 3 in 21016) and implemented 5 actions from its Reform Action Plan requiring political will. All of these measures executed by the leadership – for the first time since the parliament’s inception in 2005 – were met with resistance and strong objections from the MPs.

The activities implemented by the leadership of the Parliament are:

- the Wolesi Jirga’s leadership agreeing to publish MP attendance records (Reform Action Plan point 1.3);
- the Parliament is strictly enforcing the rules of procedure and fining MPs for their non-attendance and deducting MP pay related to their unexcused absences (Reform Action Plan point 1.6);
- the leadership of the Wolesi Jirga reviewed committee remits and reduced the number of Wolesi Jirga committees from 18 to 15 (Reform Action Plan point 2.5).

Additionally, the parliamentary leadership agreed to increase transparency by publishing the weekly parliamentary agendas (the Order Papers) on the parliament’s websites in advance (Reform Action Plan point 1.1.) and publishing up-to-date Admin Board, MP, Senator and parliamentary committee composition and contact details on the websites. The publication of the weekly parliamentary agenda importantly allows MPs time to consider and prepare for plenary sessions in advance. Also, this enables CSOs and the media to raise concerns with Members prior to debate.

The leadership approved establishment of You Tube channels (Reform Action Plan point 8.17) for each House updated with daily uploads of plenary session proceedings to keep the public better informed of the parliament’s work.

The MTE finds that the project has contributed to altering mind-sets and the approach of the parliamentary leadership in adopting and implementing reforms towards compliance with international parliamentary standards. The CTA and direct work with the International Parliamentary Union was key success factors to ensure and maintain these changes. High commitment and readiness of the leadership of both houses to implement reforms continues. One of the strongest evidences is high understanding of the importance of the Parliamentary Service Act and its adoption. The resistance from the executives did not affect their commitment to push for its adoption. Another important moment was that the leadership and administrative board of the Wolesi Jirga suspended four of its members due to long absence in the first major disciplinary move.

4.4. Impact

Impact measures the effect of the project in meeting the outcome. By definition, the latter is beyond the scope of a particular project but a positive impact could be expected if the project outputs are achieved so that it helps to meet to wider objective. Sustainability on the other hand is a measure of the degree to which the project has a lasting effect or durability after its completion.

Impact (as much as sustainability) can only be assessed after certain period upon the end of the project. However, it is increasingly conventional in mid-term and even in final evaluations to anticipate or forecast both impact and sustainability. Therefore, the MTE anticipated and assessed possible impact of the project, after its completion.

The mid-term evaluation followed general practice to validate impact looking at the expected output (and deliverables) and the outcome, and assuming possibility of the ICSPA project and its outputs to achieve the outcome, hence, contribute to the good governance system in Afghanistan.

This included the analysis at three levels: the level of individuals, institutions and the policy level.

Analysis of the possible impact of the ICSPA project on individual, institutional and systemic levels	
Expected impact Individual level	<p>At the level of individuals, the impact could be observed among the individuals that participated in the project activities or directly benefited from them. Also, the impact of the project could be expected at the level of indirect beneficiaries, the population at large in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The impact of the ICSPA project is evident at the level of the leadership of the National Assembly of Afghanistan. The ICSPA project, closely working with the International Parliamentary Union, was instrumental in changing and developing mind-sets and the approach of the parliamentary leadership in adopting and implementing reforms towards compliance with international parliamentary standards. Specifically, the Secretary Generals, the Deputy Secretary Generals and other members of the leadership/ management teams from the Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga increased their capacities on practical aspects of institutional reforms (e.g. organizing and implementing self-assessments; identifying reform priorities and preparing action plans). Also, there is evident commitment and readiness to implement reform priorities and work towards transparent and accountable governance system in Afghanistan. This was particularly manifest through the parliamentary leaderships' request for support to draft a Parliamentary Service Act towards staffing autonomy from the Executive.</p> <p>The impact at the individual level could be expected through improved performance of the employees in the parliament.</p> <p>They will benefit through acquiring new working methods, institution of missing workflow processes, and developing skills for transparent and accountable delivery of services.</p> <p>Individuals participating in the trainings increased their technical capacities and knowledge basis in the broad areas of institutional reform, starting from self-assessment, action planning to policy development and analysis. Another dimension of impact at the individual level is through exchange of experience and direct interaction of the professionals from the National Assembly of Afghanistan with the representatives of the International Parliamentary Union. This approach facilitated partnerships and horizontal knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Media representatives and journalists that participated in the training (that the ICSPA project provided) are additionally capacitated to report competently on work of the Parliament and the topics related to the Parliament, with a better understanding of good governance and gender equality and the interest of people of Afghanistan.</p>

	<p>Also, the impact of the project could be observed at the level of citizens of Afghanistan. They have access to information about work of the members of the Parliament (MPs) including the agenda of the plenary sessions and participation or absence of the MPs. The policies and laws that are adopted or in the process of adoption are now accessible and available to a broader audience. I</p>
Expected impact-institutional level	<p>At the institutional level, the MTE analyzed possible impact of the ICSPA project on functioning and performance of the Wolesi Jirga and Mashrano Jirga, as institutions that directly benefited from its support. Also, the analysis reflected on the possible impact on other public organizations in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The MTE finds the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect of the ICSPA project could be observed through its support to organizational development (“change management”) in the Wolesi and Mashrano Jirgas. Both houses of the NAA now have capacities and experience to prepare and carry out self-assessments as the initial step in the sound reform process. Additionally, these organizations have gained direct experience in implementation institutional reforms, including strategic planning and priority setting. Also, organizational, operational and technical capacities of the Wolesi and Mashrano Jirgas have been strengthened through sound technical assistance/ mentoring and transfer of knowledge provided through the ICSPA project. Some of the examples could be: introduction on international standards for delivery of the core parliamentary services; introduction of evidence based and gender sensitive policy making and policy analysis. The project also assisted with the development of operating procedures and policies for the NAA. Some examples are the: Archives policy; the Gender Mainstreaming Policy for the NAA; annual action and work planning procedures, etc. <p>This shows that the ICSPA project has a strong impact on the overall administrative culture within the NAA through the application of modern governance tools and methods and nurturing of a new work ethics and attitude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the level of organizational leadership of two houses, the project has contributed to altering mind-sets and the approach of the parliamentary leadership in adopting and implementing reforms towards compliance with international parliamentary standards. The CTA and direct work with the International Parliamentary Union was key success factors to ensure and maintain these changes. • The impact of the project on organizational transparency is evident. <p>Some of the examples could be the publishing of attendance records of the members of the Parliament on a regular basis; publishing of meeting agenda for each of the Parliamentary sessions; access and availability of all documents and decisions of the NAA via the web-site. Afghanistan's parliament dismissed two seven cabinet ministers, ignoring pleas from the president and chief executive to halt votes that threaten the Government.</p> <p>Most recently, the Wolesi Jirga suspended four of its members due to long absence in the first major disciplinary move. The move comes after the administrative board of the Lower House announced that MPs consecutively absent for 20 days would get suspended. The administrative board has sent official letters to all (parliamentary) commissions. Also of note, since January 2016 the salary and privileges of unexcusably absent Wolesi Jirga MPs have been cut.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the ICSPA project is evident through increased ability of the NAA for international partnerships- the evidence is established partnership with

	<p>the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) and involvement of both houses in the meetings and activities/ decisions of the IPU. The NAA recently participated in the IPU meeting in Dhaka (Bangladesh) and signed cooperation agreement with the Russian Duma. The NAA is preparing to engage more in the Parliamentary support to the Open Government Partnership meeting (planned in Kiev, Ukraine).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible impact of the ICSPA project on the public management system in Afghanistan could be expected as they will receive a successful model for replication for successful implementation of change management. The project prepared a toolkit for self-assessment (developed with support from ICSPA project), for prioritization and action planning; • Potential impact at organizational level could be expected through the improved reporting on the work and activities of the NAA. The ICSPA project is working to increase capacities of (local) media companies and train journalists to follow work of the NAA. This was not intended impact of the project, but could be certainly considered as positive development
Expected impact- Policy impact	<p>The actual question to consider the impact at the institutional level was if the ICSPA project influenced or provided the basis for policy development in the areas relevant to the functioning of the NAA.</p> <p>The policy cycle approach with its separated elements serves as a model for the analysis of the impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy decision: The ICSPA project brought to the agenda the need to further support the development of parliamentary democracy, legitimate and inclusive governance in Afghanistan, through the institutional strengthening of the National Assembly and it's both houses. The critical issue that emerged was that the Parliament lacks financial resources and institutional autonomy compounded by a weak capacity to initiate and implement reform, resulting in significant constraints in delivering its core functions. • Policy development: The project provided assistance with the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Act. The Act provides an important legislative framework for sustainable human resource base and establishment of an independent Parliamentary Service required for effective government oversight. The adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act is a crucial moment for the National Parliament's transparent, independent and sustainable functioning. • Decision on instruments: regarding instruments, the PSA proposed tools and mechanisms that will facilitate development of the National Assembly of Afghanistan towards modern parliamentary institution, in line with international parliamentary standards. The ICSPA project assisted with preparation of a general framework, reflecting on activities needed for financial and human independence. • Implementation: adoption and implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act is a crucial moment for the National Parliament's transparent, independent and sustainable functioning. However, it was reported that Members of Parliament (MPs) and the leadership in both Houses of the National Parliament were facing pressure from the Executive not to pass the Act "as it would undermine the government's authority and influence over parliamentary secretariat departments and oversight processes". The MTE finds that adoption and implementation of the PSA are outside of the direct scope of the ICSPA project. Still, the project is providing advice and support to the Parliament to facilitate adoption of the Law.

Qualitatively, the conclusion of this mid-term evaluation is that there is certain likelihood that the project will achieve and ensure its impact. However, as presently designed and implemented there is a high probability that the impact could erode without further external support to institutionalize results of the project. Specifically, the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act represents a critical element of the sustainability of results: its adoption will set the basis for sustainable human resources, predictable finances and independent functioning of the National Assembly of Afghanistan. .

4.5. Sustainability

The fifth criterion, sustainability, relates to whether the positive results of the project are likely to continue after external funding ends, and also whether its longer-term effects on the wider development process can also be sustained at the level of the sector or country.

This means that there is a strong correlation between impact and sustainability since the explanatory variables are often the same for explaining impact and/or sustainability. In the context of mid-term evaluations, sustainability and impact are often assessed in conjunction. This suggests that challenges leading to impact erosion could certainly apply in this case.

The mid-term evaluation analysed the (potential) sustainability, assessing whether the beneficiaries can continue to work without external intervention that was present through the project.

The mid-term evaluation assessed sustainability through the following questions:

i) Why is it important to ensure sustainability?

In present value terms, if there is no impact or sustainability then there is no logic of intervention in the first instance. Even if there are non-monetary benefits, these can be monetised and should show a real return on investment.

The central idea of the project is to leave a legacy of an operational system and know-how to facilitate organizational development of the National Assembly of Afghanistan in line with international standards. The project has been playing the central role in the support to the National Parliament of Afghanistan (Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga)'s institutional development "within its constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming a more effective parliamentary institution, both reflecting, and contributing to, a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance".

The MTE finds as the added value of the ICSPA project is a high level of sustainability: the results of the project, including development practices and methods tested within its scope, supported through the project are embedded in the operational practices of the Parliament. Specifically, preparation and implementation of the Reform Action Plans, establishment of the e-platform and pending adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act are essential steps for building independent and competent institutions in the country. Thus, sustainability of the results achieved through the ICSPA project is indispensable and essential action for the development of participatory democracy and citizens centered system governance system.

ii) Has the project employed any innovative models or approaches that may be applicable to other institutional development projects in Afghanistan or abroad?

Reform of public institutions, such as the Parliament of Afghanistan, requires full national ownership and involvement and well-planned approach to organizational development. The Secretary Generals and their associates led the self-assessment process to full extent, with technical assistance provided by the ICSPA project. The findings confirm that the parliamentary leadership was showing effective commitment and leading on the core project based initiatives. This involvement is equally evident at the operational (ref to the Efficiency part of this report) and the programmatic side of the project.

The MTE analysed if the project employed any innovative models or approaches applicable to other institutional development projects. While traditional capacity building and development interventions often result in partner-driven processes and plans that reflect externally viewed needs that are subsequently not implemented, the ICSPA project has been providing technical, advisory and secretariat support for the Afghan Parliament staff to carry out self-assessments and identify the areas requiring reforms. Therefore the ICSPA project has been highly instrumental in providing support to the direct beneficiary, the National Parliament, first to identify and prioritize needs and then to develop a comprehensive Reform Action Plans to address these needs.

This was an innovative approach for Afghanistan, with clear opportunity for replication. Efforts to diagnose institutional problems as a first step in the formulation of improvement interventions are common to many sectors and countries. But the self-driven and participatory assessment of the Wolessi and Mashrano Jirga's of the NAA to generate forward- looking reform plan and assure accountability are innovative for the following reasons:

- staff members themselves initiated the assessment and mapped out the entire exercise- The fact that the Secretary Generals and their teams are heavily involved in the project has created a real sense of ownership and also commitment to the improvement of operational methods increased transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of the Parliament to the citizens. The leadership of both houses of the NAA are showing clear readiness to move ahead with the implementation of the needed reforms.
- staff members identified the issues and indicators to be addressed, planned the retreat for addressing them, and gathered the information necessary for informed discussions and performance rating;
- staff discussed the issues in the department-based teams and proceeded to present their findings and indicators in plenary, freely challenging the findings of other departments; and
- the experts from the International Parliamentary Union and the ICSPA CTA were facilitating the process. Their tasks included analysis of information and data, capturing the core actions in a balanced manner, and isolating prominent institutional weaknesses and how they inform the strategy for the organizational reform.

The assessment process included all the units and departments of the NAA and revealed different performance categories – sets of related skills, procedures and capabilities defining particular institutional performance areas. Certain obstacles related to the functioning of the NAA – such as weak communication between two houses; turn-over of staff including the facts that the executives frequently take over employees of the NAA, deteriorating security situation and attacks against the NAA-- were considered as common to the entire institution. Still, employees, staff were able to clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of their units, providing an effective springboard for a holistic Reform Action Plan. Therefore, the Reform Action Plan included key areas of the NAA functioning in which results and activities are prioritized: 1. Plenary Session Management; 2. Committees Management; 3. Research; 4. Library; 5. Info & Public Relations; 6. Human Resources; 7. Finance and Administration; 8. Information and Communication Technology; 9. International Affairs; 10. Gender; 11. Internal Audit and 12. Procurement.

Furthermore, the priority support areas identified in the self-assessment reports and the Reform Action Plans are the main focus of the ICSPA project for 2016-2019. The project's full compliance with the NAA's reform program further supports the sustainability of results.

The legacy of this project will certainly serve as the basis and model for replication for future activities in this field.

iii) Implications for follow-up

Reform of the governance system and establishment of the independent and functional Parliament in post-conflict countries is a multidimensional problem that requires nationally driven comprehensive and well-coordinated approach. The reform efforts are additionally affected by deteriorating security situation and turn over of staff, leaving no professional counterparts to continue work in agreed reform areas. Experts to support the Afghan Parliament. Since the attack on the Afghan Parliament in June 2015, the IPU has not been able to identify and deploy qualified experts.

Nevertheless, the ICSPA project will remain as the central reference in institutional strengthening of the NAA and setting the basis for its independent and sustainable functioning. This is a long-lasting process and support should continue, with involvement of policy and decision makers from both houses of the NAA, and from different governance structures. The ICSPA project is well-positioned to facilitate this process; furthermore, adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act and its implementation will require support and technical assistance: technical assistance and expertise available through the project will be even more required to ensure full implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The challenges related to transparent and accountable governance in Afghanistan are multidimensional, rooted in the societal aspects, structure of the economy and political developments that the country is facing.

The ICSPA project is designed to contribute to the national priority for “Improved legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance at all levels that enable progressive realization of human rights.” It also contributes to more inclusive political processes and strengthening representative institutions to hold government more accountable. The primary focus of the project is to assist the two houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan (Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga), within the Afghan Parliament’s constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance.

The MTE finds that the project, within its mandate, is successfully progressing towards the achievement of its output and contributing to the specific goal. Still, the MTE provides conclusions and actionable recommendations to further strengthen the ICSPA project policies and practices.

Prepare a plan to advocate and lobby the President for the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act (PSA)

The project assisted with the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Act and this is one of the most important steps to establish a sustainable human resource base and ensure the autonomy of parliament staff from the executive branch. Adoption and implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act is a critical requirement for its long-term institutional development of the Parliament. Still, considering the division of power and the current status of governance, a high likelihood remains that this process will face resistance and strong objections from the President and the Executive branch. The recommendations for the partners participating in the ICSPA project is to discuss and prepare a plan to advocate and lobby the President for the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act and its importance for strengthening Afghanistan's governance system. For example, one argument could be that the enactment of the Parliamentary Service Act would ensure adequate oversight of the direct budgetary support that the EU and other international partners are providing.

ICSPA project should prepare a support plan for the National Parliament after the passage of the PSA

Upon the adoption of the PSA, technical assistance and expertise available through the project will be even more relevant to ensure its full implementation. It is recommended that the ICSPA project prepares a support plan for the National Parliament after the passage of the PSA.

UNDP and the partners should explore opportunities to expand support to the National Parliament and for the follow-up phase of the ICSPA project

Also, it is recommended to subsequent to the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act, UNDP and development partners explore opportunities to expand support to the National Parliament of Afghanistan and its two houses. The possible next technical assistance project to the National Parliament (the follow-up phase of the ICSPA project) should be conceptualized to provide support for additional three to five years.

In the case that the resistance for the adoption of the Parliamentary Service Act prevails, it is recommended that the ICSPA project expands efforts to increase transparency and improve operational/ management processes within the National Parliament and support the implementation of the Reform Action Plan in the relevant areas. It is recommended to revise some of the project indicators (such as the Indicator 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5).

The ICSPA project should explore opportunities to re-establish communication and cooperation with the IPU

The reform capacity and commitment for transparent and accountable functioning of the Secretary Generals and key personnel in both Houses of the National Parliament have increased significantly through the support of the ICSPA project. Engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was one of the most important moments, especially its assistance with the finalization and presentation of the Parliament Reform Action Plans and with the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Act. However, since the attack on the Afghan Parliament in June 2015, the IPU has not been able to identify and deploy qualified Experts to support the National Parliament of Afghanistan.

Strengthen the PMU through engagement of an International Technical Advisor

It is recommended to explore different options to engage in the communication and cooperation with the IPU, as its support remains critical and is needed for successful implementation of the planned reforms.

The current management approach has ensured high-quality results. However, the key stakeholders did observe some gaps in project coordination and administration. Some of the challenges were delays in the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU), while one of its core positions has so far remained vacant. The effectiveness of the project has relied heavily on the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who has built a strong relationship with the leadership of both Houses of Parliament and with the international development partners in this project. The National Technical Expert was recruited and this has strengthened functioning of the PMU.

It is recommended to strengthen the PMU and recruit a competent international Technical Advisor. It is recommended to revise Terms of Reference from the approved ICSPA project document. The requirement for “at least 7 years of international work experience in the area of parliamentary development, preferably in a crisis or post-crisis context” should be reconsidered. It is recommended to redefine it and request “at least 7 years of international work experience in the area of governance, preferably in a crisis or post-crisis context. Experience in the parliamentary development is an asset.”

This approach will enhance delivery capacity of the PMU, while at the same time, this will help bolster the UNDP's technical advisory support and maintain strong engagement at the highest levels in the Secretariats of both Houses.

The ICSPA project should continue with activities to enhance gender equality

The project has been highly effective in enhancing the role of women in Afghanistan by providing support to the Parliament to test laws and draft laws for gender equality. Also, the Reform Action Plans includes recommendations to improve the role of women in the National Parliament. The project has been providing support to the Gender Directorates in both Houses to work towards the achievement of gender-related targets for the Meshrano Jirga and Wolesi Jirga, as highlighted in Afghanistan's National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan.

However, there is still a great need for support to gender equality processes within the National Parliament. It is recommended that the ICSPA project continue and enhance its activities to foster women empowerment and gender mainstreaming within the Afghan Parliament. Some of the recommended actions could be capacity building for female employees to increase their participation in decision-making; capacity building for all employees to understand, i.e., the basic principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in policy formulation. Support to the Gender Directorates in both Houses should intensify in the next period.

It is recommended to improve monitoring system for the ICSPA project and for implementation of the Reform Action Plan

Monitoring is a continuing function that provides the management of the project and main stakeholders with early indications of progress, or any concerns or issues related to achievement of results.

Once the P4 Technical Specialist is recruited, it is recommended that the PMU start working on a results oriented monitoring system for the ICSPA project and for the Reform Action Plan (RAP). The purpose will be to keep the track whether the ICSPA project/ RAP achieves the expected results and objectives. Specifically, the monitoring system should: i) provide objective, verifiable evidence of progress towards and achievement of results and objectives; ii) enable insights to be drawn and shared about what worked well or what did not work well and why that was the case; iii) enable reflection on the context in which the ICSPA project and the RAP are being implemented and how this affects programming and iv) provide the basis for fine-tuning, reorienting and planning future development efforts in the area of support to the NAA and to the governance system in Afghanistan.

In the context of establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system for the Reform Action Plan, it is recommended to design and implement sound capacity development programme for strengthening parliamentarians' or secretariat staff to monitor its implementation and report on progress.

Annex 1: The list of people interviewed (alphabet order)

Mr. Aminuddin Hamed, UNDP, Program Officer, Governance Unit

Mr. Anis Siddique, UNDP, Head of Human Resources Unit

Mr. Douglas Keh, UNDP, Country Director

Ms. Franziska Johanna Albrecht, The Embassy of Germany, Political Affairs, Protocol, Press

Mr. Jocelyn Masen, UNDP, Senior Deputy Director

Ms. Karin Takeuchi, Chief of Strategy, UNDP, Planning and Results Unit (& UNDP Afghanistan Evaluations Focal Point)

Mr. Khudai Nazar NASRAT, Wolesi Jirga, Secretary General

Mr. Mahboob Abbasi, DFID- UK Embassy, Programme Manager

Mr. Mihir Joshi, DFID- UK Embassy, Programme Manager

Mr. Mohammad Baqir Timury, UNDP, Programme Budget Analyst

Mr. Mohammad Nazir Yaquobi, UNDP, Programme Finance Analyst,

Mr. Paul King, Chief of Party, ALBA/USAID Project

Ms. Nadia Nivin, UNDP, Head of Governance Unit

Ms. Nicole Malpas, EC Delegation, Task Manager - Governance & Democracy

Ms. Norah Babic, Head of Technical Cooperation, Inter-Parliamentary Union (Geneva)

Mr. Rahimullah GHALIB, Wolesi Jirga, Deputy Secretary General

Ms. Rosalind Meek, DFID- UK Embassy, DFID Country Manager

Mr. Sayed Hafizullah HASHIMI, Mashrano Jirga, Deputy Secretary General

Mr. Sayed Hafizullah HASHIMI, Mashrano Jirga, Secretary General

Mr. Sebastiano Germano, EC Delegation, Task Manager - Governance & Democracy

Mr. Shamsulhaq SAFI, Technical Specialist, ICSPA, UNDP

Mr. Shoaib Fetry, Head of National Assembly of Afghanistan ICT Department

Ms. Simone Schuller, EC Delegation, Task Manager - Governance & Democracy

Mr. Stephen Kooshak, UNDP ICSPA, Chief Technical Advisor

Annex 2: Terms of References

Terms of Reference

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan (ICSPA)

within the UNDP Afghanistan Country Programme of Cooperation,

Duration: 22-Mar-17 to 19-Apr-17 with maximum 21 working (5 working days from home and 16 working days)

Background/Context:

The fundamental objective of the project, entitled: "Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan" (*hereafter*, "ICSPA" or "Project"), 2014-2019, is to assist the two Houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, within the Afghan Parliament's existing constitutional and legal mandate, in becoming more effective parliamentary institutions, both reflecting and contributing to a growing culture of legitimate and inclusive governance.

An initial Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan project document (PRODOC) was signed with partners in March 2014. Following delivery of the parliament's self-assessment report and its reform action plan, the initial project document was subsequently revised and replaced with a second project document in June 2016 in alignment with its reform action plan.

Project aims and expected outputs as defined in the 2014 Project Document

To achieve such an objective, the Project aims to provide capacity support to the Afghan Parliament to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment to identify priority areas for support and institutional development, guided by the principles of co-equality and cooperation with other institutions of government.

The outputs in the initial project document were as follows:

1. Self-Assessment Framework and Reform Action Plan developed for, and adopted by, Parliament;
2. Staffing and financial management capacity of Parliament enhanced; *and*,
3. Capacity of Parliament's leadership to undertake reforms enhanced.

Project aims and expected outputs as defined in the 2016 Project Document

To achieve such an objective, the Project aims to provide institutional development support to areas identified by the Afghan Parliament through its *Self-Assessment Report* (2015) and its *Project Reform Plan* (2016), as requiring prioritized attention, guided by the principles of co-equality and cooperation with other institutions of government. The priority areas of support identified in these two reports are

the focus of this 2016-2019 ICSPA Project Document revision, which was envisioned in the original document.

Over the period July 2016 – March 2019 the ICSPA project aims to deliver the following outputs:

1. Secretariats are strengthened to support law-making and oversight functions, including committee management, legislative and policy research, and plenary;
2. Finance, Procurement, Auditing, and Human Resources capacity of Secretariats is strengthened to better manage resources and provide effective support to operational functions;
3. Representative role reinforced through support for improved communication and outreach capacities; and
4. Capacity of Parliament's leadership to undertake reforms enhanced

Key project activities, strategies and indicators are defined in the project documents dated 26 March 2014 and 23 June 2016 which will be made available to the evaluator based on which to carry out the evaluation.

Purpose of the evaluation:

The initial project document foresaw that annual as well as mid-term project evaluations would be completed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 based on which the project document would be revised. The project document was revised in June 2016 prior to conducting the annual or mid-term evaluations. This Mid-Term Evaluation will nonetheless provide recommendations for any project adjustments required here forth to better achieve targets.

A European Union Results Oriented Monitoring mission carried out an evaluation of the project during February 2017.

The Department for International Development (DFID) also carried out Annual Reviews of the project in April 2015 and April 2016. A third DFID Annual Review is scheduled to take place in April 2017.

This UNDP Mid-Term evaluation of ICSPA is scheduled to take place during the first week of April 2017 in coordination with the DFID Annual Review to lessen the burden on project partners of having to meet with multiple evaluators (EU, DFID and UNDP) over the same 8-week period in 2017.

Findings and recommendations from the Mid-Term Review will be used to inform the parliamentary leadership, project donors, UNDP and the project management to consider any necessary project adjustments for review and approval by Project Management Board that is scheduled to meet in June 2017.

Scope and focus:

The Mid-Term Evaluation should cover ICSPA implementation over the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017. This will include the project start-up phase; the first project phase of implementation related to supporting the Parliament's preparation of its self-assessment framework and reform

action plan; as well as revision of the project document and the launch/implementation of activities during the project's phase II.

The focus of the evaluation is to be on the degree to which the project has contributed to adoption of parliamentary reforms driven by the leadership towards the secretariats' compliance with international parliamentary standards; as well as, in turn, how this may or may not be contributing to the Afghan Parliament's long-term sustainable institutional development, including transparency and oversight.

As the ICSPA project focus is limited to supporting the parliamentary secretariats the Mid-Term evaluation should remain limited to evaluating impact on secretariat structures and processes as identified in the results of the PRODOC. Afghan MPs and parliamentary committees are supported directly through a parallel USAID-funding project which is not the focus and should not be considered in this mid-term evaluation.

In particular, the Mid-Term evaluation should review:

- Are the project interventions relevant and to what degree has the project contributed to laying the foundations for the National Assembly of Afghanistan's long-term sustainable institutional development?
- Has the project contributed to altering mind-sets and the approach of the parliamentary leadership in adopting and implementing reforms towards compliance with international parliamentary standards for the Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga secretariats?
- To what degree has the project contributed to increased transparent practices?
- To what degree are the project based initiatives driven by the parliamentary leadership and are the initiatives undertaken to date sustainable?
- Are project interventions aligned with the Afghan Parliament's priorities and coordinated with the interventions of other development partners to prevent duplication and reduce transaction costs on the parliament? Are all development partner interventions well-coordinated in support of the Afghan Parliament's priorities and driven by the parliament itself for sustainable institutional development? Do the ICSPA project interventions effectively complement interventions of other development partners?
- Has the project employed any innovative models or approaches that may be applicable to other institutional development projects in Afghanistan or abroad?
- What challenges has the project faced and has it dealt appropriately to overcoming these by proposing mitigating measures related to issues and risks in advance? Has the project received adequate support from national and international partners when and as relevant to overcome challenges towards success?

- What are the lessons learned from the project that may be applicable to similar institutional development projects in Afghanistan or abroad?

Evaluation criteria & key evaluation questions:

In evaluating ICSPA, OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and evaluation questions should be considered as follows:

- **Relevance:** What is the value of the project intervention in relation to: 1) the national and international partners' policies and priorities (including MDG/SDG, UNDAF, national priorities); and what is the appropriateness of the project design? 2) Are global references such as the CRC, CEDAW etc. applicable? 3) the UNDP Corporate Strategic Plan? Do the final beneficiaries regard the programme/ intervention as a top priority compared to other immediate issues and the SDGs?
- **Efficiency:** Did the project use resources in the most economical manner to achieve its objectives? Was the cost spent for these activities worth doing it against expected/achieved outputs? Is it worth continuing the project?
- **Effectiveness:** What is the quality of the project design? Are activities achieving satisfactory results in relation to any stated short and long term objectives? What is the quality/sufficiency of outputs produced by the project? How effective will it be to continue project activities?
- **Impact:** What are the results of intervention in terms of behavioural changes or changes in the lives of beneficiaries against set indicators?
- **Sustainability:** What is needed for the project intervention to be adapted/replicated further? What are the national partner's resources, motivation and ability to continue these activities in the future? Are behavioural changes expected to last and what is needed for people to continue acting in new ways? What are other resources (both human and financial) to be used to sustain the program?
- **Coordination:** What are the effects of coordination or lack thereof?
- **Coherence:** What are areas and ways of cooperation with other UN and donor agencies' in regard to set goals and objectives? Is there coherence across policies of different donor agencies and national stakeholders?

Existing information sources:

- Quarterly and Annual Project Reports
- Project Donor Group Meeting Minutes
- Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes
- Project Management Board Meeting Minutes
- Project documents dated 26 March 2014 and 23 June 2016, also containing RRF indicators
- National Assembly of Afghanistan Development Partner Coordination Meeting Terms of Reference, principles of cooperation and meeting minutes
- 2014-2017 Annual Work Plans

- National Assembly of Afghanistan department and directorate self-assessment reports; and consolidated Self-Assessment Report
- National Assembly of Afghanistan Reform Action Plan
- Briefing Notes and Recommendations
- 2016 Annual National Assembly of Afghanistan Staff Perception Survey
- Project related meeting minutes

Process and recommended methodology:

The Evaluation and evaluation report will follow UNDP and UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluations.

The evaluation methodology will include a pre-mission desk review of all project related documentation noted in existing information sources above followed by a field visit to Kabul to meet with project partners and beneficiaries. The methodology for the field visit should include structured as well as unstructured interviews with partners and beneficiaries including focus group discussions as relevant. All national and international partners as well as representatives of the beneficiaries must be consulted including but not limited to the Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General as well as representatives of National Assembly of Afghanistan staff engaged in project activities. International partners comprise project donor representatives as well as representatives of other development partner agencies supporting the parliament (including the USAID-funded ALBA project, UNFPA, UNWOMEN and some limited support from UNICEF).

Stakeholder participation:

Key stakeholders to be involved will comprise:

- The leadership of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) and Meshrano Jirga (Upper House) of the National Assembly of Afghanistan including the respective Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General; Heads of National Assembly of Afghanistan departments; and relevant department/directorate staff
- Representatives of project donors comprising the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the European Union Delegation in Afghanistan and the UK Department for International Development.
- UNDP Afghanistan Country Office Programme Management
- Representatives of development partner entities providing support to the Afghan Parliament through parallel projects including the USAID/ALBA project, UNWOMEN and UNFPA

Accountabilities:

UNDP Project staff will be accountable for coordination of stakeholders involved, organizing field-visits, focus groups, and other logistical issues. Chief PSRT will provide technical support to reviewing inception reports, methodology, etc. as necessary. UNDP Country Office, PM, and CO Management will be accountable for reviewing/approving intermediate and final evaluation results. The evaluator shall be independent in the evaluation exercise, however taking into account sensitive

issues which may arise during the course of assessment. There are no specific concerns related to conflict of interest.

Mid-Term Evaluation Consultant role/responsibilities and qualifications:

Due to the small scale of the ICSPA project a sole consultant will be charged to conduct and complete the Mid-Term Evaluation.

Consultant Qualifications

- At least 7 years of experience leading evaluations of governance related institutional development programmes or projects in developing countries; experience leading evaluations in conflict or post-conflict countries would be an advantage
- At least 5 years of experience managing a governance sector project in a development context
- Experience in conducting UNDP or UN project evaluations preferred
- Prior experience conducting similar evaluations in Afghanistan would be a strong advantage
- Master's Degree in a related field (social sciences, politics, international relations, economics) with strong background in research methodology
- Fluent written and spoken English

Ethical Considerations:

The Evaluation/Study/Survey will follow UNDP and UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines on the ethical participation of beneficiaries and children. In addition, all participants in the study will be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research and their requested involvement. Only participants who have given their written or verbal consent (documented) will be included in the research. Specific mechanisms for feeding back results of the evaluation to stakeholders will be included in the elaborated methodology. All the documents, including data collection, entry and analysis tools, and all the data developed or collected for this study/consultancy are the intellectual property of UNDP. The Mid-Term Evaluation consultant/team members may not publish or disseminate the Mid-Term Evaluation, data collection tools, collected data or any other documents produced from this consultancy without the express permission of and acknowledgement of UNDP.

Procedures and logistics:

- The consultant will lodge in Kabul at her/his own cost at accommodation approved by the UNDP Afghanistan Security Unit. These costs should be included in the consultant's financial proposal.
- Dari-English and Pashto-English translations and interpretation services will be made available to facilitate the evaluation in Kabul at no-cost to the consultant
- In Kabul, the consultant may either work from her/his accommodation or use the offices of the ICSPA project located at the old Afghan Parliament building complex.
- Transportation related to the Mid-Term Evaluation may be provided to the consultant in UNDP ICSPA project vehicles in accordance with UNDP policies and procedures as appropriate and subject to clearance and approval by the UNDP Afghanistan Security Unit.

- The consultant should organize consultations with partners in accordance with established work schedules in Kabul as follows: Afghan Parliament and Government – Saturday to Wednesday, 07h30-16h00; Foreign Embassies and United Nations Entities – Sunday to Thursday, 08h00–16h00.
- The consultant should arrange for her/his own insurance including evacuation in emergencies and war risk insurance. Related costs should be included in the consultant’s financial proposal.
- The evolving security context and security risks in Kabul could impact on scheduled activities.

End products:

- Final Evaluation/Study/Survey Report, which should include:
 - Executive summary
 - Methodology: description of sampling and evaluation methodology used, assessment of methodology and its limitation, data collection instruments, and data processing (analysis methodology, and quality assurance)
 - Findings
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations
 - Lessons learned
 - Annexes: List of indicators, questionnaires, and if survey, table of sample size and sample site as appropriate
- The report should be provided in both hard copy and electronic version in English in the required format.
- Completed data sets (filled out questionnaires, records of individual interviews and focus group discussion, etc.)
- The evaluation report will be required to follow and will be rated in accordance with “UNEG Evaluation Report Standards” and UNEG Evaluation Technical Notes

Timeframe:

Weeks / Dates	Description of activities
22-29 March 2017	Desk review of existing project information sources (home-based)
1-5 April 2017	Consultations with national and international partners in Kabul including consultations with beneficiaries
8-12 April 2017	Drafting of Mid-Term Evaluation Report in Kabul and presentation of key findings to national and international partners in Kabul
15-17 April 2017	Revision of report based on any feedback received from UNDP in Kabul
18 April 2017	Submission and acceptance of final Mid-Term Evaluation report in Kabul

PRICE PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The contractor shall submit a price proposal as below:

- **Daily Fee** – The contractor shall propose a daily fee, which should be inclusive of his professional fee, local communication cost and insurance (inclusive of medical health insurance and evacuation). The number of working days for which the daily fee shall be payable under the contract is **21 working days**.
- The contractor shall propose a Living allowance at the Kabul applicable rate of USD 162 per night for his/her stay at the duty station. The number of nights for which the Living allowance shall be payable under the contract is **19 nights**. The contractor is NOT allowed to stay in a place of his choice other than the UNDSS approved places. UNDP will provide MORSS compliant accommodation in UNOCA Complex to the contractor. The payment of accommodation shall be made directly by the contractor.
- Travel & Visa – The contractor shall propose an estimated lump-sum for home-kabul-home travel (economy most direct route) and Afghanistan visa expenses.

The total professional fee, shall be converted into a lump-sum contract and payments under the contract shall be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables under the contract in accordance with the schedule of payment linked with deliverables and at the end of assignment.

UNDP reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

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