

**Inception report<sup>1</sup>**

**UNDP Afghanistan/Tajikistan – Final Evaluation of Livelihood Improvement in Tajik- Afghan Cross-border Areas (LITACA)**

**Abbreviations used:**

AIRD	Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Local Authority
MRRD	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
NABDP	National Area-Based Development Programme
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OVOP	One Village One Project
ProDoc	Project Document
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference

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Tool V:	Guide – key informant interview with UNDP staff

## 1. Background and introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to the evaluation

1. This inception report relates to a proposed final evaluation of UNDP’s project on Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas (LITACA), implemented jointly by UNDP Afghanistan and UNDP Tajikistan between 2014 and 2017. This report outlines key elements of the evaluation framework, methodology and data analysis the evaluation team will follow for the exercise. The evaluation team comprises an independent international consultant as team leader, working with a national consultant in Tajikistan and a team of researchers from the Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development (AIRD) in Afghanistan.

### 1.2 The project context and objectives

2. The context within which this project is being implemented is described in detail in the project document (ProDoc) and Annual Reports. The project (2014-2017) is designed to enhance security, stability and resilience of people living in cross-border areas of Afghanistan and Tajikistan through improvements in the living standards of communities. The project intends to achieve this by delivering two main outputs, namely: (1) promotion of good local governance, improved livelihoods and economic development opportunities, infrastructure and services; and (2) enhanced opportunities for cross border interactions, dialogue and partnerships. Funded by the Government of Japan, with a total budget of US\$ 10.75 million, the project started on 1 April 2014 and will end on XXXX 2017.<sup>2</sup>
3. The project activities in Tajikistan are directly implemented by UNDP through its area offices covering eight districts, and on the Afghan side, the programme interventions are implemented by the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP), a partnership of the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) and UNDP Afghanistan under National Implementation Modality (NIM), in two districts of Northern Afghanistan.
4. **Project outputs and results:** The project document (ProDoc)<sup>3</sup> outlines the following specific outputs and results intended by the project (Table 1):

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<sup>2</sup> The project was to end on March 2017, but its duration was subsequently extended to ????????

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2014): Project Document - Livelihood Improvement in Tajik- Afghan Cross-border Areas (LITACA)

**Table 1: Output and result areas, LITACA project**

<b>Outcome: Living standards of selected rural communities in the bordering areas of Tajikistan and Afghanistan will be strengthened.</b>		
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Key interventions/activities</b>
<b>Output 1:</b> Communities in the bordering provinces of Tajikistan and Afghanistan enjoy better governance, access to rural infrastructure and services as well as economic development opportunities.	1.1 Enhanced capacity to manage local development processes benefiting 436 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Training for local government officials on strategic planning, resource mobilisation and monitoring and evaluation in Tajikistan;</li> <li>* Provide IT equipment benefiting 24 local government officials in Tajikistan;</li> <li>* Trainings for improving internal business processes benefiting 48 local government in Tajikistan;</li> <li>* Technical assistance for review and update of 8 District Development Programmes benefiting local government officials (10 per target district) in Tajikistan and Technical Assistance, Training and Workshops for local government officials and Communities on district planning and implementation in Afghanistan;</li> <li>* Conduct public hearings involving civil society organisations and 80 private sector representatives on the implementation of District Development Programmes in Tajikistan.</li> </ul>
	1.2 Rehabilitated rural infrastructure and services, benefiting 126,500 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rehabilitate 25 water supply and irrigation objects (20 in Tajikistan and 5 in Afghanistan);</li> <li>* Rehabilitate 20 rural hospitals and 10 schools in Tajikistan;</li> <li>* Rehabilitate 10 roads/bridges/walls in Afghanistan;</li> <li>* Rehabilitate 4 energy objects (2 in Tajikistan and 2 in Afghanistan);</li> </ul>
	1.3 Enhanced job and income opportunities for sustainable local economic development, benefiting 14,130 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provide small grants to 10 civil society organisations for agriculture and business development activities in Tajikistan;</li> <li>* Establishment and strengthening dialogue between public and private sector in improving business enabling environment;</li> <li>* Business training for 300 farmers, entrepreneurs, and other private sector representatives (150 in Tajikistan and 150 in Afghanistan);</li> <li>* Vocational training for 500 vulnerable community representatives in Tajikistan</li> </ul>
<b>Output 2:</b> Cross-border communities have better opportunities for cross border interactions, dialogue and	2.1 Cross-border information and experience exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Publication materials on cross border issues</li> <li>* Development of video film on the development context of target communities</li> <li>* Broadcasting TV/radio programmes on cross border</li> </ul>

partnerships.		issues (quarterly) * Study tours and experience exchange visits (semi-annually)
	2.2. Cross-border economic cooperation benefiting 1,810 people.	* Technical assistance for 2 Business Support Centers benefiting 1,100 people (in Tajikistan); * Pilot One Village One Product in Tajikistan and Afghanistan benefiting 60 people (30 each in Tajikistan and Afghanistan); * Construct a cross border market benefiting 200 people (100 people from each side of the border); * Conduct 2 business forums benefiting 150 people (100 from Tajikistan and 50 from Afghanistan); * Conduct 3 trade-fairs benefiting 300 people (150 each in Tajikistan and Afghanistan);
	2.3. Cross-border disaster risk management benefiting 10,100 people.	* Provide training across the border for disaster risks management and mitigation to 100 community leaders; * Implementation of 4 disaster risk management initiatives benefiting 10,000 people (2,500 people per project);

## 2. Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

### 2.1 Purpose and scope

5. The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the overall performance of the project against stated outputs and results, as well as comments on the approaches and strategies in implementation. The evaluation will also highlight issues, challenges and lessons for future programming.
6. The scope of the evaluation will cover various activities undertaken since 2014 in both Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

### 2.2 Objective of the evaluation

7. The evaluation will examine results, achievements and challenges faced in the course of implementation over the last three years of the project, with emphasis on learning. The main objectives of the evaluation are threefold:
  - i. assess the overall progress of the LITACA project against intended outputs and results outlined in the project document (Prodoc)
  - ii. examine the approaches and strategies used in delivery of the project, and
  - iii. provide evidence-based recommendations and lessons learned to inform future development of the project or its successor.
8. Specifically, the evaluation has the following sub-objectives/deliverables:

- (i) To review and assess the extent to which the planned outputs and related outcomes have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by the end of current project, using the following **criteria**: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability
- (ii) Comment on **factors that facilitate and/or hinder progress** in achieving the outcomes, both in terms of the external environment and those internal to the UNDP, including: weaknesses in design, management, resource mobilisation and human resources;
- (iii) Analyse the extent of engagement of partner institutions and stakeholders in the project, and assess the **strategic partnerships and linkages** created; and
- (iv) Examine the strategic **value addition and distinctive contribution** of UNDP in realising the outcome vis-à-vis similar work implemented by other key partners and stakeholders in the country.

### 3. Methods and approach

#### 3.1 Stakeholders analysis

9. A summary of stakeholder analysis carried out by the evaluation team is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: LITACA project stakeholders and their interest in the evaluation**

Stakeholder(s)	Role/nature of stakeholders and interest in the evaluation
UNDP COs for Afghanistan and Tajikistan	The COs are responsible for country level planning and implementation of UNDP operations. The COs are the main stakeholder of the evaluation because it has an interest in enhancing accountability towards the Government, donor, partners and beneficiaries. The COs also needs to learn from the evaluation to inform decision-making and if necessary, use the finding to readjust programming and implementation.
MRRD, Government of Afghanistan	The MRRD is the main counterparts for this project in Afghanistan
CSOs, Business Support Centres and private sector organisations engaged in various LITACA activities in Tajikistan and Afghanistan	Several CSOs and business institutions are engaged in delivery of various components of the project and act as intermediaries/service providers, thus directly influencing the project outputs and outcomes.
Farmers benefited from LITACA interventions; Vulnerable groups engaged in vocational education	These groups are direct beneficiaries of the project and hence have a primary stake in the project implementation and its outcome.
Local Authorities (LA) in targeted districts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan	District Development Assemblies, district authorities in Shaartuz, Qubodiyon, Jayhun, Dusti, Pyanj, Shamsiddin Shohin, Farkhor and Hamadoni in Tajikistan, and Imam Sahib, Dashte Qala and Yangi Qala districts of Afghanistan.
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Donor has a direct stake in the findings from this evaluation as these may inform their future programming and financing priorities.

### 3.2 Evaluation framework

10. From the documents studied during the inception phase, it appears that the project did not have an explicit theory of change (TOC) to assist the evaluation process, though underpinning the project is the premise that improved living conditions and livelihoods will make people more resilient. In the absence of a TOC, the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) outlined in the ProDoc will provide the reference point for data-gathering and analysis of progress made. The list of indicative questions against the evaluation criteria outlined in the ToR has been developed based on a reading of the ProDoc and annual progress reports. The evaluation matrix (Appendix 1 of this report) shows how the evaluation questions will be addressed using different sources and method of data collection and analysis.
11. The evaluation will use the following criteria which are mainly based on OECD/DAC criteria<sup>4</sup> for evaluation of development assistance:
  - Relevance
  - Effectiveness
  - Efficiency
  - Sustainability

### 3.3 Evaluation approach

12. The evaluation will use existing data from CPD, ProDoc, and annual progress reports to examine if credible baseline exists. Where credible baseline does not exist, the evaluator will attempt to ascertain changes that can be reasonably attributed to the project. This will be done by testing all assumptions made in the project design and validating these through data gathered from multiple sources (desk research, Key Informant Interviews, and site observations). A mid-term review (MTR) of the project was undertaken at the end of 2015 which provide valuable inputs for this final evaluation to track the trajectory of this project and its performance. The MTR report<sup>5</sup> highlighted several achievements and challenges in the project implementation during the first eighteen months. These will constitute a midline for this evaluation. Some of these were:
  - In Tajikistan, LITACA has been effective in terms of institutionalisation of development planning and building capacities of local authorities in improving access and quality of public services (schooling, primary medical care, drinking water, sanitation, irrigation), as well as enhancing skills and capacities of citizens, including women, to engage in economic activities. However, the focus on direct delivery of the infrastructure projects by UNDP has impacted the pace and advancement of the implementation of other (soft) components; this specifically includes those related to public engagement in the planning process and economic development support services (through enhancing the role of both local governments and business consulting/ development centers to support local economic agents).
  - In Afghanistan, the potential for women’s meaningful economic empowerment is still limited by the project’s lack of a clear vision for strengthening women’s associational and group business/assets management abilities.
  - Potential for cross-border cooperation in the Project has been under-utilised due to insecurities, closure of the border between the two countries, and lack of a consolidated UN effort to advocate for cooperation at national levels.
13. The methodology will need to take into account the fact that the capacity building outcomes are complex and may involve multiple stakeholders at national and district levels. The evaluation will therefore need to

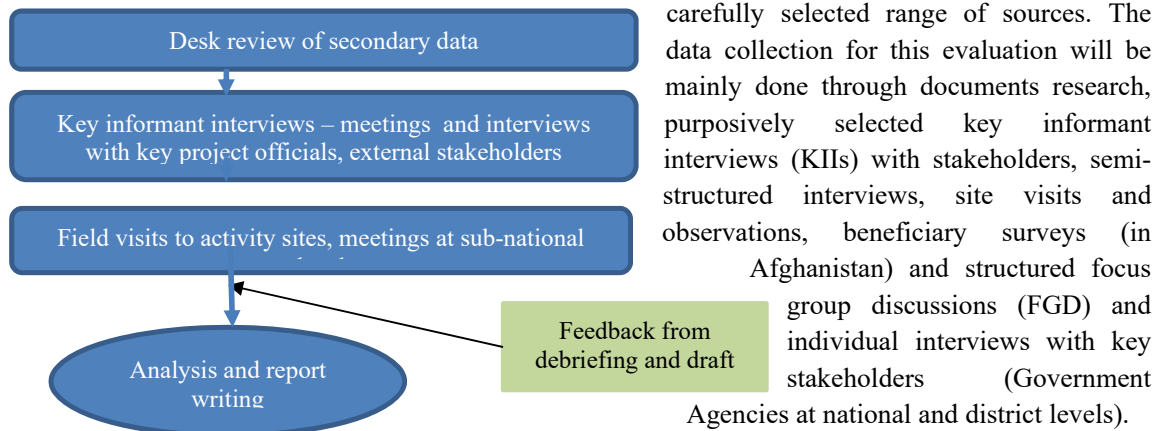
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<sup>4</sup> OECD/DAC. DAC Criteria for evaluating development assistance.

<sup>5</sup> Olena Krylova, Bahridin Azamatov, Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development (2015). REPORT, MID-TERM EVALUATION - Project for Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas (LITACA)

assess the *contributions made* by the project, rather than attribute the entire range of outcomes to project’s interventions. The rationale for adopting a **contributions approach**, rather than directly measuring/attributing all results to the various activities, is based on the premise that change is not linear and attributable to one specific intervention, but rather is the culmination of multiple interacting factors and institutions, of which this project is one.

14. A mixed-method approach will be best suited for this evaluation, with emphasis on qualitative changes the project activities have brought about or have potential to bring about. The overall methodology will be based on both inductive and deductive approaches using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a



The data collection for this evaluation will be mainly done through documents research, purposively selected key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders, semi-structured interviews, site visits and observations, beneficiary surveys (in Afghanistan) and structured focus group discussions (FGD) and individual interviews with key stakeholders (Government Agencies at national and district levels).

**Figure 1: Methodological framework**

### 3.4 Data collection tools

15. A set of tools (Table 3 below) have been developed for key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD) and surveys – these will be tested and fine-tuned by the evaluation team in consultation with UNDP evaluation managers in the two countries.

**Table 3: Data collection tools and targets**

Tool	Description	Target group
Tool I	Key informant interviews covering issues on capacity building, infrastructure rehabilitation and services, public private partnership	LA, district and Government agencies
Tool II	Survey on relevance and effectiveness of training on strategic planning, internal business process, district development planning	Local /district authority participants in training
Tool III	Key informant interview covering CSO engagement in business promotion, participation in business training/vocational education, trade fairs	CSOs and participants in business training, vocational training, business forums and study visits.
Tool IV	KII /FGD on OVOP and cross-border collaboration	Community leaders, OVOP beneficiaries.
Tool V	KII on overall performance	UNDP staff and MRRD/NABDP



### 3.5 Data validation, triangulation and independence of the evaluation

16. *Triangulation of data:* Since the evaluation will use a mixed-method approach to data collection, triangulation in various stages will be the cornerstone of data gathering and validation. This evaluation will mainly rely on:
- Source triangulation. The evaluators will compare information from different sources – attempt will be made to include multiple key informants from different agencies;
  - Method triangulation. Evaluators will compare information collected by different methods, e.g. interviews, surveys, focus group discussion, document review.

### 3.6 Reporting and presentation of findings

17. The evaluation will present findings and report of the evaluation in the following phases:
- Evaluation debriefing - oral presentation of key findings and conclusions to UNDP (in both Kabul and Dushanbe) and other relevant stakeholders as part of the validation process at the end of the field visits: this will be a participatory process to test, draw, refine and reformulate findings and lessons learned from the evaluation exercise;
  - Preparation of first draft of the evaluation report, to be revised based on feedback received from UNDP and other stakeholders;
  - Preparation of second draft of the report for wider circulation and comments;
  - Submission of final report, with summary and annexes.

## 4. Report format

18. The following is a rough outline format for the report which may be amended later:

*Executive Summary – 3-4 pages*

*Section 1: Introduction, Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation – 4 pages approx.*

- 1.1 Background to the evaluation
- 1.2 Purpose and scope of the evaluation
- 1.3 Organization of the evaluation
- 1.4 Methods, Key Interviewees and questions
  - 1.4.1 Key Steps
  - 1.4.2 The evaluation framework, key questions and limitations
  - 1.4.3 Key stakeholders
  - 1.4.4 Triangulation of information
- 1.5 Limitations
- 1.6 Format of the Report

*Section 2: LITACA Project Context and Content – 4 pages approx*

- 2.1 Overall Context and programme and objectives
- 2.2 Intended outcome and theory of change
- 2.3 Activities and resources

*Section 3: Findings of the Evaluation – 12 pages approx*

- 3.1 Output 1: Governance, access to rural infrastructure and economic development
  - 3.1.1 Enhanced capacity
  - 3.1.2 Rural infrastructure and services
  - 3.1.3 Job and income opportunities
- 3.2 Output 2: Cross-border, dialogue and partnerships

- 3.2.1 Information and experience exchange.
- 3.2.2 Cross-border economic cooperation
- 3.2.3 Cross-border disaster risk management

*Section 4: Assessment Against Criteria for Evaluation – 6 pages approx*

- 4.1 Relevance
- 4.2 Effectiveness
- 4.3 Efficiency
- 4.4 Sustainability

*Section 5: Key Conclusion, Lessons and Recommendations - 4 pages*

Annexes to the report:

- A1: ToR
- A2: Inception report
- A3: List of people interviewed/sites visited
- A4: Key documents studied
- A5: Evaluation itinerary

## 5. Time-frame

-Submission of inception (draft) report	05 September
-Finalisation of Inception Report	07 Sep
-Briefing and key informant interviews Kabul	06-10 Sep
-Support to Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development on data collection	10-16 Sep
-Preliminary analysis of data and initial findings	17-18 Sep
-Presentation of preliminary findings in Kabul	19 Sep
-Travel to Dushanbe	20 Sep
-Data collection in Tajikistan (international consultant to join national consultant on 21 September)	11-25 Sep
- Presentation of preliminary findings in Dushanbe	26 Sep
- Preparation and submission of 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of report	28 Sep-09 Oct
- Comments and feedback on first draft by UNDP to evaluation team	<b>24 Oct</b>
- Submission of second draft of evaluation report	<b>01 Nov</b>
- Comments and feedback on second draft by UNDP to evaluation team	<b>08 Nov</b>
- Submission of final report to UNDP with annexes	<b>14 Nov</b>

## 6. Quality assurance

19. The evaluation team will ensure that the following quality criteria are met by the evaluation:
- i. generate robust findings that can be clearly linked to various data sources through the quality-assurance process adopted;
  - ii. establish clear links between evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations on the specific criteria outlined in the TOR (and as expanded/amended in this inception report);
  - iii. conform to UNDP evaluation guidelines, UN Evaluation Group Standards for Evaluation<sup>6</sup> and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) (2008) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation;

<sup>6</sup> UNEG (2005). Standards for Evaluation in the UN System

- iv. ensure successful execution of the foregoing activities in an independent manner, so as to ensure credibility of the report's findings and recommendations, and be respectful of the client and stakeholders involved in the process; and
- v. ensure that all final documents submitted to UNDP are proofread, edited and produced according to UNDP style guide for evaluation reports.

## **7. Possible challenges and limitations**

- 20. The international consultant will not be allowed to travel to the project areas of Afghanistan due to security restrictions. A small team of national consultants from the AIRD will undertake data collection in the project area, with remote supervision by the international consultant.