ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION AFGHANISTAN

UNDP

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINAT
efficiency COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sus
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FO
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiver
DEVELOPMENT responsiveness NATIONAL OWNER
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP effectiveness COORDINAT
efficiency COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sus
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FO
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiver
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINA

UNDP

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS
EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION AFGHANISTAN

The Management Response for this evaluation can be accessed here:
http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageresponse/view.html?evaluationid=7226

REPORTS PUBLISHED UNDER THE ADR SERIES

Afghanistan
Angola
Argentina
Bangladesh
Barbados and OECS
Benin
Bhutan
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Cambodia
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Republic of the Congo
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Djibouti
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador

Ethiopia
Georgia
Ghana
Guatemala
Guyana
Honduras
India
Indonesia
Jamaica
Jordan
Kenya
Lao PDR
Liberia
Libya
Malawi
Maldives
Moldova
Mongolia
Montenegro
Mozambique
Nepal
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria
Pacific Islands

Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
The Philippines
Rwanda
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation. The evaluation team, led by Olivier Cossée from the Independent Evaluation Office (with thematic responsibility for rural development and subnational governance), consisted of Ross Mountain (strategic positioning); Alan Fox (from the Independent Evaluation Office, in charge of rule of law); Constance Kaplan (national governance and elections); and Karim Merchant (capacity development). The assessment was prepared and carried out with the invaluable assistance of UNDP staff in Afghanistan, especially Alvaro Rodriguez (Country Director); David Akopyan and his successor, Renaud Meyer (Deputy Country Directors – Programme until and after 2012, respectively), who acted as focal points for this assessment; as well as Irene Bernabeu, Coordination Specialist. We also thank the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific for its very constructive engagement; the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for its support to this exercise; and the representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the United Nations Country Team, civil society, nongovernmental organizations, donor countries and international funding institutions, for generously availing their time, information and insight to the evaluation team.

The quality enhancement and administrative support provided by our colleagues at the IEO was critical in the success of the evaluation. Michael Reynolds and Juha Uitto participated in the internal peer review of the draft report. Michael Craft and Anna Dall'Oca conducted an initial research and analysis of background data and reference material. Antana Locs and Michelle Sy provided administrative support. Sasha Jahic managed the publication of the report.

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present the 'Assessment of Development Results' (ADR) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the largest UNDP country programme, representing approximately 15 percent of all UNDP expenditures worldwide. Evaluating this large and complex programme in a thorough, independent and credible manner required a long evaluation process, which began in 2012 and finished in 2013. In line with the practice of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), a series of consultations on various drafts of the report were then held with key national and international partners, leading up to a stakeholder workshop held in Kabul on 16 April 2014. The feedback obtained from all these engagements has informed this final report.

The evaluation was conducted under difficult circumstances, with poor security posing significant constraints to in-country travel. In order to compensate for the inability of international evaluators to access rural Afghanistan, the evaluation involved an in-depth qualitative survey of programme beneficiaries' perceptions, conducted by Afghan evaluators in 10 provinces and 20 districts. This assessment provided a rich source of information, and complemented by other information, greatly helped in assessing programme results.
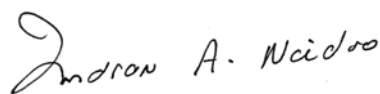
The evaluation found that UNDP assumed an extensive and very visible role in Afghanistan. Over the period under review, UNDP demobilized and disarmed ex-combatants, paid and trained the national police force, supported electoral processes, funded infrastructure development at the district level, and built the capacity of numerous state institutions. Some of these programmes delivered important development results while others did not. This report provides a comprehensive and detailed account of progress achieved.

UNDP's long-term presence in the country, its political neutrality, and its capacity to account transparently for the use of funds uniquely qualify it to implement a wide variety of governance, state-building and security-related programmes in Afghanistan. Other areas of UNDP's mandate, such as poverty alleviation, received less donor support. The ADR found that few of UNDP's interventions in Afghanistan addressed sustainable livelihoods and the need for job creation, even though poverty and conflict are probably interlinked.

Given the large scale of the Afghanistan programme, management and efficiency issues were fundamental to the assessment. It appears that the programme requires stronger operations, a more robust monitoring capacity and more stringent accountability systems than were in place during the period under review. The current Country Office management has started to rebalance the UNDP portfolio towards hitherto neglected areas, and is attempting to transform UNDP Afghanistan into a more capable and substantive partner than was the case during the evaluated period.

The task is far from finished. Afghanistan is now facing three major transitions: a security transition that will see the departure of practically all foreign troops in 2014, a political transition with the election of a successor to President Karzai, and an economic transition as the country struggles to become less aid-dependent. UNDP's efforts to develop coherent strategies in key areas of focus should help it approach these transitions proactively. I hope that this report will also contribute to this end and will be found useful more broadly to inform decision makers, over and above the implementation of its recommendations.

Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

CONTENTS

Tables

Figures

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Accountability and Transparency Project
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
ANBP	Afghanistan New Beginnings (also known as 'DDR project')
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
APRP	Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme
ASGP	Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme
ASOP	Afghanistan Social Outreach Program (USAID)
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CDC	Community Development Council
CNTF	Counter-Narcotic Trust Fund
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
DDA	District Development Assembly
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
ELECT	Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEP	Gender Equality Project
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIZ	*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (German cooperation agency)
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IEC	Independent Election Commission
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JHRA	Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MBAW	Making Budget and Aid Work
MDG	Millennium Development Goal

MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MRRD	Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP	National Area-Based Development Programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIBP	National Institution Building Project
NPP	National Priority Programme
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP
SAISEM	Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environmental Management in Afghanistan
SEAL	Supporting an Effective Afghan Legislature
TMAF	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the result of an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, conducted in 2012-2013. An ADR is a country-level evaluation conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Independent Evaluation Office to assess overall UNDP performance and contributions, and to draw lessons for the next programming cycle. The evaluation analysed UNDP's direct and indirect contributions to Afghanistan's development results in all thematic areas, as well as the strategies pursued by UNDP in the country from 2009 to 2014.

Specific criteria applied for the assessment included relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and strategic positioning. The ADR also identified significant cross-cutting factors that may explain the success or failure of a number of interventions, including the degree to which UNDP and its programmes addressed capacity development and gender, as well as the quality of management and oversight.

The evaluation process entailed background research, four country visits, and a 'beneficiary assessment'—an in-depth qualitative survey of programme beneficiaries in 10 provinces. The beneficiary assessment was intended to compensate for the limited ability of international evaluators to assess programme results at the local level because of security constraints.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

In 1978, President Muhammad Daud was overthrown by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. One year later, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan to rescue the new communist regime, which was facing a growing rural rebellion. For a decade, conflict raged between the Soviet-backed Afghan government and US-backed mujahedin rebel forces. Soviet troops withdrew in 1989, and a civil war ensued between mujahedin factions for control of the capital, Kabul. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan came to control the centre and south of the country, and fought bitterly against the Northern Alliance for control of the north. In October 2001, following the 11 September terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC, the Northern Alliance and a coalition of international forces toppled the Taliban government.

A new constitution was adopted in 2004, creating a centralized, presidential form of government with a bicameral legislature. The president is elected through direct suffrage and appoints cabinet ministers and provincial governors. Two rounds of presidential and parliamentary elections were held with UNDP support in 2004/2005 and 2009/2010. In 2014, the country entered a new electoral cycle: a first round of presidential election as well as provincial council elections took place on 5 April 2014, with parliamentary elections planned for 2015. Since 2010, the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC) has organized the country's elections.

While provincial councils were elected in 2005 and 2009, they suffer from a lack of capacity, lack of budgetary independence, confusion over their roles and authorities, and limited legitimacy. Although constitutionally required, district and village council elections have never been held. In the absence of formal district and village councils, the World Bank and UNDP have used *ad hoc* Community Development Councils (CDCs) and Districts Development Assemblies (DDAs) in their respective area development programmes.

Donors have generously funded Afghanistan's reconstruction. A regular series of conferences

have been convened to review progress and pledge further assistance. The 'Kabul Process', established in 2010, gave rise to National Priority Programmes (NPPs) and an agreement that 50 percent of donor assistance should be 'on budget' (channelled through the treasury), and 80 percent aligned with the NPPs.

Afghanistan has seen undeniable progress, particularly in the areas of health, education and power supply. The gains in educational, professional and political opportunities for girls and women represent important achievements, and have served to reverse some of the injustices and human rights abuses perpetrated against women under the Taliban regime. However, the reach of the line ministries and their capacity to deliver services outside the main cities remains limited.

Approximately 42 percent of Afghans live below the poverty line, compared to 33 percent in 2005. Eighty percent rely on agriculture. Over the past decade, policy documents have consistently put agriculture at the centre of efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's economy, but so far, the vision of an agriculturally led economic transformation has borne little fruit.

Poor security poses significant challenges, including for the United Nations (UN) and UNDP, making programme implementation more difficult and ramping up expenditures to reinforce offices, accommodations and vehicles.

UNDP'S RESPONSE AND STRATEGIES

Afghanistan is a UN integrated political mission. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is mandated by the Security Council to lead and coordinate international civilian efforts in Afghanistan. Important elements in UNAMA's 2012 and 2013 mandates were its role in supporting the organization, integrity and inclusiveness of elections, and in fostering aid coherence. Recent UNAMA mandates also highlighted the need for an evolution in UNAMA's and UN agencies' roles in line with the transition process, from direct service

delivery to support and capacity-building for Afghan institutions.

The UNDP programme, originally dominated by its role as an administrator of funds channelled by donors, has gradually become more substantive, particularly in the governance sector. UNDP has been closely associated with major efforts to improve governance, including through its support to the electoral process, capacity development assistance to numerous institutions, and support to the national budget process.

The current UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD, 2010–2014) closely reflects the national development priorities articulated in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), and focuses on the first two United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes: 1) fostering good governance, peace and stability; and 2) promoting sustainable livelihoods. These outcomes are being pursued through the following interventions:

- **Support to the rule of law**, through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which helps the Government pay and train the national police force, and through projects targeting corruption (the Accountability and Transparency Project, or 'ACT') and improved access to justice and human rights at the central and district levels (Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan, or 'JHRA').

- **Demobilization and disarmament**, through the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), and the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programmes.

- **Direct support to key democratic milestones and events**, through the ELECT project (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow).

- **Institutional development and capacity-building** to the legislature, judiciary, key ministries, agencies and commissions at the national level, mainly through the National

Institution-Building Project (NIBP), as well as support to subnational governance levels (provinces, districts), mainly through the Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP).

- **Poverty reduction and provision of basic social services**, mainly through the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP), which provides infrastructure, social services and economic projects through District Development Assemblies.

Afghanistan is the largest UNDP country programme by far, representing approximately 15 percent of UNDP expenditures worldwide. Resources have grown year after year over the reviewed period, driven by the continuous rise in police numbers. Over 2009–2013, UNDP spent approximately US$3.34 billion in Afghanistan, three quarters of which were incurred by LOTFA. As of September 2013, 580 national staff and 121 international staff were on UNDP's direct payroll, plus an estimated 2,233 'non-*Tashkeel*' (externally funded) personnel spread among various national institutions supported by UNDP.

As a result of a strategic review conducted in 2011, a change in Country Office management occurred in April 2012. A number of strategic changes followed, including new units to reinforce the Country Director's office, including units focused on risk management, communication with donors and policy. The new management has also tried to strengthen programme coherence and prepare for the next CPD by drafting cluster (i.e. thematic) strategies.

OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

UNDP delivered important, visible contributions to Afghanistan's development during the period under evaluation. Notable examples include:

- Despite some significant lapses in oversight, LOTFA has helped Afghanistan develop and operate a growing police force. Newly recruited police officers have followed a diversified training effort, even if many police officers hired in previous years remain illiterate. The steady growth of the police force over the years—and hence the remarkable growth of the LOTFA project—is linked to what an interlocutor called a "perverse metamorphosis" of the police into a counter-insurgency outfit, at the expense of community policing. LOTFA has introduced a modest community policing component in recent years and has helped increase the representation of women within the police services in order to facilitate women's access to the police. However, a more systemic reorientation and retooling of the Afghan National Police may be in order.

- Over 2,000 micro-projects have been implemented by the NABDP, from roads and bridges to schools and health centres, irrigation works and river protection walls. Results are visible and generally useful, although geographically concentrated around provincial capitals, which raises inequity concerns. The District Development Assemblies (DDAs) with which the programme works benefit from the generally positive perception of indigenous governance systems and may soon receive formal legal status. Nonetheless, the DDAs need greater support from a programme that has primarily focussed on brick-and-mortar and has paid insufficient attention to community organization issues.

- UNDP has funded equipment, buildings, furniture and a large number of national and international technical assistance personnel to strengthen the capacity in various governmental units, including the President's Office, Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, and the Independent Electoral Commission. While it was useful to stop-gap capacity, the

sustainability of UNDP's approach has been questioned. Few initiatives were based on a thorough capacity assessment.

- The presidential and provincial council elections in 2009 proved extremely controversial and demonstrated that little progress had been made in building national capacity at the time. The IEC required significant international support to implement the election, the quality of the election was arguably inferior to that of 2004, and costs were not reduced. The 2010 election was a much improved electoral event, and did manage to save costs compared to 2009. So far, the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections seem to be unfolding satisfactorily. However, the lack of an accurate voter registry indexed by voting station remains a concern.

- In the critical area of subnational governance, policy and legislative support was provided to the drafting of the country's Subnational Governance Policy and related legislation, and capacity-building support was extended to provincial and district governor offices and municipalities, notably in the area of revenue collection.

- In the area of gender, women's participation in national and local elections and their presence in the national parliament and in provincial councils, when they could not even leave their houses before 2001, send a powerful message about political equality. Results of UNDP's gender-dedicated programmes include contributions to gender-responsive budgeting, the increased capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to interact with line ministries and monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan, support to a few provincial Departments of Women's Affairs offices, and engagement with religious leaders on the issue of the rights of women. However, cultural sensitivities proved a significant constraint. Several generations will likely pass before deeper changes can begin to take root.

There are also areas where UNDP's engagement has yielded limited results so far:

- Notwithstanding a few interesting initiatives with line ministries and support to the independent Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, anti-corruption efforts supported by UNDP have so far suffered from insufficient political commitment, even as progress against corruption was listed at the London and Kabul conferences as a key condition to further international assistance.

- Results in the justice sector have also fallen short of expectations. Despite new legislation and some modest physical and individual capacity created, the Afghan judiciary remains one of the least trusted among government institutions. Traditional justice systems, analysed in a UNDP National Human Development Report in 2007, remain dominant in rural Afghanistan, but unattended by UNDP programmes.

- The effectiveness of the demobilization process is open to question. Years of demobilization and disarmament efforts have led to mediocre results, due to the lack of an overarching peace agreement and overly complex, unpractical programme design, where a plethora of institutions and ministries are involved in the reintegration process. Similarly, anti-narcotics efforts have had little positive impact, as poppy cultivation is reaching record levels.

- Natural resources and disaster risk management received some 0.1 percent of the resources channelled through UNDP in Afghanistan during the period under review. These resources were used to strengthen the capacities of the National Environment Protection Agency and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

In terms of capacity development, UNDP has mainly supported the central and executive branch of government. Paradoxically, scarce support went to the weakest pillars of the Afghan state: local governments, the legislature and the

judiciary. As is often the case, there were no in-depth capacity assessments to ensure that each capacity development response would target pertinent capacity gaps. UNDP has approached its massive capacity development portfolio in a disjointed manner, attempting to stop-gap institutional capacity rather than supporting the resolution of structural issues faced by the civil service. It is high time to rationalize this area of support, e.g. through closer collaboration with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and the Public Administration Reform (PAR), which provides the only holistic process of review and reform of the Afghan public sector.

In terms of programmatic areas, UNDP achieved little in the area of poverty reduction and income generation. The main project listed under this outcome is the NABDP, which has had good results in delivering transport, irrigation and social infrastructure, but stopped working on private enterprise development at the beginning of the review period. Of all the programmes reviewed, only the Rural Enterprise Development project in Kandahar and the Gender Equality Project provided some modest support to agro-industry and cottage industry development. This insufficient attention to poverty alleviation and economic development deserves to be corrected.

EFFICIENCY

The early years of the period under review saw the development in the UNDP Country Office of a management culture characterized by frequent interference in individual programme management; flexible support extended to key officials through a liberal use of Letters of Agreement; rapid promotion of relatively junior national staff in posts of responsibility within the Country Office; long and opaque recruitment processes leading to long periods of vacancy in some key programme positions; and attempts to control the message to donors rather than report transparently on achievements and challenges. These management issues gravely affected the efficiency and delivery of key programmes. Important

donors have reduced or in some cases withdrawn their support, and programmes were cut short as a result of management disputes and misunderstandings between partners. The recently investigated LOTFA procurement fraud was in all likelihood a symptom of this more general management problem.

From 2009 to 2011, Afghanistan did not receive significantly more attention from headquarters than much smaller programmes in other countries. Until mid-2012, only one programme officer was responsible for backstopping Afghanistan in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) in New York. Other UNDP units, such as the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), reported feeling excluded.

In 2011, UNDP commissioned a Strategic Review of its Afghanistan country programme, which led ultimately to the appointment of a new Country Director in April 2012. Since his appointment, the new Country Director has attempted to restore both the normal functioning of a Country Office and good working relations with the Government and donors, radically improving the image of UNDP in country in a matter of a few months. However, the process of reforming the administrative, logistic and oversight mechanisms of the Country Office will clearly take more time. The current Country Office management has raised the bar in terms of accountability, but also needs to instil a greater *esprit de corps* and mutual understanding between the programme staff and the staff of the Country Office.

UNDP headquarters has also remobilized around the Afghanistan programme. A new division focused specifically on Afghanistan has been established in RBAP at headquarters and a high-level Inter Bureau Task Force on Afghanistan now coordinates the inputs of various bureaux and units. An appropriate level of headquarter oversight has been restored and more substantive support is now provided. Two auditors were hired solely for Afghanistan and many more audits have taken place than in the past.

UNDP's efficiency in Afghanistan should be viewed through the lens of a country embroiled in conflict for the last 30 years. Poor security has strong effects on timelines and costs, with multiple staff evacuations, restrictions of staff movement, threats, and periodic attacks on soft targets at the provincial and capital levels, leading to interruptions in activities. Running costs are exceptionally high, as are turnover rates among both national and international staff. As a result of poor security, UNDP's ability to monitor and evaluate the performance of service providers outside Kabul remains very low, weakening UNDP's capacity to report to donors and the Government about programme results and challenges.

A perceived lack of synergies between parallel programmes has affected the Afghanistan country programme for some time. Potential for collaboration between programmes is perceived as greater at the provincial level, between ASGP, NABDP and APRP. Synergies among programmes implemented at the local level could also result from the consolidation of project presence in the provinces into UNDP sub-offices led by individuals with the capacity and authority to represent UNDP at that level. Presently, UNDP's regional offices are project offices, ill-equipped to foster collaboration, and poorly supported administratively and logistically by the Kabul office.

SUSTAINABILITY

Very few of the results described above are sustainable beyond the end of international support. The lack of clear and credible exit strategies is noted in numerous thematic areas. Even NABDP, admittedly one of the best programmes, pays insufficient attention to operation and maintenance issues. Elections have been undertaken in a manner that leads to unsustainable costs, sending the message that Afghanistan cannot afford democracy. Reliance on the donor-funded 'second civil service' (non-*Tashkeel* personnel) to stop-gap capacity in various institutions was useful at first, but has grown into a problem. These staff generally perform

core institutional functions rather than train regular civil servants, but they are almost never transferred into the civil service. Absent continued external support, there is no assurance that such capacity will be retained by the relevant public agencies. Similarly, there is no economic scenario, however optimistic in its assumptions, leading to a future where Afghanistan could afford the massive police force it has developed with donor support over the past decade.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Over the evaluated period, UNDP's programmes have been clearly focused on national priorities articulated in the ANDS. This document, which UNDP help draft in the previous programming period, served for the period in review as a 'blueprint', approved by both the Government and the international community, for the development of a democratic and stable Afghanistan. The ANDS was a turning point in that it allowed the Government to assert its leadership over a development agenda hitherto dominated by donors. The ANDS has since been further delineated in the NPPs. Although UNDP was not significantly involved in the development of the NPPs, its programmes align well with them.

UNDP has displayed in Afghanistan a genuine commitment to national ownership and leadership. UNDP programmes have in their overwhelming majority reflected this commitment, and have associated national institutions as partners and in various implementation roles, whether individual projects happen to be under direct implementation by the Country Office or under national implementation. This commitment to national ownership is not always recognized, and tends to be blurred by a still excessive focus on service delivery. In Afghanistan, UNDP has been able to leverage its neutrality relative to the different donors and the legitimate political forces in the country to act as a non-politicized conduit from donors to government. One could argue that UNDP has been all too happy to accept this service delivery role and should have resisted it more often. Some of these delivery

mechanisms, such as LOTFA, have also proven less reliable than they were claimed to be. But in most cases, UNDP did try to use its strategic position to defend national priorities, develop national capacities and progressively transfer responsibilities to national institutions. Electoral assistance is a good example of this transition.

While UNDP in Afghanistan has been able to leverage strong partnerships with the Government and donors, its relations with UN sister agencies, the World Bank, civil society and the private sector have tended to be weaker. These partnership patterns are consistent with the image of a UNDP chiefly concerned with service delivery at the expense of high-level policy dialogue. Reorienting the programme towards more substantive support is therefore likely to require better coordination within the UN Country Team and broader partnerships.

In a country where poor security and difficult terrain combine to hamper access to most valleys and villages, the massive international development assistance, including that of UNDP, has tended to remain in the capital city with limited trickle-down to the provincial, district and village levels. In particular, UNDP programmes have paid limited attention to Afghan indigenous governance systems, which remain a bedrock of Afghan society. Nonetheless, reconciling the central government with traditional governance and conflict resolution systems could hold one of the keys to future political stability in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

1. As UNDP approaches the multiple transitions ahead, it brings with it significant assets, including its long association with Afghanistan, widespread geographic coverage, access to key government institutions, and potential access to significant resources.

2. UNDP also has to overcome a number of disadvantages, including the perceptions that it is accustomed to the role of service provider, that it competes with the Government

for donors' funds, that it lacks substance and independence, and has insufficient capacity to demonstrate tangible results.

3. UNDP's goals during the 2010-2014 CPD would have been ambitious in normal circumstances; it was inevitable that the programme would fall short in a number of aspects given the difficult security conditions and complex political situation in the years following the design of the CPD. Important achievements have been made and are described in this report. However, there remain strong imbalances in terms of programme areas, geographic distribution of assistance, and types of beneficiaries.

4. Very few of the key development results UNDP contributed to are sustainable beyond the end of international support. Overall, UNDP programmes have relied on the assumption that they are in Afghanistan over the long term. The lack of clear and credible exit strategies is noted in this report in numerous areas.

5. During the first years of the period under review, and before a new Country Director improved leadership and oversight from UNDP headquarters, efficiency suffered from the development in the UNDP Country Office of a questionable management culture.

6. Efficiency needs to be considered in the context of a country in the midst of perpetual conflict over the last 30 years. Running costs are exceptionally high and poor security has strong effects on timelines—stronger than generally recognized.

7. Many donors appear to be open to increased financing of development activities through UNDP, recognizing that there are limited alternatives if they are to deliver the resource commitments made at the Tokyo conference (July 2012). Yet the trust of some important donors in UNDP's capacity to effectively deliver quality programmes on a national scale has been undermined during the period under review. Winning back their confidence

will be necessary if UNDP is to be successful in re-casting itself as a substantive partner.

8. UNDP's close association with the Government corresponds to the organization's mandate and approach, and is aligned with the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which recognizes national leadership and transparency as critical for success.

9. Over the reviewed period, UNDP has had insufficient ties with civil society, including civil society organizations and NGOs. At this critical juncture, the Afghan nation requires strong public pressure and active civil society organizations to lobby for improving education and health, gender equality, accountable government, and the battle against corruption.

10. Greater coherence and collaboration among UNDP programmes active at the subnational level, such as ASGP and NABDP, would be desirable to heighten impact and help save personnel, financial and logistic resources. The Country Office's genuine efforts in this direction have met with little progress thus far.

11. Opportunities for synergies between UNAMA and UNDP have not been systematically pursued, beyond their effective collaboration on elections. Over the years, an unfortunate distance or disconnect seems to have persisted between UNAMA and the UNCT. The UN mission in Afghanistan has been and remains one of the organization's most difficult. Progress has been frustratingly slow, and the numerous setbacks along the way, in particular the 2009 elections, have put the Integrated Mission model to serious test.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNDP needs to continue to rebuild confidence with the Government and its donors so that they will be more likely to support the ideas, frameworks and directions promoted by the organization.

2. During the next country programme, UNDP should continue to prioritize democratic governance and the rule of law, where it brings to bear a clear comparative advantage. However, the next country programme must devote greater attention to the weakest pillars of Afghan democracy (local governments, the legislature and the judiciary) and should try to contribute more convincingly to the fight against poverty and (where possible) environmental protection, in accordance with its poverty-environment nexus strategy.

3. UNDP should examine the possibility of setting up additional multi-donor, multilateral trust funds in support of the transition.

4. UNDP should strengthen its involvement in aid coordination forums and processes.

5. UNDP Country Office management should, as a matter of priority, improve operational capacity and programme effectiveness by rebuilding a cohesive team of national and international staff committed to achieving results for Afghanistan.

6. Subnational governance and service delivery should continue to be a major component of the UNDP Country Programme. To that end, UNDP should also establish regional offices that can better integrate UNDP project activities.

7. Given the extensive *de facto* local autonomy that has been a feature of Afghan governance in the past, specific attention needs to be paid to engaging with customary Afghan governance and judicial systems, which may not be up to international standard but have the important advantages of legitimacy and efficacy, and could play a useful role in the edification of the Afghan state.

8. The strategic coherence of UNDP's capacity development initiatives should be strengthened through stronger support to the Public Administration Reform process. Sustainability of capacity-building results needs more serious consideration in programme design and during implementation.

The recourse to large numbers of non-*Tashkeel* staff as a stop-gap measure must be reduced, and UNDP should consider a gradual increase in the use of national implementation to help raise capacity in a sustainable manner.

9. UNDP should make preparations to reduce its exposure to poor security conditions, by outsourcing some activities, in particular monitoring and evaluation, and by moving some administrative functions outside the country. It could also consider disengaging itself responsibly from its riskiest programme, the largely ineffective APRP, or radically simplifying its institutional arrangements.

10. The Country Office urgently needs to expand its communications capacity to ensure that the Afghan Government, Afghan citizens as well as development partners are aware of UNDP's goals and the impact its programmes have on helping improve the lives of average Afghan people.

11. UNDP should reach out to civil society, including through regular information events during the build-up to the elections and by involving carefully selected NGOs as programme implementers, primarily at the provincial and district levels, but also in lobbying, awareness-raising and civic education efforts.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is an independent country-level evaluation conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2012–2013. The ADR assesses UNDP's overall performance and contribution to stabilization and development in Afghanistan during the current programme cycle (originally 2010–2013, extended to 2014), and draws lessons for future strategies, particularly for the next programme cycle, 2015–2018.

This is the second ADR conducted in Afghanistan. The first ADR was undertaken in 2008–2009[1] and covered the period 2002–2008. The present ADR covers the period 2009–2013, corresponding approximately with the current programming period (2010–2014).

The objectives of the ADR were to:

- Support the UNDP Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the UNDP Executive Board. The ADR will be made available to Executive Board members when the new Afghanistan country programme is presented in September 2014.

- Support greater UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and partners in the programme country.

- Serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions at the country level, and contribute to learning at the corporate, regional and country levels.

The evaluation undertook a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio and activities during the period under review, specifically examining UNDP contribution to national development results. It assessed key results and outcomes—anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative, intentional and unintentional—and covered UNDP assistance funded from both core and non-core resources.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The ADR examined the UNDP strategy and performance from two perspectives. First, UNDP's contribution to development results was assessed according to four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (Table 1). Second, UNDP's strategic positioning was assessed, considering how UNDP positioned itself within Afghanistan's development and policy space, and what strategies it took in assisting national development efforts. This assessment was made according to the following criteria: strategic relevance and responsiveness to changes in national context, use of UNDP's comparative strengths, promotion of UN values and a human development perspective, role in coordination of international assistance, and partnerships with various stakeholders.

The ADR also identified significant cross-cutting factors that may explain the success or

---

1   UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', Evaluation Office, 2009.

failure of a number of interventions, including the degree to which UNDP and its programmes addressed capacity development and gender, as well as the quality of management and oversight. Detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) are presented in Annex 1.

Data collection triangulated the results of multiple evaluation techniques, including document reviews, group and individual interviews, telephone interviews, direct observations during field visits, and a survey commissioned to review the results achieved at the district level.

Table 1. Evaluation criteria	
Criteria	**Evaluative Questions**
Development results	
Relevance	Is the country programme, as designed and implemented in each thematic area, aligned with the main priorities for development expressed by the Government? Is it addressing pressing development challenges? Was the selection of geographical and thematic areas of intervention guided by need?
Effectiveness	Did the UNDP programme accomplish its intended objectives and planned results? What are the most salient results achieved under each focus area? What are the unexpected results it yielded? How do these achieved results compare with planned results? To what extent are long-term development needs likely to be met across the practice areas?
Efficiency	What resources have UNDP and donors made available to the Afghanistan programme (staff, financial resources)? How judiciously were these resources utilized? Could the programme have achieved more with the same resources, or made the same contribution with fewer resources?
Sustainability	To what extent are the results that UNDP contributed to through the country programme sustainable? Were appropriate exit strategies included in project design and implemented? Are the results achieved well known and "owned" locally and nationally? Were national stakeholders adequately involved in programme delivery? Did UNDP engage in national capacity development to improve sustainability prospects? With what results?
Strategic positioning	
Strategic relevance	Has the programme as a whole been addressing the main development challenges of the country? Were there critical gaps in UNDP programming? Did UNDP apply the right programming strategies within the specific political, economic and social context of the country? Is there an adequate balance between upstream (policy- level) and downstream (project-level) initiatives? Between interventions at the central level (capital) and subnational level? Between regions in the country?
Responsive-ness	How responsive has UNDP and its programmatic focus and strategies been to emerging needs and an evolving country context? What were the missed opportunities in UNDP programming?
Use of comparative strengths	Are all interventions clearly within UNDP's mandate? To what extent were they designed to make use of UNDP's comparative strengths, e.g. promoting capacity development, impartiality and neutrality in policy advice, convening capacity and public-private partnerships, and South-South cooperation? Has UNDP used its global network of expertise to bring in examples of good practice or share experience?
Equity, gender equality and human development	Was the country programme based on an assessment of inequality problems? Did it attempt to contribute to gender equality and human rights? Are some projects targeting women, the most vulnerable or the youth? Are there cases of 'elite capture', i.e. projects benefiting mainly the richest segments of society? Did UNDP interventions in any way influence the existing inequities in society?

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2012, the Evaluation Manager conducted a preparatory mission to discuss the plans, scope and arrangements for the ADR with the Country Office, Government representatives and donors; assess the 'evaluability' of the programme; and draft TORs.

The preparatory mission also allowed the Evaluation Manager to identify candidate consultancy firms to conduct a 'beneficiary assessment'—an in-depth qualitative survey of programme beneficiaries throughout the country. The beneficiary assessment was intended to compensate for the severe security constraints and travel limitations imposed on UN personnel in Afghanistan, which seriously restricted the ability of international evaluators to assess programme results at the local level.

The beneficiary assessment focused on the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP), a large programme started in 2002. The NABDP is implemented in rural areas all over the country. Its purpose is to contribute to poverty reduction through medium-size infrastructure projects selected in a participatory manner by representative District Development Assemblies (DDAs). Among the interventions currently funded by UNDP and implemented at the local level in Afghanistan, NABDP has the longest history and the widest geographical scope, which made it a good candidate for an in-depth assessment of results achieved at the subnational level. The beneficiary assessment was contracted out to a consulting firm and undertaken from July to September 2012 in 10 provinces (Annex 4). In total, the beneficiary assessment team held 42 focus group interviews with male beneficiaries, 34 focus group interviews with female beneficiaries, and 32 focus groups with non-beneficiaries living in villages not yet reached by the project.

For several reasons—including the extension of the Country Programme Document (CPD) period from 2010–2013 to cover 2014, and the change of Country Director in mid-2012—the main ADR evaluation mission was postponed to

early 2013. A team of independent international experts conducted the 20-day mission in April of that year. The bulk of data, therefore, was collected in mid-2013. Data presented in this report was generally current at the time of collection, and accordingly, may be out of date at time of printing.

During the main mission, members of the evaluation team visited the provinces of Bamyan, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Parwan, in order to observe project sites and activities, assess UNDP capacity at the regional level, and collect the views of additional beneficiaries and stakeholders, notably provincial officials. The visited provinces are amongst the most secure in the country. Travels to more insecure areas, such as Kandahar and Nangrahar, were also scheduled but were subsequently cancelled due to security considerations or logistical problems (see section 1.3, Limitations).

The evaluation collected information and perceptions from relevant programme stakeholders, including: i) UNDP staff posted at headquarters in the Afghanistan Division of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), as well as in the United Nations Department of Political Affairs/Electoral Assistance Division and Department of Peacekeeping Operations; ii) UNDP staff in the Country Office and in the main project management units, including current and past project managers; iii) representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; iv) heads of UN agencies and multilateral organizations present in Kabul; v) diplomatic, development and military personnel in embassies, donor organizations and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); vi) civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and vii) a small sample of programme beneficiaries. Furthermore, to identify key development challenges, the evaluation team conducted consultations beyond those involved directly or indirectly with the UNDP Afghanistan country programme. A total of 310 persons were interviewed for this evaluation. For a complete list, see Annex 2.

The final ADR report was prepared and validated through exchange of drafts with the Country Office, the Government and donors.

The ADR process was conducted in parallel with two outcomes evaluations managed by the Country Office, and benefited from their findings.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

As often is the case, finding the right frame of reference against which to assess development results proved challenging. The set of objectives and intended results outlined in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2010-2013 and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for the same period did not always provide relevant points of comparison, as the context has evolved significantly since their formulation. Given the importance of some of the projects implemented in Afghanistan—both in financial terms and as units of accountability for the Government and donors—these projects were primarily evaluated in comparison with their own goals as stated in relevant project documents as agreed with the Government and donors, and the extent to which they contributed to CPD outcomes.

Rapid staff turnover limited the opportunities to discuss programme results and management issues with some of the staff directly responsible for them. Similarly, in several embassies, the mission's interlocutors were relatively new and had little institutional memory. When possible, former staff were interviewed by telephone.

Visits by the main evaluation team to Jalalabad (east) and Kandahar (south) were cancelled for security and logistical reasons. Those regions lay at the heart of the insurgency, and are therefore less secure than the areas in the north, west and centre, which could be visited by the main mission. Fortunately, the beneficiary assessment did cover the south (Kandahar and Helmand), and the east (Nangarhar and Paktia).

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report consists of six chapters. Following the introduction, chapter 2 summarizes the national context and Afghanistan's primary development challenges. Chapter 3 offers a short overview of the UNDP Country Programme, its main projects and organizational set up in Afghanistan. Chapter 4 details the assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results in each thematic area and against the key evaluation criteria. Chapter 5 analyses UNDP's strategic position in the country. Finally, drawing on findings from chapters 4 and 5, chapter 6 proposes a set of conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

This chapter describes the context within which UNDP supports Afghanistan, and sets out the background against which the rest of the report assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the UNDP Afghanistan Country Programme. The chapter identifies key governance, economic, security and environmental challenges facing Afghanistan; reviews the main national development strategies; and briefly explores the structures and coordination of international cooperation, an important feature in contemporary Afghanistan.

2.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is a semi-arid, land-locked and mountainous country of approximately 652,000 square kilometres, sharing borders with China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and a sector of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir that is controlled by Pakistan. About half of its territory is more than 2,000 metres above sea level. In 2000, the United Nations Population Fund estimated the population of Afghanistan at some 22.7 million.[2] The major languages are Pashto and Dari/Farsi.

Throughout its history, Afghanistan has often found itself in the path of invading armies. It became a buffer state between the British and Russian empires in the late 19th Century, and a Cold War battlefield in 1978, when President Muhammad Daud was overthrown by the leftist

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. In 1979, Soviet troops came to rescue the new communist regime from a budding rural rebellion. From 1979 to 1989, conflict raged between the Soviet-backed Afghan government and US-backed mujahedin rebel forces. Soviet troops were unable to win this asymmetric war and endured significant losses. After their withdrawal, a civil war pitted mujahedin factions against one another during the 1990s.

From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, drawn from the Pashtun majority, came to control 80 to 90 percent of the country in the centre and south. Taliban forces fought bitterly against groups federated under the Northern Alliance[2], which were drawn mainly from Afghanistan's minority communities and controlled the north of the country.

The terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Qaeda in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 led to a massive US bombing campaign of Taliban positions, rapid Northern Alliance advances, and the toppling of the Taliban government in October 2001. In December 2001, the UN Security Council authorized the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help provide basic security for Afghanistan. NATO countries contributed varied levels of troops to ISAF over the years, with the United States as the main contributor.

As envisaged in the Bonn Agreement (December 2001), a new constitution was adopted in 2004, creating a centralized, presidential form of government with a bicameral legislature: the House

---

2   The most recent census was conducted in 1979, when the population was reported to be about 15.5 million.

3   Officially known as the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan.

of Elders (*Meshrano Jirga*) and the House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*). The president is elected through direct suffrage and appoints cabinet ministers and provincial governors.

At the Berlin conference in March 2004, the Afghan Government presented a post-conflict transition plan. Donors responded generously and pledged some $8.2 billion towards rehabilitation and reconstruction activities for a three-year period (2004 to 2007). Subsequent international conferences would add new and growing pledges of military, financial and development assistance (Table 5).

The period from 2002–2005 was marked by significant progress in building up institutions, stabilizing the economy, beginning the reconstruction of ruined capital assets and developing programmes. But 2005 and 2006 saw an inflection point in Afghanistan's recovery.[4] The attention of the United States, Afghanistan's largest international partner, had been diverted to Iraq. The Taliban, which appeared defeated in 2004, were able to regroup in cross-border sanctuaries and conflict intensified after 2005, particularly in the south and east of the country.

According to the World Bank, real per capita gross domestic product (GDP) has almost doubled since 2001, after a significant decline over the previous 23 years. Public financial/revenue management has improved significantly, and inflation remains relatively low. Undeniable progress was made in the areas of health and education as well. As a result of these efforts, more children have access to education than anytime in Afghan history.

However, these gains remain fragile. Much of the international assistance that paid for such progress was delivered through channels—including UN programmes, NGOs, military units with a specific reconstruction role (called Provincial Reconstruction Teams or PRTs) and private companies—that tended to bypass governmental institutions, reflecting donors' concerns about capacity and corruption. Outside the main cities, the reach of Kabul's line ministries and their capacity to deliver services remain thin.

NATO allies have set a timetable to withdraw most foreign troops by the end of 2014. Starting in 2011, ISAF began to transfer security responsibilities to Afghan armed and police forces, in a process known locally as *inteqal* ('transition' in Dari).

GOVERNANCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Immediately after the adoption of the new constitutions, a first round of presidential and parliamentary elections was held in 2004 and 2005. Another round of elections was held in 2009 (presidential and provincial council) and 2010 (parliamentary), organized for the first time by the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC), with UNDP support. The 2009 elections were marred by poor security, violence, extremely low voter turnout (about 33 percent)[5], and allegations of widespread fraud.[6] More than 1 million votes were excluded from the final counting and it took two months to decide the outcome. President Hamid Karzai was ultimately declared the winner after the runner-up, Abdullah Abdullah, withdrew from the second turn. The 2010 parliamentary elections elected members of the House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*). There were again allegations of massive fraud[7], and the election commission

---

4   World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 'Afghanistan Country Program Evaluation, Evaluation of the World Bank Group Program, 2002–11', 2013.

5   Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission-UNAMA, 'Joint Monitoring of Political Rights, Presidential and Provincial Council Elections, Third Report', 1 August – 21 October 2009.

6   See for instance, OSCE/ODIHR, 'Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Presidential and Provincial Council Elections – Election Support Team Final Report', 8 December 2009.

7   OSCE/ODIHR, 'Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Parliamentary Elections – Election Support Team Final Report', 26 November 2010.

voided more than 20 percent, or 1.3 million, of the ballots after investigations. Peter Galbraith, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan in charge of political affairs, publically disagreed about the electoral process with Kai Eide, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the time, and was fired as a result.[8]

Afghanistan entered a new series of elections in 2014. The first round of the presidential election, as well as provincial council elections, took place on 5 April 2014, with parliamentary elections to the *Wolesi Jirga* planned to follow in 2015. These elections are widely seen as key to preparing the transition, building the country's self-confidence and giving a strong mandate to the next government. The first round of the presidential election was generally seen as successful by observers. More than 7 million out of an estimated eligible 12 million voters cast their ballot, according to the electoral commission. No candidate secured more than the 50 percent of the vote, and a run-off is expected to take place in June 2014.

UNDP has been closely associated with major efforts to improve governance, including through its support to the electoral process, capacity development assistance to numerous institutions, and support to the national budget process. However, while structures have been put into place, their efficacy in bringing responsive governance and services to populations is less clear. State institutions remain fragile and their capacity to deliver basic services and security throughout the country remains weak.

A major challenge in Afghanistan has been the widespread reliance on staff hosted in, and recruited by, line ministries and other national institutions but funded by donors, either to work on donor-funded projects or to assist the regular functions of the institution. These staff are commonly referred to as 'non-*Tashkeel* staff'[9], 'externally funded staff', 'National Technical Advisors', or collectively, 'the parallel civil service'.

The Ministry of Finance has estimated that as of 2010, about 7,000 Afghan consultants work in non-security ministries and agencies. A 2011 World Bank survey of eight key ministries and one agency found just under 5,000 'non-*Tashkeel* staff' working in these entities, all but 200 of them Afghans, estimated to cost $125 million a year (Figure 1). According to these estimates, externally funded staff would only represent about 4 percent of the whole governmental workforce, but would receive as much as 40 percent of total payroll expenditures, because their salaries are on average much higher than those of regular civil servants. The capacity that these staff represents is likely to be lost, at least in part, after 2014.[10]

SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Subnational governance is a particularly challenging issue in Afghanistan. The Afghan governance context has historically been characterized by formal centralization combined with *de facto* local fragmentation. In practice, Kabul's reach throughout the country has always been limited, and mediated through customary law, tribal alliances and religious leadership.[11] Previous constitutional arrangements outlined a centralized governance structure, but little attempt was made by those in power in Kabul to actually impose their will on the myriads of

---

8   UNAMA is headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General supported by two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, one for political affairs and the other for development issues. The latter is also the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, as well as the UNDP Resident Representative in the country.

9   The *tashkeel* is the official number of civil servants paid out of the Treasury that state ministries and institutions can hire.

10 World Bank, 'Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014 - Volume 1: Overview', May 2012.

11 Nixon H., 'The 'Subnational Governance' Challenge and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance', in Martine van Biljert and Sari Kouvo (ed.), *Snapshots of an Intervention, the Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance (2001-11)*, The Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012, pages 117-123.

Figure 1. Share of externally funded staff (EFS) in eight ministries and one agency (2011, percent)

Workforce

National EFS
3.9%

International EFS
0.2%

Civil service
95.9%

Total payroll costs

International EFS
7.9%

National EFS
31.9%

Civil service
60.2%
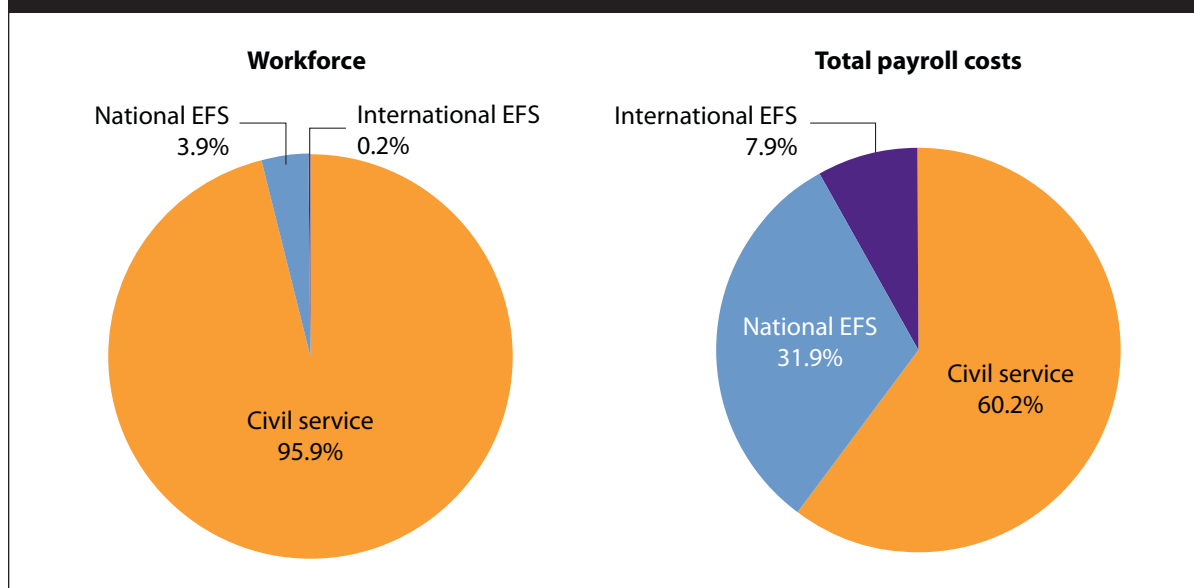
Source: World Bank staff calculations.

valleys composing the country. The only exceptions were in 1978/79, when the young communist regime aggressively promoted land tenure and other reforms. This ignited the Afghan civil war. A form of *de facto* decentralization began to occur, as a class of military commanders started exercising varying degrees of autonomy over large parts of the country. The conflict further weakened the reach of the central government and empowered regional and local strongmen—so-called commanders—who gained prominence in the anti-Soviet resistance and the internecine struggles that followed.

After 2001, and in the wake of a protracted civil war characterized by fragmentation of power at the local level, it was deemed imperative to build a highly centralized mode of governance where virtually all resource allocations, revenues remitted, and budgets and administrative processes are managed in Kabul. The Constitution of 2004 confirmed that the political architecture of the country was that of a unitary (nonfederal) state, divided into 34 provinces and some 400 districts.[12] Power remains highly centralized and personalized. Provincial governors

(*Wali*) and district governors (*Uluswal*) are all nominated by and under the authority of the President.

Local government bodies offer a potential means to represent Afghans and respond to their needs, but these institutions suffer from a lack of capacity, lack of budgetary independence, confusion over their roles and authorities, and limited legitimacy. While provincial councils were elected in 2005 and 2009, they are still seeking effective roles in securing provincial development. Despite a constitutional requirement, district and village council elections have yet to be held, officially because of the significant cost that would have to be incurred by the IEC and because the limits between some districts are still to be agreed upon. According to the IEC, the first district elections could happen in 2017.

A major portion of expenditure for development projects for all 34 provinces is procured at the centre by line ministries. Successive frameworks for reconstruction and development—including the 2008 Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS)—emphasised improving governance at

---

12 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2004, Arts 137–140.

CHAPTER 2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

all levels, but failed to provide a coherent decentralization agenda.

Under the 2008 public procurement law (amended in 2009), provinces receive some funds for development expenditures, which are spent directly by provincial authorities. Provinces are required to relay locally generated revenue to the central government, though cases of revenue retention occur.[13]

Municipalities come closest to an independent level of government. In contrast with provincial and district offices, most provincial municipalities[14] have taxing authority and are allowed to collect, budget, spend and save their own revenue. They now have appointed mayors, but the constitution calls for elected mayors and municipal councils. Municipalities are responsible for providing some services (e.g. trash collection, solid waste management, recreation and park services, paving roads, food markets). In cooperation with other government line ministries, municipalities can also be indirectly involved in the construction of the city sewage system, water supply, prefabricated apartments, city power, communications, public health, education and sports.[15] The constitutional provisions for elected officials as well as the fiscal autonomy allowed to municipalities make them a favourable environment for democratic governance.[16] Besides, the urban population has grown faster than the overall population. The population of Kabul alone has increased from about 1.5 million in 2001 to some 5 million in 2007.[17]

Subsequent to the adoption of the ANDS, a number of Afghan provinces (e.g. Herat) sought to translate the national plan into provincial terms, and found it to be a difficult process. The linkage between national plans and strategies, and planning, coordinating and budgeting at the subnational level remains weak.

In such a policy vacuum, disparate initiatives proceeded with no clear direction for the long-term roles of subnational administration.[18] In the absence of formal district and village councils, the World Bank and UNDP have used essentially traditional village and district *shuras*, established through informal voting systems, adding a minimum representation of women (usually a third of the body) and thereby promoting them into Community Development Councils (CDCs) and Districts Development Assemblies(DDAs) in their respective area development programmes.[19]

USAID has also promoted 'Afghanistan Social Outreach Program' (ASOP) councils at the district level, in places affected by the insurgency, with more of a counter-insurgency role. The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), a body created under the Presidency in 2007 with UNDP support to coordinate the central government's oversight over subnational governance echelons, supports the creation of one council at the district level, the District Coordination Council, to be established by fusing the DDAs and ASOP councils.[20]

---

13   International Crisis Group, 'Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan - Asia Report N°210210', August 2011.

14   There is one 'provincial municipality' (*Sharwali wolayat*) in each province. Some districts also have a 'district' or 'rural' municipality (*Sharwali uluswali*).

15   AREU Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 'Subnational Administration in Afghanistan: Assessment and Recommendations for Action', by Evans, A. et al., March 2004.

16   Asia Foundation, 'An Assessment of Sub-National Governance in Afghanistan', April 2007.

17   International Finance Corporation, 'Interim Strategy Note for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Period 2012-2014', March 2012.

18   Nixon, H., 'Subnational Statebuilding in Afghanistan', Synthesis Paper Series, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, April 2008.

19   CDCs were established by the World Bank-funded National Solidarity Program at the village level, while DDAs were set up by the UNDP-funded National Area-Based Development Programme at the district level. Both programmes are implemented by the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

20   Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'National Policy for Unified District and Village Governance and Development, Submission to Cabinet of the Government of Afghanistan', 13 April 2013.

PEACE AND SECURITY

The state emerging from the 2004 constitution had to find a compromise between the strong centralist tendencies described above and a *de facto* recognition of the strength of local power figures. The general 'agreement between elites' found in Bonn had to be implemented in practice, and perhaps inevitably, the process took into account the balance of power in place at the time. In an effort to reach out to local leaders, the central government allowed mujahedin leaders and commanders, as well as tribal, ethnic and religious leaders, to participate in official political life within the new institutions, enabling them to either enter cabinet positions or to stand for election to the National Assembly. Powerful players were allocated ministries, leading to additional institutional rivalries within the nascent government.

The process has achieved a somewhat workable division of power and a degree of inclusion of existing political forces in the national political process, but the arrangement also enabled local leaders and commanders to continue to exert some control in the provinces, sometimes through armed groups that are technically illegal but politically tolerated, while simultaneously influencing the institutions of the state from within. The requirement that commanders disband their armed groups before entering political life or face dismissal was never systematically enforced. Important government officials linked to illegal armed groups were not removed from office.[21]

Over the past decade, there has been considerable progress in clearing land mines, and the number of accidents related to land mines and land mine victims has fallen steadily. Professional training of the Afghan National Army is also considered an area of success, but less so in the police force. As of early 2013, the newly formed Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police have reached 195,000 and 150,000 personnel, respectively (Figure 2). These high numbers[22] are driven by the counter-insurgency role of both the army and police, and their cost is almost entirely supported by donors. Concerns remain about their sustainability when donor funds are eventually withdrawn.

In addition to the regular national police, the support extended to the Afghan Local Police has raised concern. The Afghan Local Police are village-based defence forces trained and created primarily by US Special Forces in parts of the country with limited police and military presence. There are believed to be approximately 13,000 Afghan Local Police, with 30,000 planned to be recruited and trained by the end of 2014. Afghan Local Police units were implicated—with few consequences for perpetrators—in killings, abductions and beatings, raising serious questions about Government and international efforts to vet and train these forces. They are formally under the Ministry of Interior (MOI), but in reality, they are subject to little to no oversight and accountability.[23]

In 2011, the total number of foreign soldiers reached a peak at about 150,000, and has since started to decrease. At evaluation time, all NATO and US military personnel were to be withdrawn from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, with the possibility of a small extended US presence in the country beyond 2014 hinging upon the signature of a Bilateral Security Agreement covering the period in question.

Despite a massive build-up of international and national troops and the expenditure of billions of dollars, a peaceful and stable Afghanistan has so far not been achieved. The insurgency has

---

21   UNDP Evaluation Office and DIAG Quarterly Project Reports, 2007 and 2008.

22   Equivalent to 650 police officers per 100,000 inhabitants, a rather large ratio by international standards (e.g. Japan: 197; Sweden: 208; US: 256; Brazil: 282; Germany: 296; UK: 307; South Africa: 317; France: 356) and much higher than elsewhere in the region (Bangladesh: 83; India: 76; Iran: 80; Pakistan: 207; Turkey: 491).

23   House of Commons International Development Committee, 'Sixth Report - Afghanistan: Development progress and prospects after 2014', July 2012.

Figure 2. Growth of the Afghan police and armed forces

No. of troops (y-axis): 0 to 200,000

Years (x-axis): 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

Legend:
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Interior
- American troops
- Other foreign troops
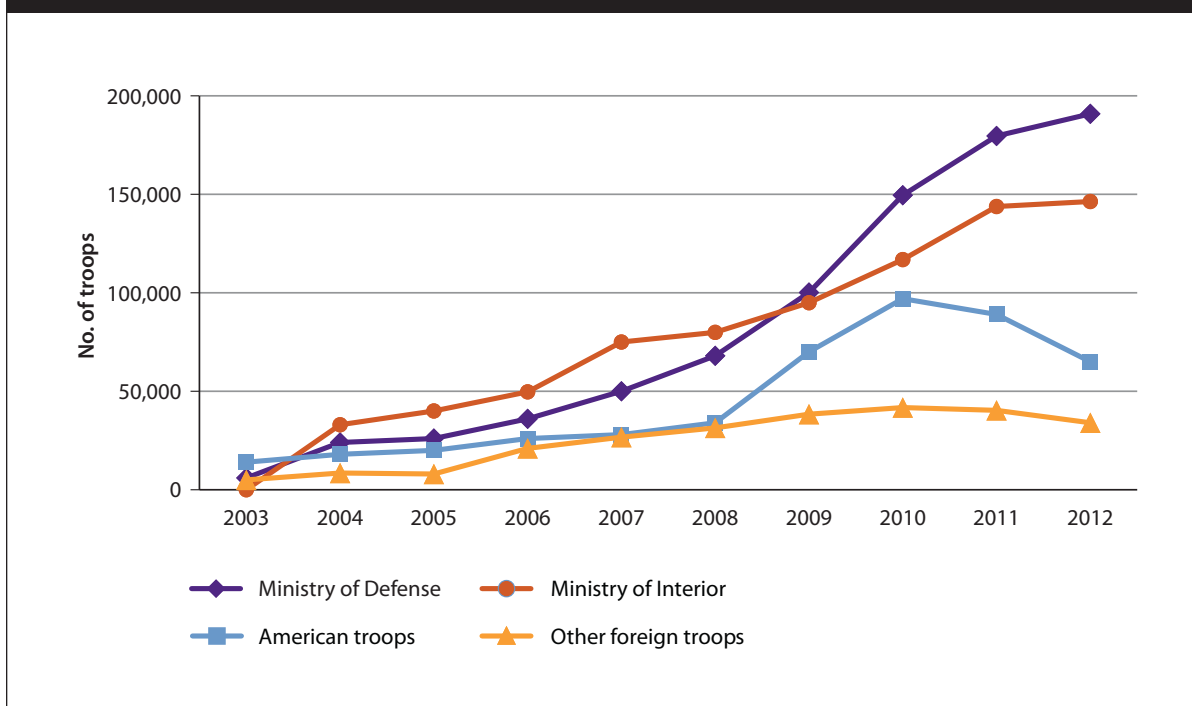
Source: Brookings Afghanistan Index

Figure 3. Civilian deaths and injuries by parties to the conflict

Year	AGE	PGF	Other
2010	5,415	819	924
2011	5,636	1,088	1,113
2012	6,131	587	841
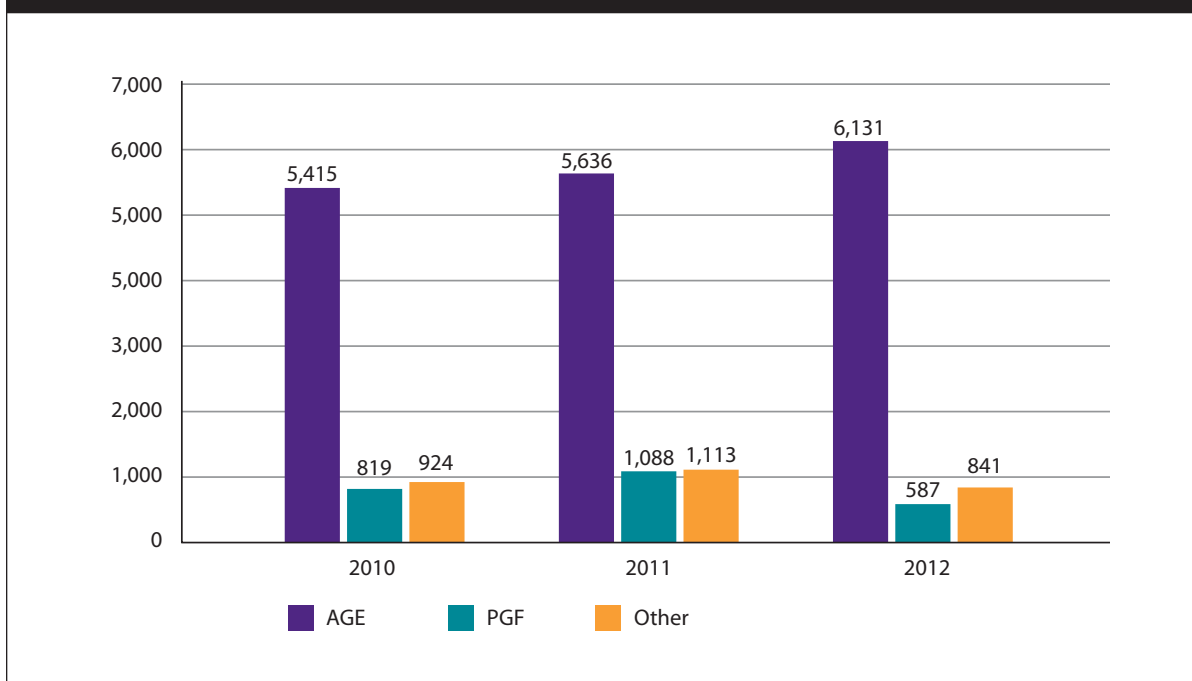
AGE - Anti-Government Elements; PGF - Pro-Government Forces
Source: UNAMA - Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2012

intensified since 2006, especially in the south and east of the country. Weak rule of law, corruption, narco-trafficking, and civilian casualties from ISAF counter-insurgency operations also contribute to poor levels of human security. Now that full responsibility for security is being handed over to Afghan national security forces, ISAF estimates that 92 out of 374 districts in the country are still 'insecure' or 'kinetic—euphemisms for falling partly or largely under Taliban control.

The number of attacks and their geographical reach has grown steadily since 2005, with the UN and international NGOs deeming more and more districts unsafe for travel. The insurgency tactics have evolved from hit-and-run to suicide attacks on government and ISAF forces, and the use of improvised explosive devices, with a corresponding increase in civilian casualties (Figure 3).

Since 2006, the Taliban have expanded beyond their historic stronghold in the south-east (Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan) and moved into the east, including Ghazni, Logar and Paktia, and further north in Kunar and even Nuristan, setting up shadow governments in many provinces. A campaign of assassinations of government officials and infiltration of Afghan security forces has reduced the Government's ability to expand its reach to the periphery. Governmental control over key cities such as Kandahar and Jalalabad has declined since 2010. Occasional attacks in the capital have been staged, and although they are not aimed at gaining control, these attacks have important psychological effects.

The Taliban are operating within Afghanistan and from the tribal areas of Pakistan, with a high-level *shura* (assembly) based in Quetta. They are pursuing a strategy of destabilization and delegitimization, building upon drivers of public resentment such as corruption or culturally offensive behaviour by foreign troops. They have

displayed little interest in a political solution. However, the Quetta *shura* has recently opened offices in Qatar in an apparent effort, supported by the US, to create an official communication channel for peace talks. The Government has so far shown limited interest in negotiating a global arrangement with the armed opposition, preferring to approach Taliban commanders and their groups on a case-by-case basis to negotiate their 'peaceful reintegration into society'.

Poor security poses significant challenges for the UN system in general and UNDP in particular. The 2009 Bakhtar guesthouse attack[24] had a considerable effect. It was followed by an evacuation of 600 UN staff out of the country for a period of 6 months, made recruitment of international personnel more difficult, and drove up expenses as offices, accommodations and vehicles were reinforced for enhanced safety.[25] The cost of security personnel also mounted. Guards are posted both outside compounds (generally Afghans) and inside compounds (often Gurkhas). While it has been possible to travel to some provincial capitals on UNAMA and UN Humanitarian Air Service flights, and occasionally on commercial carriers, security concerns and regulations have significantly restricted operations in recent years.

Most attention to the potential for conflict has focused on the implications of the ISAF withdrawal and the reaction of the armed opposition. Yet other causes of conflict and insecurity exist, including a flourishing drug trade, criminality, corruption, and tribal, political or land-related disputes between or within communities. As pointed out by the recent BCPR conflict assessment on Afghanistan, "there are multiple conflicts across the country that intersect along the major fault lines of security, governance and livelihoods with factors like ethnicity, tribalism, regionalism and religion providing their own specific 'colours'." In

---

24 Five UN staff were killed in the attack on the Bakhtar guesthouse in Kabul on 28 October 2009. Twenty-five UN workers were residing at the guesthouse, including 17 members of the UNDP ELECT project. The attack was linked to Taliban's opposition to the election process.

25 All UN vehicles now must be armoured, and each armoured car costs approximately $180,000.

Afghanistan the vast majority of conflicts at the community level is and has always been about land and water.[26] Other non-traditional security challenges include increasing population and urbanization, and food security.

Security challenges arise from criminal gangs involved in the drug trade. Opium poppy cultivation and trade remains one of the most deeply rooted problems of the country, particularly—but not only—in regions under strong insurgency influence in southern Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the world's largest producer of opium, the raw material for heroin, with its farmers harvesting about 80 percent of the world supply. The sector would amount to half the official GDP. For many Afghan farmers, poppy represents their most profitable cash crop and an important source of income. 2012 saw the highest level of cultivation since 2006.[27]

The exercise of basic civil rights, such as voting in national elections, demonstrating peacefully or running for public office, is still associated with high levels of fear (Figure 4). The levels of fear associated with encountering the Afghan National Police is almost 50 percent, but dropping. Close to 80 percent of the Afghans sampled in the Asia Foundations surveys declared that they feel 'some' or 'a lot of fear' when encountering international troops.

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

The degree of support that government institutions receive from the population is rightly

Figure 4. Public level of fear ('some fear' + 'lot of fear') to participate in various activities (Asia Foundation Surveys)

Legend:
- Encountering international forces
- Participating in a peaceful demonstration
- Running for a public office
- Voting in a national election
- Encountering ANP officers
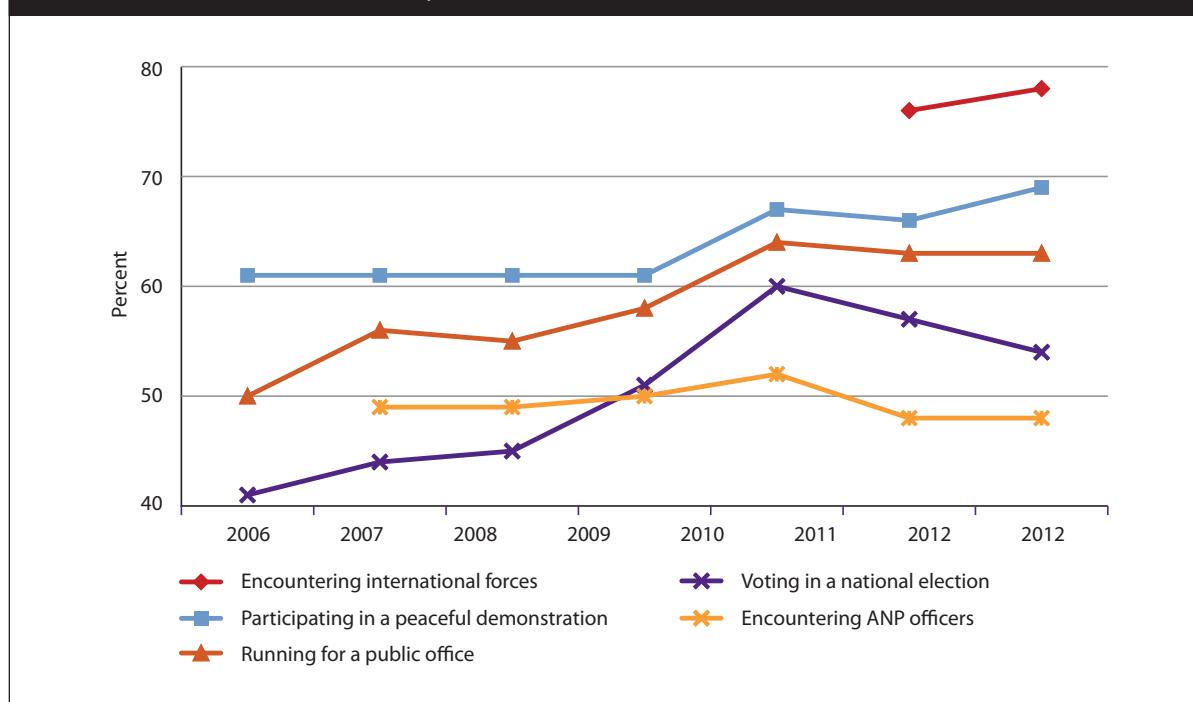
26   Waldman, M., '*Community Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: The Case for a National Strategy*', Oxfam International, February 2008, cited in 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011', 2011, p.17. The CCA Macro Framework goes as far as connecting climate change with the conflict, noting the relationship between the war in Afghanistan, the drying of the Helmand River and the flourishing opium trade within Helmand province.

27   Driven by high prices, opium poppy cultivation reached 154,000 ha in 2012, a rise of 18 percent compared to 2011. However, while cultivation rose, the actual production of opium is estimated to have dropped to 3,700 metric tons, about a third less than in 2011, because of lower yields. See UNODC/Ministry of Counter Narcotics, 'Afghanistan Opium Survey 2012 – Summary of Findings', November 2012.

perceived as a key determinant of their chances for sustainability post-2014. There is no shortage of frustrations with the new regime. Many key challenges have been left unattended, from the still intact power of local commanders to the development of the drug economy, through to corruption perceived as spreading in state institutions. However, Asia Foundation surveys show broad support for institutions representing state authority and national sovereignty: the army and the police.[28] A recent survey of public perception by Democracy International confirms this general picture, although it suggests lower levels of support than the Asia Foundation surveys (Table 2 and Figure 5).

It should be stressed that according to these surveys, Afghans have less confidence in their formal justice system than in other organs of the state. The IEC is also less well rated than some other institutions, with a degree of confidence that decreased in 2009/2010.

Table 2. Confidence in institutions	
Institutions	**A lot + some confidence**
Afghan National Army	83%
Village leaders	76%
The President	78%
Police	73%
District governor	72%
The media	66%
Provincial governor	63%
The *Wolesi Jirga*	61%
The Provincial Council	56%
IEC	48%
The judiciary	41%
Local commanders	26%
Political parties	24%
Taliban	15%

Source: A Survey of Public Perception on Election and Civic Education, Democracy International, 2013

Figure 5. Confidence in various institutions ('good deal' and 'fair amount')
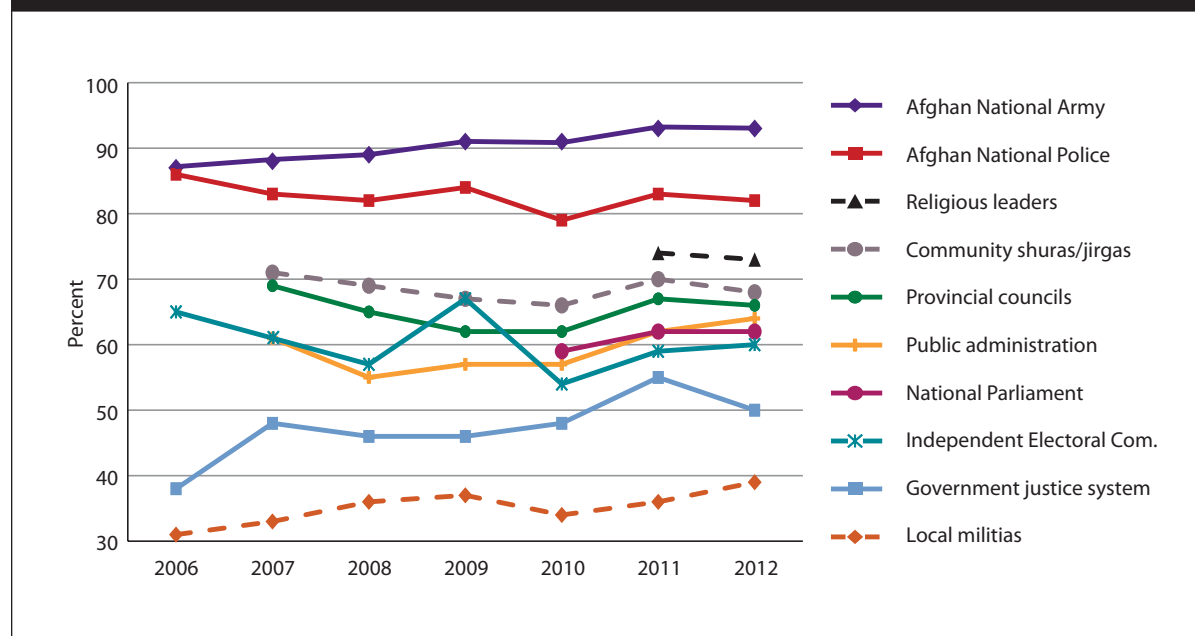
Source: Asia Foundation Surveys

28   Data from the Asia Foundation surveys are likely to be biased towards high levels of support for state institutions. The 2012 survey could not access nearly one-third of the planned sampling points for security reasons, and people in safer neighborhoods or villages were interviewed instead. Afghans have also grown skilled at telling surveyors what they think they want to hear. The data is therefore best used comparatively, e.g. to compare the level of support for different institutions.

Interestingly, informal or customary institutions such as religious leaders and community *shuras* and *jirghas* are still highly regarded. Customary and other forms of self-organized governance at the local level in Afghanistan remain quite robust, and are perceived as legitimate and effective. Thirty years of conflict have not depleted this social capital; if anything the conflict has strengthened the role of customary institutions, which constitute an indispensable social asset for conflict resolution (Table 3 and Figure 6).

In rural areas, where the vast majority of Afghans still reside, *orf* (customary laws) serves as the framework for the delivery of justice. Traditional decision-making assemblies are estimated to account for more than 80 percent of cases settled throughout Afghanistan. The particular form and composition of a *jirga* are determined according to the dispute at hand, but typically a body of esteemed elders and leaders weighs customary laws and institutionalized rituals to reach a settlement that is socially and morally binding

Table 3. Do you agree with the following statements about your village or neighbourhood-based *shura / jirga*?

Statements	Percent
Are fair and trusted	87
Follow the local norms and values of our people	75
Are effective at delivering justice	74
Resolve cases promptly and in a timely manner	70

Source: Asia Foundation Survey 2012

on the parties involved.[29] *Shuras* (assemblies) are of a more permanent nature than *jirgas*. Typically composed of notables, tribal and religious leaders, *shuras* are often set up to represent a small region (*monteqa*) in its dealing with the official state structure (such as district and provincial governors, or the police), or with development projects.

Figure 6. Whom did you approach to solve your problem? (Asia Foundation Survey 2012, more than one response possible)
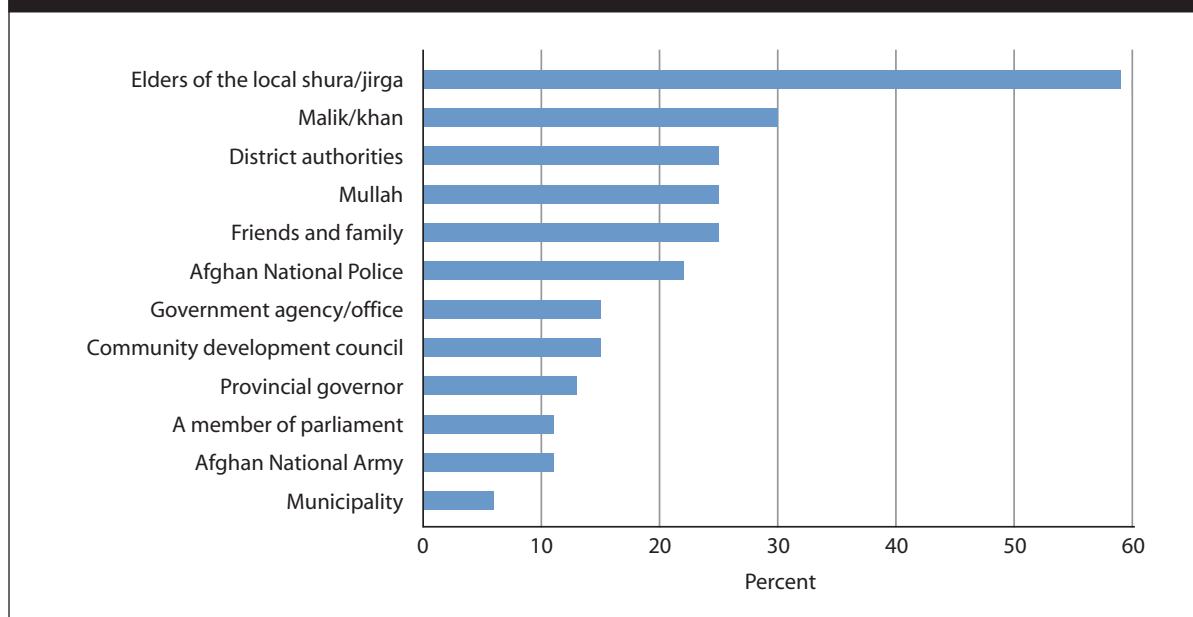
Source: Asia Foundation Surveys

29 UNDP, 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007', 2007.

Figure 7. Evolution of the human development index
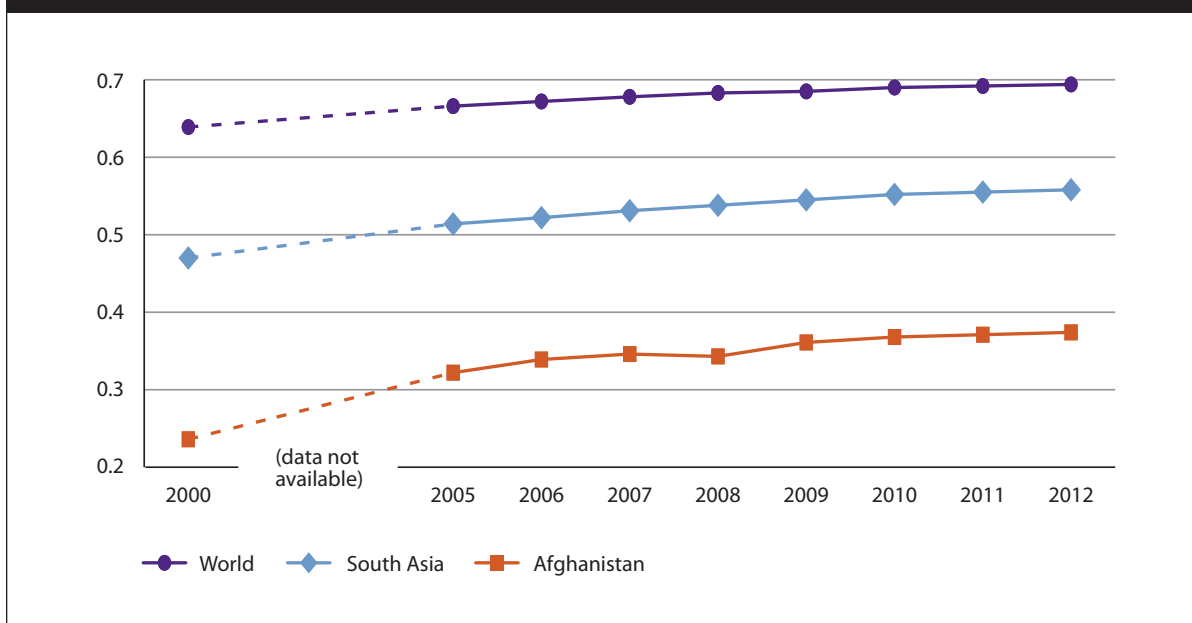
Source: Asia Foundation Surveys

The role of the traditional justice system at times violates national and international human rights norms, particularly on the rights of women. Cultural values in Afghanistan often create obstacles to access to justice for women by limiting their freedom of movement, literacy, and ability to assert their rights.[30]

POVERTY

Afghanistan's 2012 human development index of 0.374 ranks the country 175th among 187 countries. The human development index has historically remained below the average for countries in South Asia, and its evolution has been quite slow (Figure 7).

Undeniable progress has been made in Afghanistan over recent years in the areas of health and education, especially for women. Though almost 2 million children remain out of school, the net school attendance ratios for 2007–2011 were, according to UNICEF, 40 percent for girls and 66 percent for boys. Disease

rates and maternal mortality are down. The latest MDG report[31], though based on patchy data, highlights noticeable improvements made in bringing school-age children back to school and in reducing infant mortality and under-five mortality rates, which remain among the highest the world. Infant mortality is now around 77 deaths per 1,000 live births, and under-fives child mortality around 97 deaths per 1,000 child births.

The Ministry of Energy and Water estimates that about 30 percent of Afghans have access to electricity from grid-based power, micro-hydro, or solar panel stations. The situation has improved significantly in the major urban population centres along the critical north-east corridor between Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul, following the import of power from Uzbekistan and the rehabilitation of three hydro plants (Mahipar and Sarobi completed, and Naghlu ongoing). Increasing parts of some urban centres, for example Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Pul-e-Khumri, now have a 24-hour power

30   JHRA Project Document, 2011, p. 1.

31   Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010', October 2010.

supply for the first time in decades. Rapid progress in accessing telecommunication facilities has also been recorded, with an impressive development of cellular networks.

The majority of Afghan citizens remain poor. Approximately 42 percent of Afghans live below the poverty line, compared to 33 percent in 2005. Poverty in rural areas appears higher than the national average, while incidence in the urban population is much lower. Forty percent of the Afghan population is reportedly unemployed, and more than half are vulnerable to economic and climatic shocks. Economic poverty is compounded by a lack of health and social services, as well as poor education and nutrition levels.

Eighty percent of the Afghan population and most of the economy rely on agriculture. Over the past decade, policy documents have consistently put agriculture at the centre of efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's economy. But so far, the vision of an agriculturally led economic transformation has borne little fruit, with actual livelihood improvement often closely tied to illegal crops (opium poppy) or derived from urban economies, rather than from investment in legitimate agricultural value chains. The core issue appears to be a lack of effective demand. Global markets are largely out of reach at present, lacking the necessary infrastructure[32], and massive imports of food weaken the demand for Afghan produce. NATO, for example, imports vegetables, bottled water, fruit juices, soda and tissue paper, which are all produced locally. The strength of the national currency, buoyed by foreign currency expenditure, has even made it cheaper for local traders to import agricultural goods to sell in the local market.

While private enterprise is flourishing compared to its dismal state under the Taliban, most of it occurs in a bubble of trading and construction activities to service the large international assistance community. Afghanistan has also witnessed a criminalization of its economy, notably in relation to drug production, which has grown over the past few years.

The influx of military and aid spending has skewed incentives and created artificial local economies, but this spending is now on the decline. Development aid from United States, the largest aid donor, has dropped from $3.5 billion in 2010 to approximately $2 billion in 2011. Over the coming years, Afghanistan will need to compensate for this decline in external support.[33]

GENDER

With a female literacy rate of a mere 14 percent, high levels of gender-based violence and weak access to justice, Afghan women face formidable challenges. Afghanistan is one of the very few countries in the world where women have lower life expectancy than men, because of a record high maternal mortality rates. In 2005, a UNICEF study found 1,800 women dying per 100,000 live births, the highest ratio in the world. However, the 2010 Afghanistan Mortality Survey[34] estimated maternal mortality at the much lower level of about 350 deaths per 100,000 live births (417 in rural areas against 95 in urban areas). This major improvement in maternal mortality must be credited to the improved health, obstetric and family planning services that became increasingly available over the past decade.

In the education sector, 2.7 million girls are now in primary and secondary education. While adult literacy is one of the lowest in the world, over the last 10 years enrolment rates have picked up quite significantly (71 percent primary enrolment rates in 2010) as a result of investment in the sector and greater freedom accorded to girls to attend school. However, gender gaps still persist

---

32   E.g. insecure trade routes, unstable banking sector, non-abidance to international food safety and veterinary standards, etc.

33   UNDP Strategy for Legitimate and Inclusive Governance, Version 2.0, March 2013.

34   Ministry of Public Health/Afghan Public Health Institute, 'Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010', November 2011.

both in literacy, primary school enrolment and all higher educational levels. Disparities in access to education also persist between urban and rural areas, with fewer opportunities for women in rural areas. The ratio of girls to boys in education shows a decline as the level of education increases, from 52 percent in primary school, to 45 percent in secondary and 21 percent at the university level. Women's position in the labour market is also significantly weaker than in other South Asian countries.

The new Government has successfully ensured women's strong involvement in national institutions, including the civil service and the National Assembly, and in social sectors. In the civil service, 18 percent of posts are occupied by women, though many observe that they are largely consigned to traditional and marginal positions.[35] The 20 percent female representation in the Constitutional *Loya Jirga* led to significant advancements for women under Articles 83 and 84 of the Constitution, guaranteeing that at least 25 percent of all representatives elected to the upper and lower houses would be female. Women constitute 28 percent of the current National Parliament.

The gains in educational and other opportunities for girls and women represent important achievements, and have reversed some of the injustices and human rights abuses perpetrated on women under the Taliban regime. Numerous surveys have shown that women remain strong supporters of the current regime. Gender equality has topped donors' agendas, and is considered a major cross-cutting issue in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (see section 2.3). However, the degree of governmental commitment to women's empowerment is debatable, with the Ministry of Women's Affairs one of the weakest ministries in the government. Cultural barriers remain quite powerful in spite of official pronouncements.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Environment is a largely neglected sector. Faced with critical security issues, Afghanistan does not accord as much importance to protecting its environment as it should. There is no ministry of environment, only an agency (the National Environment Protection Agency) with a coordination function for a number of line ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD).

Yet the country lies in the Himalayan mountain arc, subject to the same climate, rapid erosion processes and flash floods one can witness elsewhere in the Himalayas, in a seismically active part of the globe. On average, some 250,000 Afghans are affected by natural disasters (droughts, floods, earthquakes) each year.[36]

The country's natural resources support much of its agrarian economy. As a result, the impact of natural disasters, and of droughts in particular, can be quite severe. In 2008, lack of rain, compounded by below normal snowpack, caused wheat production to decline by 40 to 55 percent countrywide. The effect of the 2008 drought on national crop production was aggravated by Pakistan's bans on wheat and flour exports, a measure taken to counter a significant rise in global food prices at the time. An estimated 4.5 million Afghans required food aid.[37]

Deforestation is reportedly severe in northern and western Afghanistan (where it affects pistachio forests), and in the east of the country (Kunar and Nuristan, where the remaining cedar forests are at risk). The urban environment is also fraught with problems, from a lack of appropriate solid waste management collection and disposal systems, to pollutions of various kinds.

---

35   Central Statistics Office, 'Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook', Issue No. 24, September 2003, cited in Ministry of Women's Affairs National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (2008-2018).

36   UN OCHA, Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Afghanistan 2013, December 2012.

37   Ibid.

But if managed in a sustainable manner, the country's natural resources could provide the basis for much-needed economic growth. Significant hopes have been placed in the development of extractive industries. Afghanistan has extensive mineral deposits and potential for oil and gas production. The Afghanistan Geological Survey identified six major mineral opportunities in the country: copper, iron- ore, rare earth metals, gold, gemstones and marble. World-class copper and iron deposits are located at Aynak in Logar and at Hajigak in Bamyan provinces. A substantial semi-precious stone industry also exists, as well as active marble quarries at various locations, including Balkh, Helmand, Herat, Kabul and Kandahar. Marble and gemstone mining is artisanal and small-scale, and the extracted stones are cut and polished in Pakistan.[38] Opportunities clearly exist to develop this sector, and in recent years, the country has seen increasing investor interest in exploration and development. The Government has made efforts to formulate enabling policies and legal instruments for mining. Consortiums of Chinese and Indian companies have signed contracts to develop the copper deposit in Aynak, Logar province and iron-ore in Hajigak, Bamyam province, respectively. Developing secure transport infrastructure that would link deposits to global markets remains a challenge.

2.2 MAIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

This section attempts to summarize the national strategies, documents and instruments that are most relevant to UNDP's work in Afghanistan. Given the proliferation of policies, strategies, plans and frameworks over the past decade, it would be next to impossible to exhaustively summarize all national development strategies and policy instruments.

Over the past five years, Afghanistan's national strategic documents have evolved from the very substantial Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) adopted in 2009, to the 'Kabul Process' and the National Priority Programmes (NPPs) in 2010, and currently, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), which the Government of Afghanistan and its development partners agreed upon during the Tokyo conference on 8 July 2012.

THE AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The ANDS was a thorough and ambitious document covering the period 2008-2013. Its development demanded enormous efforts, including from a range of UNDP-supported international consultants. The ANDS was foreseen "as an Afghan-owned blueprint for progress in all spheres of national life … a Millennium Development Goals-based plan[39] that will serve as the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper . . . a roadmap for the long-desired objective of 'Afghanization' and the transition towards stability, self-sustaining growth, and human development." Its main pillars were:

1. Security ("achieve nationwide stabilisation, strengthen law enforcement, and improve personal security for every Afghan")

2. Good governance, rule of law, and human rights ("strengthen democratic practice and institutions, human rights, rule of law, delivery of public services and government accountability")

3. Economic and social development ("reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development through a private sector-led market economy, improve human development indicators, and make significant progress towards achieving the MDGs")

Six key cross-cutting issues were also identified as vital to the success of the ANDS and the achievement of Afghanistan's MDGs: counter-narcotics, anti-corruption, capacity development, gender

---

38 UNDP, Poverty-Environment Nexus Strategy, draft, March 2013.

39 The ANDS is based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) plus security, identified as the ninth MDG by the Government.

equity, environment, and regional cooperation. The cost was estimated at \$50 billion over five years, of which 87 percent was expected to come from the international donor community.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

The Public Administration Reform (PAR) is a priority in the ANDS and the Kabul Conference. It seeks to create an effective and transparent civil service, improve governance and service delivery at the local level, and make government accountable to the people. PAR aims to address a variety of problems, including the fragmentation of government structures with many overlapping functions and a lack of coordination; the tenuous connection between Kabul and the provinces; the lack of experienced professional staff with the necessary skills; the lack of robust procedures for recruitment and appointment based on merit rather than patronage; the need for a pay and grading structure which attracts, retains and motivates civil servants; poor physical infrastructure; and slow and outdated administrative systems.

Overseen by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), PAR promotes transparent hiring and staff assessment procedures as well as pay and grading reform for civil servants, and supports Afghan state institutions in setting up their human resource procedures.

More recently, the IARCSC has launched a new national initiative called the 'Reform and Capacity Building Coordination Forum' to assist in coordinating the Government and the international community's future cooperation on the strategic matters of public sector reforms and capacity-building. This forum is co-chaired by IARCSC and the Civil Affairs Unit of UNAMA.

NATIONAL PRIORITY PROGRAMMES

The 22 National Priority Programmes (NPPs, see Table 4)—21 of which were formally endorsed by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board at evaluation time—were assembled by the

Government with, in most cases, international support. The NPPs were intended to operationalize the ANDS and prioritize the needs of the country. Although it was intended that Afghans would largely determine the priorities, the large number and varying qualities of the NPPs reflected in part the interest of donors in covering a wide range of fields. This led to a large number of NPPs and somewhat defeated the purpose of setting clear Afghan-determined development priorities.

Moreover, the NPPs are often criticized as not taking implementation capacity into account, or for not covering several critical activities, such as electoral support. UNDP was hardly involved in their preparation, with the notable exception of NPP 5 ('Justice for All'), which was redrafted with UNDP technical support and endorsed by the international community in June 2013.

The Afghan Government, particularly the Ministry of Finance, strongly defends the NPPs as providing a key development policy framework for international cooperation. The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF, see below) has helped anchor the NPPs to any further dialogues on reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. Most donors now claim their aid is broadly aligned with the NPPs. However, the Afghan Government complains that donors are not funding the NPPs through the national budget.

THE TOKYO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The decision to withdraw the International Stabilization and Assistance Force (ISAF) during 2014 significantly focused the minds of both government and international partners, forcing renewed attention to long-lasting and long-term issues such as legitimacy and sustainability.

Under the landmark Mutual Accountability Framework agreed upon in Tokyo, international partners would contribute more than \$16 billion over the four years through 2015. Partners also agreed to "sustaining support through 2017 at or near levels of the past decade" on the basis of the Government of Afghanistan's commitment to:

a) Conduct credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015.

b) Improve access to justice for all, ensure women in particular enjoy full rights, and enforce the legal framework for fighting corruption, including narcotics production.

c) Improve integrity of public financial management and the commercial banking sector.

d) Improve government revenue collection and budgetary capacity of line ministries.

e) Achieve inclusive and sustained growth through a focus on human development,

#	Title	Lead donor/agency
Table 4. National Priority Programmes		
Infrastructure development cluster		
1	National Extractive Industry Excellence	World Bank and UK
2	National Regional Resource Corridor	Asian Development Bank and US
3	National Energy Supply	Asian Development Bank and US
4	Urban Planning Technical Assistance Facility	Japan and US
Private sector development		
5	Integrated Trade and SME Support	Germany
6	E-Afghanistan Program	France
Agriculture and rural development cluster		
7	Water and Natural Resource Development	Asian Development Bank and EU
8	Agriculture Production and Market Development	UK and Australia
9	National Rural Access	World Bank and Japan
10	Strengthening Local Institutions	World Bank
Human resources development cluster		
11	Skills Development and Labour Regulations	UK
12	Education For All	US
13	Expanding Opportunities for Higher Education	Norway and US
14	National Action Plan for Women	UN Women
15	Health for All Afghans	US
Governance cluster		
16	Financial and Economic Reforms	World Bank
17	National Transparency and Accountability	US
18	Efficient and Effective Government	World Bank and EU
19	Local Governance	UK and UNAMA
20	Law and Justice for All	Canada and UNAMA
21	Human Rights and Civic Responsibilities	Canada
Security cluster		
22	Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme	Japan and UK

Adapted from Ministry of Finance, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2011', 2012; and International Development Association and International Finance Corporation, 'Interim Strategy Note for the Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan for the Period FY12-FY14', 9 March 2012. Note that the numbering of NPPs is not consistent across these documents.

private investment, employment "and the improvement of [the country's] ranking in the [UNDP] human development index."[40]

The first annual review of the TMAF was held in July 2013 in Kabul, and focused on progress towards the 24 'tangible actions' or 'hard deliverables' (17 for the Government and 7 for the international community) drawn from core elements of the TMAF. These 'hard deliverables' include international pledges to provide over $16 billion to Afghanistan until 2015, with 50 percent of the assistance routed through the national budget and 80 percent aligned with national priority programmes. On the Government's side, they include a credible, inclusive and robust electoral architecture; implementation of the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women; enforcement of anti-corruption measures; provincial budgeting processes; and a robust legal framework to encourage investment in the extractive industries. While progress was recognized on some government commitments, concerns were expressed about the issue of violence against women. On the financial side, seven of 24 donors (representing 21 percent of disbursements) had achieved the 50 percent on-budget target that was to have been met by all donors as of June 2013. A ministerial conference co-chaired by United Kingdom and Afghanistan will be convened to review TMAF in 2014.

2.3 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND AID COORDINATION

Afghanistan remains highly dependent on foreign assistance. According to the Ministry of Finance[41], as of July 2012, the international community had pledged $119 billion for security and development of Afghanistan and had disbursed $70 billion. The average annual official development assistance (ODA) was $7.87 billion over the 2005-2010 period. Other sources, such as the World Bank's last Interim Strategy Note[42], point at higher figures ($8.5 billion per annum over the same 2005-2010 period, with an estimate for 2010 in excess of $15 billion). This data does not include—and pales in comparison with—the cost of maintaining foreign military forces in the country.

Since 2002, the entire development budget of the Government, and on average approximately 45 percent of its operating budget, has been financed by external aid.[43] This translates into an aid dependency ratio of 71 percent, by far the highest in the world.[44]

A recent World Bank report[45] projected that the extent of dependency is such that by the end of the "transformation decade" (2025), even assuming that major mineral extraction projects will materialize, the Government of Afghanistan is still projected to run a deficit of some 22 percent of GDP.

Development aid to Afghanistan has been an unprecedented international effort. Some 50 countries and organizations have contributed, although 10 donors have contributed 85 percent of development assistance. The United States, the largest donor, accounts for about 42 percent of development assistance. Other top donors include other ISAF-contributing nations, the traditional OECD donors, multilateral organizations, and the United Nations. India is the eighth largest donor. Other non-traditional donors, such as China, Iran, and Turkey, have also provided assistance.

---

40   TMAF, available at www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/index.php/tokyo-framework/tokyo-framework.

41   Ministry of Finance, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2011', 2012.

42   International Development Association and International Finance Corporation, 'Interim Strategy Note for the Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan for the Period FY12-FY14', 9 March 2012.

43   Ministry of Finance, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2010', 2011.

44   OECD, '2011 OECD Report On Aid Predictability', available at www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/49565196.pdf

45   Hogg, R. et al., 'Afghanistan in Transition: Looking beyond 2014.2014', Directions in Development - World Bank, 2013.

Because of concerns about corruption and the limited capacity of line ministries to use their current budgetary allocations, much of this external assistance has been disbursed through structures that bypass governmental institutions. In 2011 for instance, the international community reportedly disbursed $13 billion, of which only $2.3 billion was channelled through the government budget (18 percent). This has not only undermined national ownership, but has also hindered national capacity development efforts. At the London conference (28 January 2010), development partners recognized that aid was poorly coordinated and largely bypassing government mechanisms and priorities. They agreed that within two years, their contributions should be 50 percent 'on budget' (i.e. administered through the Ministry of Finance) and 80 percent aligned with government priorities, as defined in the National Priority Programmes.

A major innovation in Afghanistan was the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)—civil military mechanisms established by troop-contributing countries. PRT bases spread throughout the country from 2003, spurred by a perceived lack of government responsiveness and capacity to deliver services. They rely on 'quick impact projects' or capacity-building of local officials to try to generate rapid local progress. US PRTs spent largely via the military Commander's Emergency Response Program, while other nations' PRTs generally had fewer resources. Initially modest, these initiatives grew dramatically in size and quantity: in 2010 approximately $1 billion was appropriated for the Commander's Emergency Response Program. By evaluation time, less than 30 PRTs were left in Afghanistan and the remaining ones were in the process of closing. Other similar structures included some 49 District Stabilization Team, the US National Guard Agricultural Development Teams present

in every province in the south and east, and 11 NATO 'Rule of Law Field Support Missions'.[46]

Despite the benefits that they contributed to, notably in respect of infrastructure, PRTs have primarily played a protection and counter-insurgency role. They are about 'winning hearts and minds'. This use of military means for development, with a counter-insurgency motive, has garnered criticism, mainly from humanitarian professionals worried about blurring the line between humanitarian and military activities. More recently, researchers have provided some evidence that the strategy is failing to win hearts and minds as intended.[47]

A regular series of conferences to review progress have been convened (Table 5), with a view to heightening the effectiveness of international assistance. The 'Kabul Process' established in 2010 has given rise to the concept of NPPs and the agreement that 50 percent of donor assistance should be on budget and 80 percent aligned with Afghan government programme objectives. Beyond the high-level events, separate weekly meetings are held of ambassadors and heads of aid agencies in Kabul, as well as semi-annual meetings of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

The mandate contained in the Security Council resolutions for aid coordination currently rests with UNAMA. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in charge of development affairs chairs the Aid Agency Heads meeting, and UNDP is the only UN agency to participate in these meetings. Coordination at provincial level is also UNAMA's responsibility, but its convening role is largely procedural at this level. Provincial coordination is complicated by the significant presence of PRTs in all areas and provinces.

---

46 Presentation to the UNCT on PRTs and ISAF Reduction, by Megan Minnion, December 2012.

47 See for instance, Lyally, J., Blairz, G. and Imaix, K., 'Explaining Support for Combatants during Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan', published in American Political Science Review, 23 December 2012; and Beath, A., Christia, F. and Enikolopov, R., 'Winning Hearts and Minds through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan', World Bank, October 2012.

A recent development has been the adoption by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board of an Aid Management Policy. The policy aims to minimize the impacts of declining aid and military spending. It includes many new initiatives, including the phasing out of project implementation units; management of fiduciary risks through a joint Risk Management Assessment mechanism; increased use of pooled funding mechanisms such as the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund; improved coordination and utilisation of National Technical Advisors (or non-*Tashkeel* staff); budgetary reforms to expedite budget execution and improve transparency; sector-based division of labour based on partners' comparative advantages and expertise; mechanisms to coordinate development assistance at subnational levels; and commitments to transparently sharing timely information on aid with Parliament, civil society, media and the private sector.

Yet coordination is perceived by most actors as focusing largely on procedural aspects rather than substance. The Aid Management Policy recognized that "government-donor mechanisms exist in abundance, but have not significantly improved coordination or effective allocation of funds." Coordination at the sectoral level is even less well managed. The Government of Afghanistan has proposed a clear division of labour among donors and stipulated criteria which allowed "each development partner to operate in a maximum of three sectors with the possibility of moving to the fourth sector provided that it had contributed a minimum annual investments of dollars 30 million in the third sector." UNDP operates in four thematic areas (security, governance, environment, and poverty reduction), and contributes to four NPP clusters: agriculture and rural development, governance, human resource development, and security.

To further complicate the coordination challenge, major donors have multiple windows through which they can provide support. The United States is a notable example, with many of its domestic departments running programmes in Afghanistan. Similarly, the United Kingdom's and Canada's foreign affairs ministries handle their conflict-related programmes separately from their development programmes. With the constant turnover of expatriate staff at all levels, the positions adopted by donors are not always consistently pursued. "New people want to do new things," as one aid official commented.

Despite major investments—including by UNDP—the administrative infrastructure of government is generally weak. A number of ministries, such as the ministries for finance, education and health, are deemed to be among the more effective. However, confronted with Afghanistan's unenviable reputation for corruption (ranking joint top with North Korea and Somalia on Transparency International's list), donors are reluctant to provide budget support. Thus while agreeing to the 50 percent on-budget objective, donors made slow progress towards this goal.

A variety of mechanisms have been devised to formally channel funds on budget while permitting donors to retain considerable influence over the allocation of their funds. One of them is the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund managed by the World Bank. The Management Committee that approves disbursements is chaired by the Minister of Finance and is made up of representatives of different international organizations, including UNAMA and UNDP. The Asian Development Bank has likewise established the Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund. The UNDP-managed LOTFA is seen in a similar light.

Table 5. International conferences on Afghanistan			
Location	**Dates**	**Result highlights**	**Donors' pledges (US$ billions)**
Bonn	5 Dec. 2001	Afghan Interim Authority established, made of 30 members, with a six-month mandate to be followed by a two-year Transitional Authority, after which elections will be held; ISAF also established.	
Tokyo	21 Jan. 2002	First 'pledging' conference immediately after Bonn, based on key priority areas for the reconstruction and a preliminary needs assessment prepared by UNDP, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.	5.1
Berlin	1 Apr. 2004	Post-conflict transition plan presented and pledges secured. Established five Provincial Reconstruction Teams and agreed to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.	5.6
London	31 Jan.-1 Feb. 2006	Pledged further assistance on the basis of support for pluralistic Islam, aspiration towards Afghan ownership and support for capacity development. Human and women's rights discussed prominently; established the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board; endorsed the Afghanistan Compact with 64 benchmarks in security, governance, rule of law, human rights and socio-economic development.	8.7
Rome	2 Jul. 2007	Rule of law components of ANDS to be implemented through the 'National Justice Program' (World Bank/Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund).	0.04
Paris	12 Jun. 2008	Reviewed the Afghanistan Compact agreed to at London 2006, and re-affirmed the international community's political and financial support for Afghanistan. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) presented. Role of UNAMA in all aspects of coordination re-affirmed.	14
Moscow	30 Mar. 2009	Organized by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; stressed the importance of regional cooperation.	
The Hague	31 Mar. 2009	Urged UNAMA to expand its presence throughout Afghanistan; need for a balanced civilian-military approach discussed.	
London	28 Jan. 2010	Focused on Afghan self-determination and endorsed the Cluster Coordination System; donors committed to increasing the proportion of aid on-budget; highlighted the importance of regional cooperation.	
Kabul	19 Jul. 2010	First conference in Afghanistan; endorsed the Kabul Process and is viewed as a turning point in relations between the international community and Government; 22 NPPs presented as operationalizing the ANDS; 33 benchmarks added to the Afghanistan Compact.	
Bonn	5 Dec. 2011	'Bonn 10 years on' confirmed the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan and the special status of Afghanistan to receive donor assistance in greater measure than similarly situated countries.	
Chicago	20 May 2012	NATO summit focused on long-term security support for Afghanistan; international community committed to support the training, equipping, financing and capacity development of the national security forces on the basis of $4.1 billion per year; the Afghan Government committed to contribute $500 million per year from 2015 onwards to its armed forces.	14
Tokyo	7 Jul. 2012	Agreed on mutual benchmarks for the Transformation Decade (2015-2024) in the form of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework; donors committed to providing over $16 billion through 2015, and sustaining support through 2017.	16

Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2012', Ministry of Finance, 2013

Chapter 3

UNDP'S RESPONSE AND STRATEGIES

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part describes the goals of the ongoing UNDP country programme and how they fit with the broader objectives of the UN in the country. The second part provides an overview of the subject of the present evaluation: the UNDP programmes and presence in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2013.

3.1 UNDP'S STRATEGY AND COORDINATION WITH THE UN SYSTEM

Although UNDP has been active in Afghanistan for decades[48], UNDP representation in Kabul was re-established in 2002 following a decade of operations based in Pakistan. Since then, UNDP has operated under the overall umbrella of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), with the primary aim to support stabilization and state building.

Afghanistan is a UN integrated mission. The work of all UN agencies in the country is coordinated by UNAMA, a political mission established by the Security Council in 2002 at the request of the Government to assist in implementing the Bonn Agreement. UNAMA is mandated to lead and coordinate the international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on National Priority Programmes, and cooperation with NATO/ISAF for transition, reconciliation, elections, regional cooperation, human rights and humanitarian assistance. An important element of the 2012 and 2013 mandates was their references to the role of the United Nations in the elections planned for 2014 and 2015, and to the necessary evolution of UNAMA's and UN agencies' roles, in line with the transition process, from direct service delivery to support and capacity-building for Afghan institutions, "enabling the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its sovereign authority in all its functions."[49]

UNAMA is a political mission funded as part of the general United Nations Secretariat budget and managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As such, it has been hard hit by cuts to the overall UN Secretariat budget. Unlike most political missions, which tend to be of limited size and focused on the 'good offices' function[50], UNAMA's mandate includes a number of functions in common with peacekeeping missions, including civil affairs, human rights, rule of law and especially aid coherence, i.e. aid coordination. Thus UNAMA is responsible both for coordinating with ISAF, and for coordinating humanitarian and development aid.[51] Despite having closed nine provincial offices this year, UNAMA retains 10 regional offices plus Kabul, Islamabad and Tehran.

---

48 A Standard Technical Assistance Agreement was signed in 1956 and provides the legal framework for UNDP's operations in the country. The UNDP 'Standard Basic Assistance Agreement' is currently under consideration by the Government.

49 The mandate of UNAMA is extended annually. On 17 March 2014, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2145 (2014), which extended the mandate until 19 March 2015.

50 The term 'good offices' refers to (generally informal and discreet) mediation efforts between the parties to a conflict, in order to prepare or facilitate formal peace negotiations or a settlement to a conflict.

51 This has caused some tension with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes concerned with humanitarian assistance, which have tried to avoid being too closely linked with UNAMA's political mission in order to protect the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

As per the official delegation of authority, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, in his function as UNDP Resident Representative, carries overall responsibility for the UNDP programme. With the breadth of his responsibilities however, the UNDP Country Director is *de facto* in full charge of developing and managing the programme.

The UNDP programme was originally dominated by its role of administrator of donor funds. With the key role played by the World Bank in the management of the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, a strong position adopted by the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General of UNAMA, and UNOPS originally in charge of electoral support[52], UNDP was initially limited both in the number of expatriate staff that it could deploy and programmatically restricted to pay for elections, civil service salaries and the police force. The portfolio gradually became more substantive, particularly in the governance sector. The previous country programme (2006-2008, extended to 2009) began after the Parliamentary elections in 2005 and saw a return for UNDP to broad-based development. This included a shift away from a narrow interpretation of capacity-building to encompass civil society as well as formal institutions of state and added attention to the creation of jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

In 2008, the UN Country Team sought to establish its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the next cycle through extensive consultations with national and international partners, including through the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board co-chaired by UNAMA. The resulting UNDAF 2010-2014, a rather ambitious document, foresaw a transformation of Afghanistan and focused UN support to this transformation on three priority

areas: a) fostering good governance, peace and stability; b) promoting sustainable livelihoods with a focus on agriculture, rural development, food security and income generation; C) providing basic social services, specifically education, health, water and sanitation.

The UNDAF was issued four days before the Taliban attack on the Bakhtar guesthouse (28 October 2009), which seriously affected UN operations in the country. The UNDAF was thus described by many in the UN system as too optimistic and based on an outdated diagnostic. Indeed, the mid-term review compiled in early 2012[53] evidenced the limited progress made towards the stated ambitions.

Against this background, the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) was ostensibly designed to focus on the first two UNDAF outcomes.[54] The overall goal to which UNDP is supposed to contribute during the period under review is stated in the CPD document as follows:

> "*The current CPD and the accompanying CPAP* [Country Programme Action Plan], *covering the period from 2010 to 2014, was designed to advance and deepen the progress made in the previous cycle in <u>promoting stabilization, state building and governance, and strengthening democratic institutions in the country</u>.*" (emphasis added)

The CPD and CPAP identified as lessons from the previous programme period "the need for UNDP to strengthen its coherence and provide more substantive programmes in the next phase of assistance," and "improved reporting of development results from UNDP interventions and better integration of UNDP programmes and coordination with UNAMA and the United Nations system."

---

52 UNDP inherited electoral support in 2005/2006, after a financial scandal at UNOPS.

53 UNDG, 'UNDAF Mid-Term Progress Report', 2013 (not published).

54 The third UNDAF priority area (basic social services) was perceived as beyond UNDP's mandate and niche.

The CPD reflected a progressive shift to more long-term development-oriented programmes that target poverty, human security and sustainable livelihood issues, and concentrates on a few key strategic outcomes. The CPD also closely reflects the national development priorities articulated in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, and aimed to provide substantial impetus to the integrated UN approach.

Another key change was the strong emphasis placed on subnational governance. The CPD notes that that while UNDP had invested heavily in central institutional development, "the positive impact on the lives of Afghans was limited and more must be done to improve state-society relationships, trust and confidence." The focus on the subnational level was to be a defining characteristic of the present Country Programme.[55] The UNDAF also makes frequent references to the importance of working at the subnational level.

Four programme components were selected in the CPD: a) stabilization and peace building; b) strengthening democratic governance; c) livelihoods, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction; d) national development policies for economic growth and poverty reduction. The ensuing Country Programme Action Plan (2010–2013), published in December 2009, further delineated six outcomes (Table 6).

At the time of the ADR evaluation mission, the UN Country Team (UNCT) had initiated the first steps of a Common Country Assessment (CCA), which will serve as the basis for the new UNDAF. UNDP's new five-year country programme will be initiated as of 2015. The UNCT has decided that the CCA should explore six sectors:

- Environmental management (including water and natural resources, urban development and mining)

- Inclusive economic growth (including employment, agriculture, trade patterns, cultivation of poppy and production of opium, manufacturing and service sectors)

- Accountable governance (role of Parliament, civil service reform, capacity development at the national and subnational levels, democratic accountability, rule of law, electoral rules, political transition, gender equality in practice and the security sector)

- Service delivery (focusing especially on health, safe water, education and food security);

- Humanitarian action (focusing on interrelated humanitarian issues of food insecurity, natural disasters in conflict and the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to address these)

- Human development outcomes (including youth bulge, migration and quality of life)

As the CCA and resulting UNDAF will provide the basis for the next UNDP CPD, the Country Office is expected to collaborate closely in its compilation. In particular, UNDP has analysed the drivers of conflict and capacities for peace as a contribution to the CCA process.

3.2 UNDP PROGRAMMES AND OFFICE ORGANIZATION

The CPAP 2010-2014 lists the following intended outcomes:

1. Capacity in state and non-state institutions increased to contribute to overall stabilization and peace building.

2. Effectiveness of the justice system is improved and access to justice is increased.

---

55 "UNDP will seek to expand its programmatic sub-national presence to enhance the outreach of its programmes to ordinary Afghans. While this has to be balanced with security concerns, it is a key objective in this new country programme, as an emphasis limited to secure provinces in the past cycle undermined development for large segments of the population." UNDP, 'UNDP Country Programme document for Afghanistan (2010-2013)', September 2009, p.3.

Table 6. Afghanistan Country Programme Document 2010-2014 – components, outcomes and projects			
UNDAF	CPD programme components	CPAP outcomes	Main UNDP projects
a) Fostering good governance, peace and stability	Stabilization and peace building	1. Capacity in state and non-state institutions increased to contribute to overall stabilization and peace building.	LOTFA ANBP/DIAG, APRP
	Strengthening democratic governance		
	(a) Effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems promote the rule of law, including both formal and informal processes, with consideration of the rights of the poor, women and vulnerable groups.	2. Effectiveness of the justice system is improved and access to justice is increased.	JHRA, ACT (+GEP contribution to women's access to justice)
	(b) National, regional and local levels of governance expand their capacities to manage the equitable delivery of public services and support conflict reduction.	3. Government has improved ability to deliver services to foster human development and elected bodies have greater oversight capacity.	CAP, GEP, NIBP, MBAW, Policy Analysis and Development project
	(c) Legislatures, regional elected bodies and local assemblies have strengthened institutional capacity, enabling them to represent their constituents more effectively.	4. The state and non-state institution is better able to promote democratic participation and be accountable to the public.	ASGP, ELECT, SEAL, National State Governance Project (Office of the President)
b) Promoting sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on agriculture, rural development, food security and income generation	Livelihoods, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction	5. Capacities of national and local governance bodies are improved for better natural resources and disasters risk management	National Disaster Management Project, SAISEM, Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme
	National development policies for economic growth and poverty reduction.	6. Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships.	CNTF, NABDP, Alice-Ghan, Rural Enterprise Development Kandahar, Rural Enterprise Development Helmand

3. Government has improved ability to deliver services to foster human development and elected bodies have greater oversight capacity.

4. The state and non-state institutions are better able to promote democratic participation and be accountable to the public.

5. Capacities of national and local governance bodies are improved for better natural resources and disasters risk management.

6. Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships.

These outcomes are being pursued through the following interventions:

- Direct support to key democratic milestones and events: UNDP facilitated the adoption of the constitution and supported the

presidential, parliamentary and provincial council elections, essentially through two phases of the ELECT project (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow).[56]

- Support to the rule of law through the management of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which helps the Government to pay and train the national police force, and through projects meant to fight corruption (Accountability and Transparency Project, or 'ACT') or to improve access to justice and human rights at the central and district levels (Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan, or 'JHRA').

- Institutional development and capacity-building to the legislature, the judiciary, key ministries, agencies and commissions at the national level, mainly through the National Institution-Building Project (NIBP), as well as support to subnational governance levels (provinces, districts), mainly through the Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP); in addition, a variety of projects have supported the capacity of key national institutions, often by embedding advisors in governmental positions.

- Poverty reduction and provision of basic social services, mainly through the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP), which provides infrastructure, social services and economic projects through District Development Assemblies, thus strengthening their capacity to plan and implement development projects.

- Demobilization and disarmament initiatives such as the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), and the older

Afghanistan New Beginnings (ANBP, also known as "DDR project") and Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programmes.

The above-listed interventions are the largest ones. The programme portfolio used to include many smaller projects covering a wide area of topics, until a "criticality review" conducted by the UNDP Country Office after the attack on the Bakhtar guest house (Oct. 2009)[57] resulted in the consolidation, clustering and sometimes cancellation[58] of some 35 projects into 10 large programmes. As a result, the Afghanistan programme is now consolidated around a small number of key interventions, each fairly large.

The correspondence or mapping between programmes and outcomes, presented in Table 6, is somewhat arbitrary in that many programmes actually contribute to several outcomes. The NABDP, classified under outcome 6 ("Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships") has stopped working on enterprise development and is chiefly concerned with building social, irrigation and transport infrastructure, as well as local governance. The outcomes themselves are overlapping: outcome 2 on justice could be subsumed under outcome 1 on stabilization, or under outcome 3 on services. In the Afghan context, all these outcomes are intertwined and seen to contribute to state-building.

The financial size of the Afghanistan programme is staggering by UNDP standards. Over the evaluated period (2009-2013), UNDP has spent approximately $3.34 billion in Afghanistan (Table 7), and has channelled approximately

---

56 Phase I started in 2005 and ended in 2011. Phase II was launched in January 2012, a two-year project of capacity-building support primarily to the IEC. As a result of a UN Department of Political Affairs-led electoral Needs Assessment Mission in late 2012, ELECT II was expanded and extended to cover direct support to the 2014 and 2015 elections.

57 The attack was meant to disrupt the (once-planned, then cancelled) run-off to the 2009 presidential elections. It killed five UN staff, including two from UNDP/ELECT, two Afghan security personnel and an Afghan civilian.

58 For instance, in the areas of environment and disaster risk reduction.

10 percent of all ODA to the country. This large share[59] talks to the centrality of UNDP in the current aid architecture in Afghanistan.

Resources available to UNDP for programming have grown year after year over the reviewed period, driven by the continuous rise in police numbers, which determined the size of LOTFA (see Figure 8).

Afghanistan is the largest UNDP Country Programme by far, representing approximately 15 percent of all UNDP expenditures worldwide. Expenditures during recent years are displayed in Table 7. LOTFA accounted for about three quarters of all programme expenditures since 2009. 'Regular' resources (i.e. core UNDP funds) account for 2.4 percent of all expenditures over the evaluated period. Notably, 97.6 percent of all expenditures came from 'other resources' (donors

funding). Two donors, Japan and the United States, financed two thirds of all UNDP expenditures since 2009 (see Figure 9).

As of September 2013, 580 national staff and 121 international staff were on UNDP's direct payroll. This figure does not include the so-called non-*Tashkeel* personnel placed within national institutions, and generally paid out of Letters of Agreement with the concerned institutions. These are formally staff of the concerned institution, even if paid by UNDP. As of November 2013, there were 2,233 non-*Tashkeel* personnel supported by UNDP, spread among the institutions supported by UNDP in the country.

Approximately 80 percent of all expenditures are used to fund programme staff and consultants (national or international). A review of

Figure 8. Evolution of programme expenditures

---
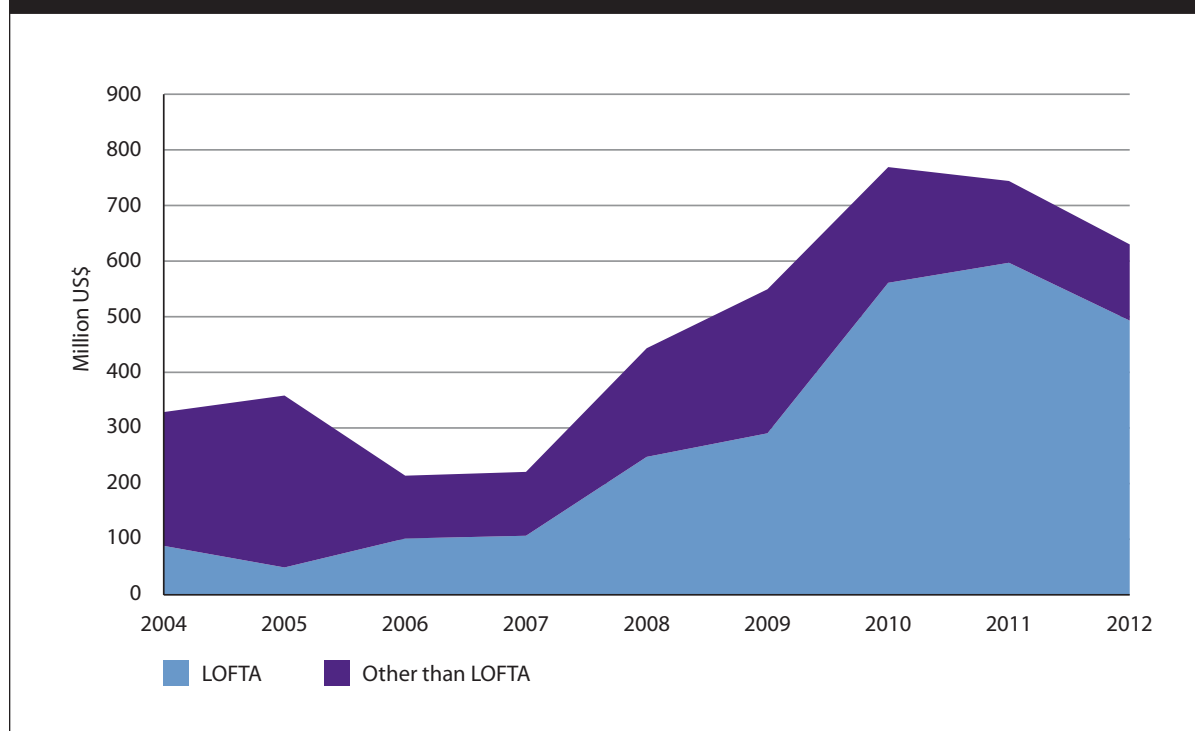
59   In stable countries, UNDP typically commands some 1 or 2 percent of total ODA. The percentage tends to be higher in countries experiencing crises or in post-conflict situations, such as Afghanistan.

Figure 9. Main donors (2009-2012)

US, 28%
EU, 9%
Germany, 6%
UK, 3%
Canada, 3%
Netherlands, 3%
Norway, 2%
Denmark, 1%
Other donors, 4%
UNDP core, 2.4%
Japan, 38%
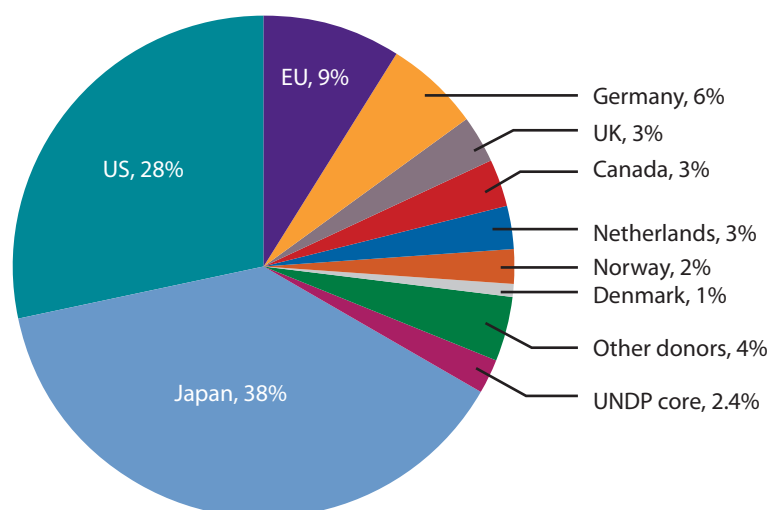
Table 7. Expenditures since 2009

Year	Total expenditures	Programme expenditures	of which LOTFA	LOTFA as % of programme expenditures
	------------ (million US$) ------------			
2009	568	549	290	53%
2010	790	769	561	73%
2011	769	744	597	80%
2012	656	630	493	78%
2013*	556	527	376	71%
Total	**3,339**	**3,219**	**2,317**	**72%**

Source: ATLAS

* Estimate data as of 6 January 2014.

all procurements effected in 2010 showed that travels and transport (both international and in country) represented $29.3 million, or 38 percent of the value of all procurements that year. 'Motor vehicles and parts' plus 'petroleum oils and products' amounted to an additional $6.8 million. These figures are consistent with a programme chiefly concerned with capacity development and providing or paying for human resources.

During the ADR evaluation mission, the Country Office in Kabul was in the process of relocating from a compound in *Shar-e-Naw* to a rather less convenient United Nation office complex on the outskirts of the city.

The organogram of the Country Office changed significantly during the reviewed period, with the architecture of programme units evolving regularly. One characteristic of the evolving structure has been to separate 'subnational governance' from 'national governance', reflecting the large size and importance of these two domains of intervention.

Recently, as a result of a strategic review[60] conducted in 2011 and a change in Country Office management in April 2012, a number of new units have been set up to reinforce the Country Director's office, such as risk management, communication with donors, and policy.

Another effort to strengthen programme coherence has been the cluster system. For most of the period under review, the Country Office had five clusters (1-5 below), to which a sixth was added recently (poverty-environment nexus). At evaluation time, the clusters were:

1. Rule of law and justice for all

2. Gender and women's empowerment

3. Capacity development

4. Subnational governance

5. Legitimate and inclusive governance (formerly national governance)

6. Poverty-environment nexus

Programme clusters are intended to facilitate strategic coherence, collaboration, and joint planning and learning by different programmes. Each cluster team is currently working on strategies for the next programme period.

In theory, the UNDP programme is spread across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan as a result of programmes such as NABDP and support to provincial administrations and councils. Yet in practice, due to donor earmarking, activities are concentrated on some of the most unstable provinces while other, more stable provinces receive fewer resources.

The 2011 strategic review recommended, among other things, that UNDP strengthen the synergies among its three programmes implemented at the subnational level: the NABDP, the APRP and the ASGP. A programme coherence mission was conducted in April 2012 and recommended the creation of a new cluster on local governance and development.

While UNDP does not maintain sub-offices in the country, a number of programmes have opened offices in the regional capitals of Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Kandahar, Bamyan and Jalalabad. These are ASGP (whose staff positioned in regional capitals loosely coordinate all UNDP interventions); NABDP (with offices often located within MRRD compounds in every province); APRP (which has UNDP-paid staff in five regional offices, and LOA staff in all provinces); NIBP (with a small number of international technical advisors located in line ministries at the provincial level); and GEP (which supports LOA staff within Department of Women's Affairs offices in a growing number of provinces).

Generally speaking, the programme has been thoroughly evaluated at the project level, albeit with uneven quality. The recent strategic review added to this evaluative evidence, particularly with regards to internal management and donor relations. However, there is still a dearth of information about programme results, in particular at the provincial and district levels. This shortcoming, which the Government and donors have highlighted, and the limits imposed on monitoring by poor security conditions, is reviewed in detail in section 4.7 (Efficiency).

---

60   Rajan, R. et al., 'Strategic Programme Review of UNDP Afghanistan: The Way Forward – a Transformation Agenda for UNDP Afghanistan', UNDP, 2010.

Chapter 4

UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This chapter reviews the UNDP programmes implemented over the last four years against the ADR core evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Given the magnitude of most UNDP programmes in the country, reviewing each programme individually was deemed more useful than the outcome-level format used in most ADRs. Therefore, the relevance and effectiveness of each programme and project are presented under their respective CPAP outcome, following the categorization of Table 6. However, the chapter closes with a consolidated review of all programmes against the criteria of efficiency and sustainability, because of the commonalities found among UNDP programmes when evaluating them against these criteria.

4.1 STABILIZATION AND PEACE BUILDING

This outcome is pursued through the management of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which helps the Government to pay and train the national police force, and through the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), which supports a process by which anti-governmental forces would be approached and enticed, by a package of financial support and vocational training, to lay down arms and return to civilian life. The Counter-Narcotic Trust Fund (CNTF), now almost closed, is briefly reviewed as part of the NABDP under outcome 6.

4.1.1 SUPPORT TO THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (LOTFA)

Overview

LOTFA has been an anchor project in UNDP's portfolio in the past decade. In 2012, it represented 75 percent of all UNDP expenditures in Afghanistan, and constitutes the largest single project that UNDP manages worldwide. As of February 2013, LOTFA has mobilized and delivered $2.5 billion through six short-phased programmes since 2002. The current phase (budget $1.4 billion, about $650 million spent annually) is primarily funded by the United States, the European Union and Japan. LOTFA generates significant extra-budgetary resources collected through the management fee (approximately $24 million in 2012), half of which remains for the Country Office, with the other half going to UNDP headquarters.

Originally set up to pay salaries to a nascent police force, LOTFA has since expanded to cover the uniformed personnel employed by the Central Prisons Department, as well as police infrastructure and facilities. It has also added a component for capacity development and institutional reform of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) at the policy, institutional and individual Afghan National Police levels, and a gender component through recruiting, training and mainstreaming female police. LOTFA also supports the building of effective police-community partnerships. In the current phase VII, these activities are structured under three pillars: 1) prison and staff remuneration and police infrastructure; 2) capacity development and institutional reform for MOI at the policy, organizational and individual levels; 3) democratic policing (*polis-e-mardum* – unconnected to the Afghan Local Police).

Relevance

LOTFA constitutes a vital national undertaking, and is likely to be continued during the transition and beyond. UNDP acts primarily as an administrative agency in managing the programme, and is widely considered by the donor community to be

an essential actor, ensuring greater accountability of the funds going to support the Afghanistan police force. Likewise, MOI is quite keen on LOTFA, which ensures the continuous funding of the largest police force the country has ever had.

The function played by UNDP in LOTFA is primarily one of funds management in a transparent manner. This role reflects the comparative advantage and niche of UNDP in post-conflict context, but comes at a variance with the Organization's substantive mandate. In 2010/2011, UNDP added components relative to the training of police officers and democratic policing. This has brought the project closer to the UNDP mandate in capacity-building and good governance, and strengthens the case for UNDP's involvement in the project.

Effectiveness

While serious issues, analysed under the 'efficiency' section, have been reported in the management of the LOTFA programme from 2009-2011, the programme has also achieved many of its objectives. It has put in place a credible electronic payroll system, with appropriate checks and balances. This includes registration, verification by the national security department, training and entry into the human resource file. UNDP Afghanistan indicates that LOTFA has achieved the following:

- Ensured regularity and transparency in the payment of police remunerations. Ninety-five percent of police are now covered through the electronic payroll system, 80 percent through individualized electronic fund transfer.

- Some 1,250 MOI officials received specialized financial management systems training. LOTFA also trained 300 police trainers on gender and human rights concepts.

- Helped recruit over 2000 women to the policy force and started a specific training programme for female officers.

- Construction and refurbishment of police infrastructure, including a 200-bed hospital in Kabul, 1,350 police checkpoints, five police headquarters, provincial fire brigade departments, traffic units and police colonies, and a police gymnasium in Kabul.

- Developed police community relationships in eight Kabul districts and public information desks established in 31 districts and three provinces

UNDP, with significant support from many donors, has had a widely perceived positive impact in helping Afghanistan develop and operate a functioning police force. In particular, observers cite the importance of having a reliable system in place to regularly pay all police, through bank deposits as well as direct cash payments through the *Hawala* system.[61] The payroll system is viewed as a major achievement by MOI and international donors. It also receives favourable comments from interviewed police at the district level, and even from key NGO representatives who appreciate the presence of a reliable police force in the main urban centres.

The extent of doubt and uncertainty about the payment of police salaries is lower today than it was five years ago. Today, roughly 95 percent of police are paid through electronic transfer of funds to individual bank accounts. The potential risks and abuses inherent in a manual/cash payment system have been reduced from 100 percent a decade ago to the roughly 5 percent who still receive their salary in cash due to the unavailability of personal bank accounts in the still evolving banking systems in the rural areas. Overall, the electronic system allows for easier detection of possible abuses.

As a result of LOTFA, police are getting paid, food support is being provided and morale appears to be high, despite the fact that the police

---

61 *Hawala* is a cash transfer system based on a large network of informal money brokers.

are commonly on the front lines against the insurgency and have borne the brunt of casualties.[62]

However, payroll and food expenditures indicate large, unexplained variance from one month to the next, in some provinces more than others, and late payments of police salaries has been reported in many provinces.

LOTFA has no real control over what gets paid and when. The payments are effected by the Ministry of Finance and not by LOTFA. LOTFA can only monitor such payments after they are made, through the monitoring agent reports. From these reports, it appears that LOTFA is routinely being used to advance all kinds of expenditures.[63]

Reconciliations are difficult, as data about hiring, firing, secondments and transfers are not available. Human resources data maintenance under LOTFA is provided under an electronic payroll system and a Web-based electronic payroll system, where provincial police officers report their payroll needs on a monthly basis. These systems, maintained by LOTFA and MOI, provide the number of police personnel for the purpose of payment of salaries. However, the links are not automated: the three databases developed by different partners—Payroll (UNDP); Biometrics (USAID, Denmark); and Human Resources (MOI)—do not 'talk' to one another.

There is recognition amongst the international community as well as within the government that the current role of the police force includes too much counter-insurgency work, at the expense of community policing. Project documents for recent phases of LOTFA include a community police component called in Dari *polis-e-mardum*

('people's police') and aiming to "build effective police-community partnerships."

A recent survey meant to prepare the community police component[64] noted that Afghan citizens' satisfaction with the police is relative: they compare the present situation with the previous decades of war, during which time the local militias (mujahedin, Taliban and others) were both the lawmakers and law breakers. The public expresses a deep fear of the return of local militias if police are seen to be failing at their job.

The outcome of the capacity-building aspects (pillars 2 and 3) has not been reviewed in detail by the ADR team, given that they have been implemented only recently. The records maintained by the LOTFA project on training activities (Table 8) indicate an intense and diversified training effort. Feedback from MOI and LOTFA staff indicate, however, that these pillars tend to be composed of many disparate activities and would deserve to be better planned and coordinated.

The degree to which this effort meets the training need of the average police officer posted in the field may be more of an issue: it would appear that many present police officers are simply illiterate. In the survey mentioned earlier[65], 98 percent of interviewees thought police needed more training. Forty-two percent mentioned literacy training, 29 percent noted a need for training on relationships with the general public, 25 percent highlighted conflict resolution, and 4 percent thought the police needed legal training to better understand the law.

MOI is aware of the very low competencies of most police officers, and is trying to reinforce selection and training at entry level. In addition to

---

62   From March to August 2013, 1,792 police were killed, most by roadside bombs. The same number died in the preceding 12 months. Police precincts and other official buildings have been targeted by attacks, and police vehicles are lighter and more vulnerable to roadside bombs than army vehicles.

63   Ineligible expenditures identified by the Monitoring Agent are deducted from future LOTFA payments.

64   Afghanistan Civil Society Forum, 'Baseline Study for Pilot Democratic Policing Across 8 Districts of Northern Kabul Province', March 2010.

65   Afghanistan Civil Society Forum, 2010.

Table 8. LOTFA training activities 2010-2012		
Subjects	Trainees	Trainees x days
Finance, accounting and electronic payroll system	628	6,330
Management skills	300	1,500
International training on management, leadership, logistics, community policing, traffic, etc. (Turkey and Indonesia)	1,042	179,310
Information technologies and English	35	1,665
Code of Conduct for family response unit and gender mainstreaming unit (with the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan)	860	1,112
Gender	811	3,824
Police and society, police and human rights, child and women rights, introduction to civil society, communication, conflict management	101	707
Refresher workshop on Democratic Policing (Polis-e-Mardum)	101	303
Citizens' rights and police responsibility	15	45
Call centre, information desk operators and front desk interactions with citizens	237	5,494
Sports training from a Polis-e-Mardum perspective	640	1,280
Stress management	24	168
Total	**4,794**	**201,738**

Source: LOTFA project records

this focus on new recruits, a renewed effort to train police officers already in the force appears in order.

LOTFA has advanced efforts to both increase the representation of women within the police services and to strengthen the overall ability of the police to ensure the protection of women and girls, including as they relate to the police. The recruitment of women into the police provides a mechanism for the reintroduction of women into the public sphere, but also a critical point of access for women to the wider justice system. These activities represent important interventions by LOTFA, albeit ones to which relatively few resources have been devoted. They include:

■ Recruitment of new female recruits (482 in 2011-12, over 2,000 according to the latest reports)

■ Establishment of the Gender Mainstreaming Unit at MOI, which has reportedly gained recognition within the Ministry *Tashkeel*

■ Formation of the Afghan National Police Women's Association

The latest LOTFA evaluation report[66] points to significant attrition rates among female police personnel and notes that recruits have largely been among *satanman* (non-commissioned officer) and *sarbaz/satonki* (soldier/patrol) ranks. The number of women in *saran* (officer) ranks has remained stagnant. The report describes stalled efforts to establish Family Response Units, with efforts being channelled instead into the formulation of a Family Response Unit strategy by MOI, and a static caseload. Similarly, the development of a recruitment strategy, the initiation

---

66 UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) Phase V', by Atos Consulting, April 2012.

of incentive pay for female recruitments, and the monitoring of attrition and retention rates of female personnel were lagging behind. In these conditions, the report questioned the realism of the target of 5,000 female officers for 2014 announced by MOI.[67]

4.1.2 DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (ANBP, DIAG, APRP)

Overview

In post-conflict settings such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan, UNDP has been increasingly called upon to facilitate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. In Afghanistan, however, UNDP faced a number of specific challenges, detailed in this report, which severely hampered the achievement of development results.

UNDP's involvement in DDR started as early as 2002, with the formulation and implementation of the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), which ran from 2002–2006 and provided support to the reintegration of 63,000 former combatants from the assemblage of militias that constituted the Northern Alliance, dubbed the 'Afghan Military Force'.

A subsequent programme within ANBP was DIAG (Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups) which targeted all armed groups outside the Afghan Military Force, and was carried out between 2005- 2011. DIAG reports claim over 53,000 reintegrees. Another initiative was the Heavy Weapons Cantonment project, which collected over 12,000 pieces of artillery, tanks, mortars and missiles. These three interventions destroyed or secured a total of 23,000 tons of munitions, mines and weapons[68] out of an estimated 100,000 metric tons of uncontrolled ammunition and explosive material littering the country.

The most recent DDR initiative is the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), created following a National Consultation Peace *Jirga* held on 29 June 2010 to provide a means for Taliban and anti-government elements to renounce violence and become a productive part of Afghan society. The programme supports the High Peace Council and its Joint Secretariat.[69] The Joint Secretariat is supposed to foster collaboration across government units in delivering demobilization assistance to ex-combatants, while the High Peace Council, composed of 70 members selected by the President, has the more political role of engaging in talks with the armed opposition (Taliban and related networks). The APRP also provides leadership support to provincial governors for reintegration at the subnational level, through chairing peace and reintegration committees, mobilizing *shuras*, negotiating local grievances, supporting local reintegration initiatives, and through the enrolment of tribal elders and religious leaders as 'peace advocates'.

The APRP was formulated by the Government and donors without significant UNDP involvement, as NPP 22. UNDP was called upon to implement 'funding window B' of the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund.[70] This window attracted the largest contributions. A total of $99 million was pledged to window B, with Japan in the lead ($52 million) plus Germany, Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, Republic of Korea and Spain.

---

67 Recruitment goal announced at the 14 June 2009 Steering Committee meeting, according to Atos Consulting 2012, op. cit.

68 Mission undertaken in Afghanistan by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in relation to the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme, Luc Lafrenière et al., UNDP 2006.

69 The High Peace Council structure was detailed in a joint order dated 6 September 2010. The Council itself was established in October 2010 with former president Borhanuddin Rabbani as its chairman.

70 Several implementation mechanisms are available to donors under the APRP, each called a 'window'. Window A allows contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund overseen by the World Bank; window B channels resources through UNDP; window C is managed by a private trustee, Standard Chartered.

The organizational structure of the High Peace Council and its secretariat, as well as 34 provincial teams mirroring the council and secretariat format, and accompanied by regional APRP management units, took more than a year to set up. The reintegration and vetting process are equally lengthy and complex, involving the ISAF Force Reintegration Cell (FRIC), the National Directorate of Security (NDS, Afghanistan's main intelligence service) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) at provincial and national levels.

Relevance

The APRP is a national priority and is of significant importance to the Government's peace and security strategy. The High Peace Council supported by the APRP is seen as a critical body in any future peace talks with the Taliban. Currently, the High Peace Council is the only mechanism offering a platform for negotiations/reconciliation in the absence of a structured peace process or cessation of hostilities.

The Taliban have publicly opposed the APRP on numerous occasions, including by killing the High Peace Council's first chairman, Professor Borhanuddin Rabbani, in Kabul on 20 September 2011.[71] In the absence of a peace agreement, APRP accesses insurgent groups such as the Taliban, the Hezb-e-Islami or the Haqani network in a piecemeal manner, group by group, commander by commander. The programme (and DIAG before it) has been forced to approach individual commanders separately to try and entice them to lay down arms, and this has been a time-consuming, cumbersome process.

The programme's institutional set-up is overly complex and heavy. While UNDP was asked to implement part of the APRP, it apparently did not contribute to its long, protracted formulation process. Perhaps as a result, the APRP design includes an extremely complex and unwieldy institutional set up involving eight ministries[72], and weak conflict analysis. Having accepted operational responsibility of window B, UNDP is now saddled with a programme with slow delivery, poor performance and significant reputational and security risks, although it constitutes one of the Government's top priorities for international support.

Another concern, which calls into question the relevance of APRP's disarmament efforts, is that Afghan society has historically been highly confrontational and armed. In many parts of the country, nearly every adult male owns one or several small arms. The 2005 National Millennium Development Goals Report recognizes this difficulty and argues that "large scale civilian disarmament, without the strengthening and reform of the police and justice systems, is likely to be both difficult and may also increase people's vulnerability and perception of mistrust of the state." It goes on to state that "the registration and regulation of small arms may be a more viable option," but even such a modest step seems unrealistic in a country with millions of unregistered small arms.[73]

Effectiveness

The APRP has achieved some results mainly at the institutional level. A reintegration strategy was drafted; the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund was established; and the project helped develop policies and operational guidelines.

The APRP supported the Joint Secretariat and the establishment of 34 Provincial Peace Councils and 34 Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams. The training given to these entities was uniform in design and delivery, but given the multi-tiered design of the project involving decision-making

---

71 Rabbani's son Salahuddin was nominated to take over the chairmanship of the High Peace Council.

72 Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled; Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; and Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs.

73 The Small Arms Survey estimated in 2010 that there was from 500,000 to 1.5 million small arms and light weapons in the country. See Bhatia, M. and Sedra, M., 'Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict: Armed groups, disarmament and security in a post-war society', Routledge, February 2011.

and oversight mechanisms at the centre and province levels, a significant effort would have been required in matching the training requirements to Terms of Reference for all the posts. Not all staff and provincial council members received training at the outset of their duties, and some did not receive any training at all due to a rapid staff turnover in provinces.
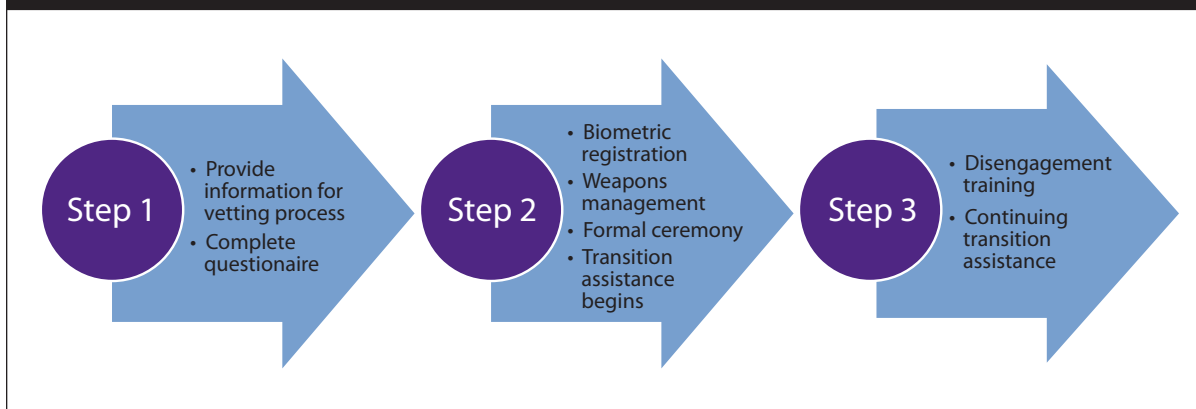
Bank accounts were established in each of provinces, enabling the transfer of funds for operational expenses. Six regional project offices have been set up and staffed. In addition, the APRP maintains Project Management Units or 'APRP cells' located in various line ministries to coordinate training or support packages to reintegrees. The quality of these Project Management Units' relations with their respective ministry varies, and the project has had difficulties in working through them.

As of 31 December 2012, a total of 7,602 former combatants reconciled with the Afghan Government, of whom 6,662 were already biometrically enrolled into the programme. Among those enrolled, 565 were key commanders and leaders. The APRP further reports that 6,277 technical assistance packages have been distributed to the biometrically enrolled people, and that 5,442 weapons have been collected and formally registered.

According to the Joint Secretariat's operating procedures, demobilization should follow the step-wise approach summarized schematically in Figure 10. In practice, delivery of the biometric identity process has been slow, due largely to the slow vetting procedures through the HPC, NDS, ISAF and MOI at national and provincial levels. Delays in vetting and getting reintegrees through the identification process have, in turn, slowed the stipend payment process. There is also much delay in developing and delivering the courses, support package and small development projects that would incentivize reinsertion, with significant difficulties working with the line ministries in placing reintegrees in their infrastructure projects.

As a result, the financial stipend paid to reintegrees ($200/month) had to be extended from three months to six months, and too few rural communities are getting recovery projects.[74] The number of such projects initiated (140 as of end 2012) has remained low and the linkages between reintegrees and community recovery projects remain unclear. In theory, the community recovery projects provided through four partner line ministries (Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development; Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; Ministry of Public Works; and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled) are supposed to

Figure 10. APRP demobilization process

Step 1
- Provide information for vetting process
- Complete questionaire

Step 2
- Biometric registration
- Weapons management
- Formal ceremony
- Transition assistance begins

Step 3
- Disengagement training
- Continuing transition assistance

---

74   APRP Mid-Term Evaluation Report, February 2013.

benefit the communities in which insurgents are reintegrated. In practice, it appears that the link between the two may need to be strengthened. While a recent study by the ISAF Force Reintegration Cell (FRIC)[75] indicated that the districts with the most reintegrees had the vast majority of the community recovery projects, the study also found districts with reintegrees but without any community recovery project, and vice versa (Table 9). Besides, Afghan districts tend to be large, with thousands of communities in each district; therefore, a match at the district level does not necessarily indicate a match at the community level.

Another issue has been the low quality of training packages offered to reintegrees by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, and the absence of follow-up and monitoring of this work.

One example of the work with line ministries is the Public Work Corps, which started operating under the Ministry of Public Works in December 2011 with a view to create job opportunities for reintegrees and community members on routine maintenance of roads. The Public Work Corps employed 1,186 persons in six provinces in 2012, and 1,878 person in eight provinces in 2013 (820 reintegrees and 1,058 community members).

There is scarce information on APRP reintegrees. Based on their geographic origin, it appears that ideological insurgents are a minority among programme beneficiaries. Most of the persons reintegrated so far are from the north of the country (Figure 11), i.e. from areas with generally low Taliban presence. Some 1,400 of them are from Badghis, a province with a low insurgency presence. This may be because Spain earmarked its large APRP donation for that province, where Spanish troops are positioned.

Gauging the effectiveness of the programme in terms of reintegrating individuals or contributing to peacebuilding and stabilization is especially difficult. There is no data on job and business creation, only approximate data on armaments turned in, and no data on what has happened subsequently for reintegrees, in terms of settling into jobs and so on. It is also not clear that the persons entering the system are in fact former combatants, as the numbers are very low in the areas of strong Taliban presence (south and east).

In general, the systems and processes to track reintegrees once they have gone through the process of reintegration remain weak. Some concerns have been expressed that persons enrolled in the programme are subsequently joining local police militias, but no tracking has been done to either refute or corroborate these concerns. Likewise, the work of the 'peace advocates' and their impact on Afghan society appear seldom documented.

None of the issues highlighted above is intractable, and stakeholders have stressed that solutions have been found and implemented for some of them already. According to APRP donors, some

Table 9. Correlation between reintegrees and community recovery projects at district level			
Districts	With community recovery projects	Without community recovery projects	Total
with reintegrees	123	115*	238
without reintegrees	13	156	169
Total	**136**	**271**	**407**

* 89 of these districts have less than five reintegrees each, so the mismatch is not as severe as it appears.
Source: ISAF Force Reintegration Cell, March 2014

75   APRP Reintegree / CR Correlation, ISAF Force Reintegration Cell, March 2014.

Figure 11. APRP reintegrees and community projects per province (as of 31 Dec 2012)
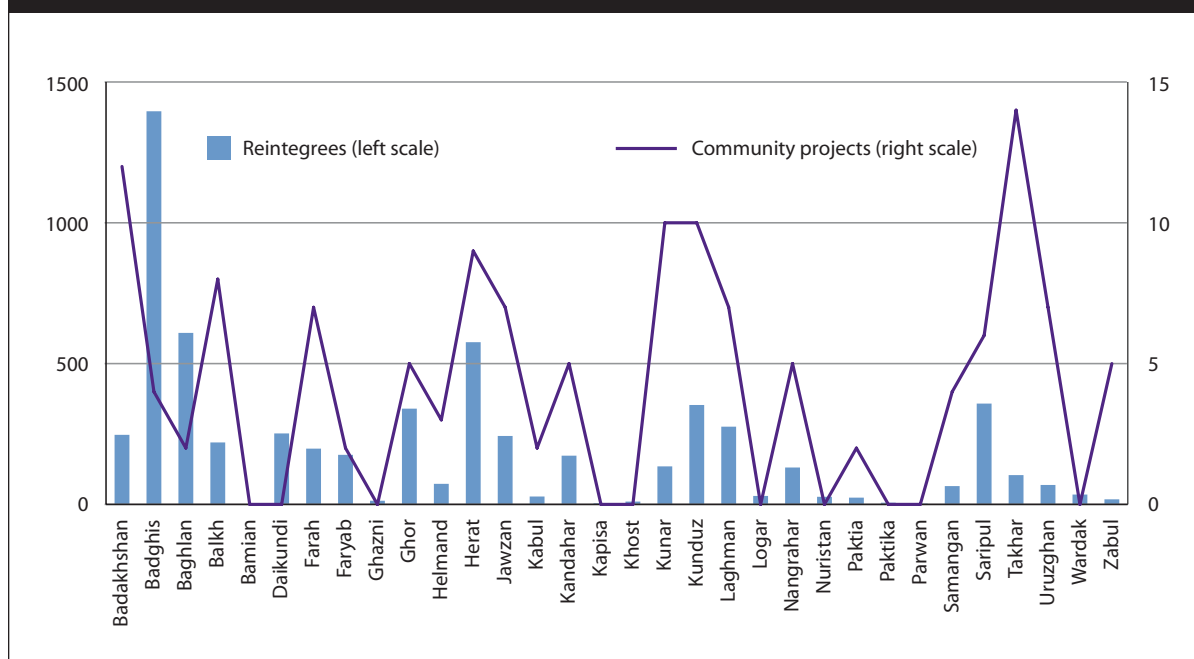
Source: APRP 2012 Annual Project Progress Report, April 2013

teething period was inevitable and the institutional mechanisms may need to be simplified, but the programme is in a good position to be scaled up, should a political settlement with the armed opposition materialize.

Judging from evaluation reports[76], the DIAG and ANBP projects were more straightforward in their implementation than APRP. They were designed to quickly transition former combatants back into their communities. Between the two programmes, more than 100,000 former combatants were reportedly reintegrated. But while the ANBP and DIAG could produce impressive data for the number of soldiers demobilized and arms collected, they could not achieve one of their primary stated objectives: the permanent breakdown of militia groupings and the commander patronage

networks that sustain them. Most of the weapons collected by DIAG were old and unserviceable.

Due to a lack of political support, the provision that commanders should first disband their armed groups before entering political life (e.g. compete in parliamentary elections) was never systematically enforced. Important government officials linked to illegal armed groups were *not* removed from office.[77]

Finally, a lack of coordination meant that while DDR actors, including UNDP, sought to disband militias, ISAF has pursued a strategy to provide local militia with arms in order to create the 'Afghan Local Police', sometimes re-arming the very same militias that just underwent a DDR process.[78]

---

76 Poulton. R-E., ' DIAG Evaluation - Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups in Afghanistan, a project of the United Nations Development Programme & the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)' EPS Mandala Consulting, April 2009.

77 UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', UNDP Evaluation Office, 2009; and DIAG Quarterly Project Reports 2007 and 2008.

78 Poulton, 2009, op. cit.

4.2 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The main UNDP interventions in this area are Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA), the Peace through Justice Joint Programme (part of JHRA), and the Accountability and Transparency (ACT) project.

4.2.1 JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN (JHRA)

Overview

JHRA began in June 2009 and is designed to improve access to justice at the central and district levels. In doing so, it aims to take a human rights-based approach that is simultaneously designed to strengthen citizens' capacity to claim their rights, and to enhance the capacity of justice system actors to deliver justice in compliance with the rule of law and human rights standards. It was meant to provide capacity-building to the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court.

JHRA support to the Ministry of Justice included the creation of a Translation Unit. Initially conceived as a mechanism to improve cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the international community, the Translation Unit's role expanded substantively. Presidential Decree of 21st June declared the Translation Unit to become a Translation Board, placed under the direct supervision of the Legislative Department 'Taqnin' to assist in the law-making process. An additional translation unit was reportedly developed for the Supreme Court, building on a previous project with similar aim. The JHRA also supported the establishment of a Human Rights Support Unit, identified as a priority within the ANDS and designed to help the Government draft new laws and tracks human rights implementation in keeping with Afghanistan's international human rights commitments.

Output 3 of the JHRA was designed to provide support at the district level to increase the delivery of justice services locally, at the district level. This work entailed training justice officials on legal issues, as well as training community elders and religious leaders. An additional effort focused on providing information to citizens on their legal rights, and a mass media campaign was carried out through radio, public service announcements and other platforms on justice and rights issues. Infrastructure support represented a large component, with 19 primary courts, judicial residences, Ministry of Justice legal affairs offices and detention centres built in 15 districts.

The project is undergoing a thorough review to meet a more ambitious agenda from the Government of Afghanistan and key donors. An independent evaluation of this project, conducted in August 2011, noted that JHRA needs to become more responsive to the Ministry of Justice's vision and needs, and Afghan ownership of the project needs to be increased substantially. A revised draft strategy for the continuation of the JHRA was endorsed in December 2012. It draws on the 2004 UN Secretary-General report defining the rule of law and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, endorsed by the Afghan Government and UNDP in 2012.

Relevance

The JHRA is very relevant to Afghanistan, especially in its work to expand the capacity of justice services at the local level and to raise the awareness of citizens about their rights as well as duties under the law. It is also can serve as an essential bridging effort between informal and formal legal mechanisms.

In Afghanistan, the traditional justice system plays a major role in resolving conflicts, sometimes in violation of national and international human rights obligations, particularly the rights of women. Cultural values in Afghanistan, including a very strict interpretation of Islam by some religious leaders, often creates obstacles to access to justice for women, by limiting their freedom of movement, literacy, and ability to assert their rights.[79]

---

79   JHRA Project Paper, 2011, p. 1.

Given this context, it is most relevant for UNDP to work in this area.

Nonetheless, the traditional justice system 'works' in that it provides swift, transparent justice and binding rulings that are viewed as legitimate. In contrast, the formal justice system is significantly slower, viewed as corrupt, and may also produce decisions contrary to international human and women rights. This indicates a need for more work by UNDP on *both* systems.

Effectiveness

The latest evaluation[80] noted a heavy reliance on international staff in senior technical and management positions, and a low sense of project ownership by national institutions. The overall impact of the project is deemed high at the central level (Human Rights Support Unit and, to a lesser extent, Ministry of Justice). However, the Translation Unit is described as closed due to a lack of funds, though it was found significant in influencing policy. According to the evaluation, JHRA did not contribute significantly to capacity-building beyond the Ministry of Justice, as its capacity-building activities with the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court were *ad hoc* and not sustained over time.

The Ministry of Justice and Supreme Court translation services have been viewed as valuable, setting the stage for a significant increase in translation of international legal text with subsequent enhancement of Afghanistan legislation—for instance, a new Child Act provides protections for children rights in Afghanistan. Mass media and public legal awareness campaigns in schools, among community and religious leaders, and at the community level have raised awareness about human rights.

A specific concern with the JHRA to date relates to its infrastructure construction component, including six primary courts, five attorney general's offices, four detention centres and four residences for judges. At the end of the JHRA phase 1, the construction was still ongoing. Oversight of the infrastructure work was weak, and the UNDP country office was not fully aware of the status of each project—whether it was on schedule, whether it was coming in on budget, whether there was sufficient funding for operations and maintenance, and whether the facilities that were completed were being used as intended. The focus of the project was primarily on the provision of rehabilitated infrastructure, without addressing the staffing and organizational systems requirements necessary to ensure the delivery of justice services to the communities using these rehabilitated facilities. Plans for the next phase of the JHRA do not include infrastructure projects.

4.2.2   THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY (ACT) PROJECT

Overview

The Government of Afghanistan has taken several key steps in the fight against corruption, including ratifying the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2008), finalizing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, and establishing the High Office of Oversight for the Implementation of Anti-Corruption Strategy. Against this background, the Accountability and Transparency programme (ACT) was designed to support integrity initiatives in line with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the priorities outlined in the ANDS as well as in the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The purpose of the UNDP ACT project was described as the "capacity of national and local government institutions to tackle corruption is improved, with civil society providing greater demand for reform." The ACT project thus focused on prevention of and institutional/capacity development on anti-corruption, complementing ongoing efforts on enforcement. The

---

80   UNDP, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) - AFG/0071252 - Independent / External Mid-term Evaluation Report - Project Period 26 June 2009-30 June 2012', by Fainula Rodriguez and Hangama Anwari, August 2011.

High Office of Oversight was the main partner, but the scope of the project was extended in 2009 to include other groups, such as the Control and Audit Office and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

Relevance

The fight against corruption remains highly relevant, as the future stability of the nation depends upon the emergence of a credible administration enjoying the confidence of its people and able to make good use of both domestic and foreign resources to deliver services. Corruption is a significant challenge facing the Government of Afghanistan, and a key driver of popular dissatisfaction with how the country is managed. Corruption issues are viewed as endemic within the public sector, although this report argues that massive international assistance has worsened the problem.

The ACT project attempted to address crucial issues that have gained greater prominence over the last several years as anti-corruption measures emerged as a key donor priority. Its relevance also spans the broader UNDP mandate of ensuring transparency, good governance and capacity development.

The project was overambitious in design, and based upon generic objectives and an untested interaction methodology that was heavily risk-laden. However, UNDP progressively adapted the ACT design to take into consideration its inability to deliver against its objectives with the High Office of Oversight, diversifying its partnerships by adding a series of ministries and the Control and Audit Office. Finally, ACT worked in parallel with a number of other donors, such as DfID, the European Union, GIZ, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, USAID and the World Bank—all of which have programmes focused on strengthened and accountable governance mechanisms.

Effectiveness

The project helped set up the High Office of Oversight, paying for more than 50 staff over the project period; supporting the establishment and maintenance of office premises; and establishing functioning administrative systems (information technologies, financial and human resources management). Vulnerability-to-corruption assessments were undertaken to identify key vulnerabilities to corruption in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance. With the Ministry of Finance, the project was able to improve the complaints and fraud mechanism, enabling staff an easy means to report fraud without the risk of persecution.

However, the High Office of Oversight's response to the Kabul Bank scandal was perceived as politically oriented, and the Office lost the trust of donors.[81] Subsequently, the project supported the capacity of the Control and Audit Office by securing training and technical support from the National Audit Academy and National Audit Office of Malaysia, and provided operational, administrative and financial support to the independent Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee comprises six prominent anti-corruption experts (three Afghans and three international), with the objective of offering policy advice to the Government, and monitoring and evaluating progress against specific benchmarks to combat corruption. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee had sole authority to determine the content of its reports, published bi-annually. The excellent analysis by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of the Kabul Bank affair contrasted with the High Office of Oversight's response.

At the outcome level, the lack of political incentives for reform represented a significant risk for the project. Stronger judicial, financial and social pressures on political decision makers are needed

---

81 SIGAR Audit-10-2, 'High Office of Oversight - Afghanistan's High Office of Oversight Needs Significantly Strengthened Authority, Independence, and Donor Support to Become an Effective Anti-Corruption Institution', December 2009.

Figure 12. How often in the past year have you had to give cash, a gift or perform a favor for an official? (Asia Foundation Surveys)
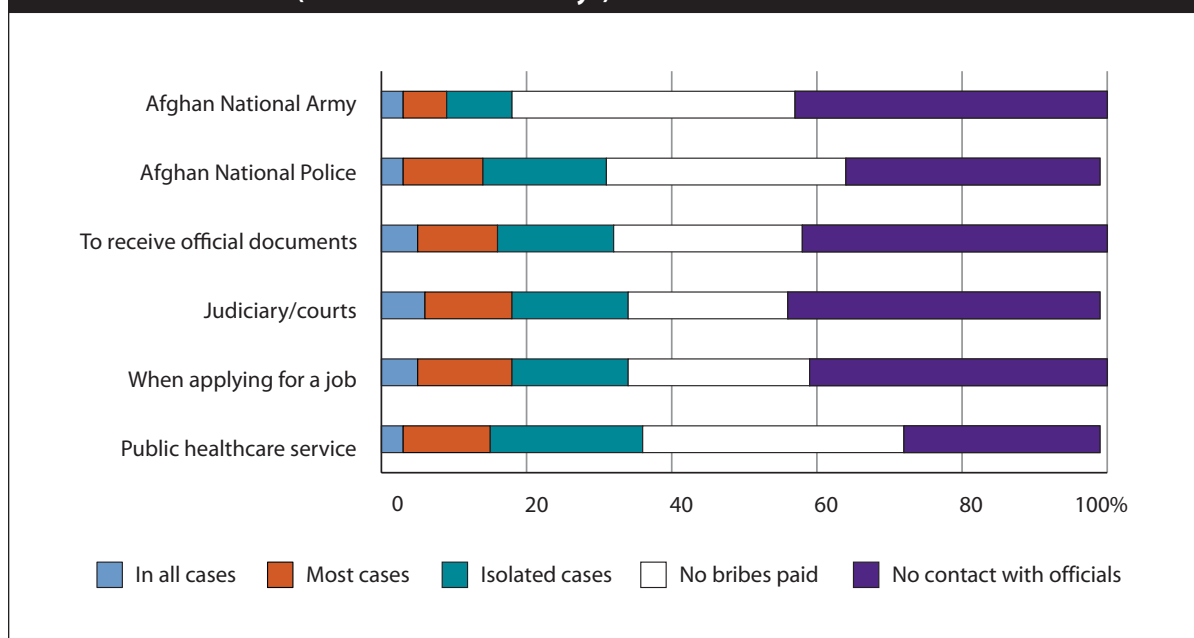
to trigger change. The Asia Foundation surveys confirm that Afghans perceive no improvement in the level of corruption. Half of the respondents who had some dealing with the police, the judiciary or other governmental offices report the occasional or frequent payment of a bribe (Figure 12).

A new project, the Afghanistan Integrity Initiative, is currently being developed to continue UNDP's support to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and the Supreme Audit Office.

4.3 IMPROVED GOVERNMENT ABILITY TO DELIVER SERVICES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Three programmes are clustered under this outcome: Making Budgets and Aid Work (MBAW), which is a long-standing cooperation with the Ministry of Finance Budget Office; the Gender Equality Project (GEP), which aims to mainstream gender in the nation's policies and development strategies; and the National Institution Building Programme (NIBP), a South-South cooperation programme sourcing and placing

national and international advisors in key lines ministries and institutions.

4.3.1 MAKING BUDGETS AND AID WORK (MBAW)

Overview

UNDP has been supporting the Ministry of Finance (MOF) since 2004, through three consecutive phase of the Making Budgets and Aid Work (MBAW) project. The MBAW project aims at strengthening the national budget processes as a comprehensive policy and decision-making mechanism for the Government of Afghanistan to be in a position to follow good macroeconomic management and promote efficient allocation of both domestic resources and large-scale international development assistance. The current phase pursues three objectives:

1. The budget is comprehensive, policy-based, prepared in an orderly manner and supportive of the national development strategy

2. Improved alignment and effectiveness of aid to support Afghanistan development goals and strategy

3. Sustainable institutional capacity built within the MOF and Government of Afghanistan institutions[82]

MBAW, financed by DfID, Canada and Germany, funds the salaries of a large number of Budget Department staff performing line functions. It is complemented by another DfID-financed project: the Strengthening Afghanistan's Budget and National and Provincial Levels project, which provides the Budget Department with advisory technical assistance and capacity-building support through a team of international advisors and national consultants.

As with earlier phases of UNDP support to the MOF, the national budget is seen as the primary mechanism through which a number of key development principles can be promulgated and enforced, including fiscal discipline and sustainability, the effective delivery of public services, national security, provincial and social equity, poverty reduction, increased productivity and growth of the private sector, gender equality and poppy eradication.[83]

Relevance

Overall, MBAW remains highly relevant to the Government's expressed priorities through it support of a mechanism to control and manage budget and aid coordination. Its relevance also spans the broader UNDP mandate of ensuring transparency and capacity development. At a strategic level, MBAW also addresses the broader needs of a nation dependent upon aid and assistance funding for the foreseeable future. The project supports the Government of Afghanistan's long-term goal to exert greater control over aid resources flowing into the country, either through alignment of donor-funded programmes with national programmes, or through the promotion of budget support and other 'on-budget' modalities. In particular, MOF sees achieving the target

of 50 percent of all external support channelled through on-budget modalities as critical to facilitate future planning and develop service delivery in a sustainable way. Afghanistan must demonstrate that external assistance is aligned with its national development objectives and that aid is used effectively—precisely the arguments used by the Government to channel more aid resources through the national budget.

At a programmatic level, MBAW remains relevant to the Budget Department's reformed budget monitoring and reporting. Indeed, the Department's Fiscal Policy Unit is fully staffed by personnel financed by the project.

Effectiveness

Recent achievements include:

- **Budget planning and management:** The development of the State Budget Planning System, financed by MBAW, has greatly improved the Government's capacity to undertake effective budget monitoring and reporting, including tracking the budget-related performance of priority projects and programmes. The budget execution rates have risen from 46 percent in 2011 to 50 percent in 2012.

- **Policy and strategy development and aid coordination:** MBAW, through the Aid Management Directorate, achieved over 2012 the following key milestones: signed $1.594 billion of grant and loan agreements; contributed to endorsement of 16 out of 22 NPPs; designed the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework monitoring and planning tools to ensure sound implementation and monitoring of government and donors commitments; and drafted the Aid Management Policy, which should serve as a guideline and roadmap for sound aid management and effectiveness in Afghanistan. Refinement of the Development

---

82 UNDP, Project Document, 'Making Aid and Budgets Work', May 2007, p. 12.

83 This description of Afghanistan's national budget is taken from the Making Aid and Budgets Work project 2009 Annual Progress Report, p. 7.

Assistance Database is now completed and under trial. The project also provides regular technical support to the Aid Management Directorate to actively participate in 'New Deal' global and national meetings.

- **Capacity development:** MBAW has made significant efforts in improving the technical capacity of the MOF and line ministries, and in gradually transferring this capacity to civil servants. MBAW delivered training courses to over 2,800 civil servants and supported the recruitment of 28 *Tashkeel* staff. Under the MBAW project's exit strategy, three rotations of young graduates were recruited and trained-up through formal, on-the-job, and other training. However, MBAW has been unable to retain these young graduates, who very rapidly acquired jobs elsewhere within the Government or with international organizations.

- **Subnational governance:** The project is currently drafting a subnational financing policy in consultation with other government counterparts, and is engaging development partners in view of reaching a consensus on the way forward for decentralized financing. Concerns about local governance capacity and accountability have hindered decentralization efforts. The challenge is to develop capacities of provincial authorities and empower them to actively participate in the highly centralized top-down budget formulation process, so that they can prepare their budgets, reflecting local priorities arrived at in a fully consultative manner and fair allocation of resources.

While understanding that the MOF wields significant influence with all ministries, MBAW would not have been able to positively influence both the policy and operational environment if it did not have anything of substance to contribute. An increased understanding of provincial needs and requirements was heavily influenced by the feedback from the roll-out of the programme, and provincial budgeting was facilitated by timely preparation of necessary policies, plans, circulars,

and so on. That the Budget Department had adequate trained staff indicates a high degree of MBAW project effectiveness. Operationally, enhanced monitoring has assisted in identifying potential bottlenecks in budget execution. Timely preparation, publication and posting of the MOF's 'Fiscal Bulletin' is contributing to an improved understanding of the national budget as the vehicle to achieve ANDS and other national goals. This system will greatly enhance the reporting against NPPs.

The Budget Department's Aid Management Directorate has been effective in tracking external assistance by donor, with notable improvements in also tracking assistance by sector and, increasingly, by province. However, the Directorate's efforts remain handicapped by the quality and timeliness of data provided by donors. The Directorate has successfully promoted dialogue with donors, bilaterally and overall through the establishment of an Aid Policy (included as part of the ANDS) and ongoing Paris Declaration and High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness monitoring.

To a certain degree there is also complementarity with other donors, especially at the provincial level. While MBAW developed programmes and funded the preparation of budget manuals and other materials that have contributed to improved public financial management capacity in line ministries and provincial *mustufiats* (provincial departments of finance), the actual training at the ministry and provincial level has been conducted with support of other donor-financed projects.

4.3.2 GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT (GEP)

Overview

The Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality Project (GEP, 2007-2012) aimed to accelerate the process of mainstreaming gender in the nation's policies and development strategies through a systematic and comprehensive approach based on partnerships between government institutions and other stakeholders at national and subnational levels. The overall objective of the project was "to support the achievement

of Afghan women's human development as envisaged in the ANDS, National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan, as well as in the Kabul Conference Communiqué and provide them with equal opportunities through engendering national policies and local capacity-building initiatives." The main project stakeholders were 18 line ministries, Kabul University and various departments at the provincial level.

Relevance

GEP is highly relevant to the ANDS and to the Afghan Government's expressed priorities of mainstreaming gender and implementing the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. At a strategic level, GEP also contributed towards the broader needs of the Government in linking the MDGs, ANDS gender priorities, and several directly and indirectly related NPPs. The project is also highly relevant to the UNDP mandate in gender equality, human rights and capacity development.

However, the project has faced strong resistance from a very traditional society, in which women's empowerment is generally perceived as a foreign, specifically western, concept. The introduction of the word 'gender' and its integration into policies and programmes both at national and subnational level remains very difficult. Even with gender mainstreaming and economic, legal and livelihoods support to women appearing more frequently in the development narrative and rhetoric, these issues lag behind in political importance compared to security sector development and the promotion of large-scale infrastructure and economic development.

Effectiveness

The project targeted both the establishment of a number of gender-related institutions, policy-level change and initiatives benefiting the rural population. Most of the effort focused on institutional development, with the establishment of four new national institutions:

- A Women Policy Development Centre, to enhance the Ministry of Women's Affairs' ability to liaise with other ministries and push for incorporating gender related issues in their policies and strategies

- A gender-responsive budgeting cell in the MOF, to support the integration of gender-specific elements in the national budget

- A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit to monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan

- A Gender Studies Institute established within the Kabul University, to conduct research and organize training on "gender, conflict and development."

GEP also worked in four pilot provinces (Herat, Balkh, Bamyan and Nangarhar), where Provincial Women's Development Councils and 24 legal help centres were established. The legal help centres reportedly benefited nearly 3,000 victims of domestic violence (including cases requiring interventions from the police and the courts).[84] The project also started a dialogue with religious leaders on issues pertaining to gender and Islam as well as women's rights under Sharia law, through a working group of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

There is a significant push from the international community to mainstream gender in numerous other programmes, and hence a realistic attribution of the impact of GEP-I is difficult to assess. However, direct discussion with senior government officials in the Ministry of Women's Affairs; MOF; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock confirm the importance of the results listed above to their relevant ministerial departments. The Women Policy Development Centre analysed how eight ministries conduct gender-inclusive implementation of their own programmes and allowed them to link these activities to a more coherent policy. The

---

84   GEP II project document.

MOF gender-responsive budget unit has been of significant assistance in allowing the MOF to provide data to support informed budgetary choices and to meet the requests of key donors for whom gender-related budgetary information was an essential condition for fund release. The M&E Unit allowed the Ministry of Women's Affairs to fulfil its mandate of leading the oversight of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. GEP-I was also a useful resource in fine-tuning several NPPs, ensuring more gender-sensitive design and indicators.

However, these achievements should be qualified. The limited clout of the institutions established by the project, such as the Women Policy Development Centre and the Provincial Women's Development Councils, proved a significant constraint to these institutions achieving influence and results. As for the Ministry of Women's Affairs itself, the combination of irregular donor funding and *ad hoc* and often short-lived interventions by the Ministry in the past have resulted in weak political capital and leverage within the Government. This weakness was only partly mitigated over the last several years through the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and the recently approved NPP in support of the plan, in tandem with a renewed push for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.[85]

A new phase of the project (GEP II) has recently been formulated to provide a degree of continuity in the areas of capacity development and strategic support. The resources of the projects are distributed with a greater balance towards the subnational level, where UNDP has a solid track record and a comparative advantage, with geographic expansion to 19 provinces by 2015. In contrast with GEP I, GEP II is also meant to develop significant support to female entrepreneurs.

4.3.3 NATIONAL INSTITUTION BUILDING PROGRAMME (NIBP)

Overview

The National Institution Building Project (NIBP, 2010-2013), implemented in partnership with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), provides international Capacity Development Advisors and national Capacity Development Officers to the Government of Afghanistan at the national and subnational levels. These advisors and officers are placed in ministries and departments to identify and facilitate the implementation of capacity development strategies. This in turn, leads to the preparation of capacity development plans, in principle based on comprehensive capacity assessments.

NIBP pursues three main goals:

1. The institutional and organizational capacity of select government entities are strengthened through the development of policies and strategies, and systems in support of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) are improved.

2. The institutional and organizational capacity of select government entities are developed through coaching and advisory services, in alignment with the Government's Civilian Technical Assistance Program, which uses the same approach of placing advisors in selected governmental agencies.

3. PAR management and coordination capacity of IARCSC are strengthened, and institutional and policy support for implementing required training programmes for civil servants are established.

International Capacity Development Advisors are recruited primarily from neighbouring countries (primarily India at evaluation time), based upon the 'South-South Cooperation' model. NIBP further promotes 'twinning arrangements'

---

85 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000, calls for the adoption of a gender perspective during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.

and partnerships between Afghan Government ministries and agencies with corresponding ministries and agencies of other countries to transfer specialized skills and experience.

NIBP was originally designed to be implemented directly by the General Director of Program Design and Management of IARCSC. In 2009, UNDP proposed to start the project under direct implementation by the country office, with a view towards transferring implementation to the IARCSC after a few months. However, UNDP has not followed through on this transfer of responsibility, arguing that IARCSC lacked sufficient capacity to effectively and efficiently implement the NIBP under the national implementation modality. This issue has generated significant friction between the two partners.

Relevance

NIBP remains highly relevant to the Government of Afghanistan's expressed priorities of ownership and leadership of its own development vision, improved governance through a more capacious administration, and strengthened service delivery. NIBP also addresses the broader needs of a capable and responsive cadre of civil servants under the supervision of the IARCSC, and follows the National Priority Programme for "efficient and effective government." The project fits particularly well with the UNDP mandate in capacity development, and is positioned to complement the work of a number of other donors and national programmes, such as the World Bank's Capacity Building for Results Framework and the Afghanistan Skills Development Project. NIBDP is also in harmony with the Kabul Process, which emphasizes regional cooperation.

At a programmatic level, NIBP is highly relevant to the IARCSC, providing a pool of capacity development inputs that can be tailored to the exact needs of a ministry, based upon a needs assessment. However, the majority of donor institutions providing international Capacity Development Advisors tend to have geographical or sector-specific priorities that relegate the IARCSC to a consultative role. This has reduced

the potential impact of NIBP not only as a facilitative mechanism for capacity development, but also as promoting pragmatic models such as the 'one ministry approach' (see below).

Effectiveness

At evaluation time, NIBP had embedded a dozen international Capacity Development Advisors and national Capacity Development Officers in seven line ministries, the Central Statistics Office, and the IARCSC itself.

The project has reportedly made some progress regarding the promotion of a 'One-Ministry Approach' with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled to increase collaboration between central ministries and their line departments at the subnational level. Although this activity is not new (there have been several previous short-lived attempts), discussions with senior management in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock indicate the process not only fits with one of the Ministry's main strategic pillars of 'Change Management', but complements the work of two other projects focusing on building the technical knowledge and training of staff at province and district levels.

In the case of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, the project supported the Ministry's efforts in forming national policies on labour, labour emigration and child labour. The project has also contributed to the finalization of NPP 3, specifically aimed at capacity development.

In other ministries, NIBP faces certain constraints to translate its comparative advantages (e.g. the one-ministry approach and development of sector-specific capacity development plans) into concrete results and impacts on the way line ministries conduct their business and improve longer-term efficiencies. Capacity development currently features in almost all donor institutions' mandates and programmes. There is insufficient coordination on lesson sharing and consultation

in the design of new programmes, resulting in a number of duplications and overlapping interventions. NIBP does not appear to have the type of critical mass necessary to lead, given the role that the MOF's Civilian Technical Assistance Program and World Banks' Capacity Building for Results programmes play in the capacity development sphere. For instance, the project still needs to create a niche for itself as a capacity development resource within the MOF, side by side with advisors from the Civilian Technical Assistance Program.

Despite weekly advisors meetings, there does not seem to be sufficient productive consultation and information and knowledge sharing within the project. UNDP should try to share (initially within the project then outside of it) the diverse experiences of international Capacity Development Advisors, their lessons learned, and the contextual understanding that national Capacity Development Officers can bring.

Another issue is that of capacity substitution versus capacity development. Due to a lack of expertise in many government institutions, the Capacity Development Advisors and Capacity Development Officers are often asked to perform line functions, including report writing, logistics management and direct programmatic support. Given that Capacity Development Advisors are civil servants and accustomed to working in hierarchical organizations, and that most of them have little capacity development-specific skills, it should not come as a surprise that they tend to yield when a minister or senior officer insists that they perform a line function. NIBDP and its partners have tried to mitigate this risk, for instance through the identification of a select group of civil servants to be trained directly in a particular function or skillset, but more needs to be done.

The low motivation and lack of retention of middle- to lower-level ministry staff due to the lack of financial incentives and opportunities, as well as the frequent changes in senior leadership in the respective institutions, result in disruption of daily activities and changes in focus and

operational imperatives. The project is attempting to address this issue by focusing its activities on overall organizational and systematic change management, and also by working with different hierarchical levels within the same institution.

4.4 PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This portion of the ADR assesses UNDP support to national elections, to the Parliament and to subnational governance (i.e. local governance and decentralization). UNDP's activities in this area are currently implemented through three programmes: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT II), Supporting an Effective Afghan Legislature (SEAL II), and the Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP).

4.4.1 ENHANCING LEGAL AND ELECTORAL CAPACITY FOR TOMORROW (ELECT)

Overview

Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) has been the main vehicle through which the international community has supported Afghan electoral authorities to plan and conduct elections. ELECT I (2006-2010) was established to provide support to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Afghanistan. This followed a previous round of assistance to voter registration and 2004–2005 elections, which had been implemented by UNOPS, with UNDP in a purely administrative (fund management) role.

ELECT II, originally designed as a two-year project (2012-2013), builds upon the initial ELECT project. It focuses on maximizing capacity development of the IEC during the inter-election period. By the end of 2012, following an electoral Needs Assessment Mission led by the UN Department of Political Affairs, a revised project document was drafted to extend phase II and continue support to the IEC through the

current electoral cycle, i.e. the presidential elections scheduled for 2014, and parliamentary elections planned for 2015. This new programme framework modifies and expands ELECT II's range of support to the Afghan electoral process, to take into account the findings and recommendations of the Needs Assessment Mission, as well as a recent Mid-Term Review, organized into two phases (February 2013 and April 2013).[86] The project document for the expanded and extended ELECT II, which also supports the newly formed Independent Electoral Complaints Commission, was approved by ELECT II funding partners, and signed with the IEC in summer 2013.

Relevance

ELECT is an evolving programme, frequently revised to accommodate political decisions, donor requests, and the needs and desires of the Afghan government and the IEC. The numerous programme reviews and revisions underscore the objective that ELECT stay relevant as a provider of technical electoral assistance in Afghanistan.

International electoral assistance to the IEC, as designed and implemented by UNDP, initially focused on building the capacity of the IEC, improving the legal framework, and establishing a joint civil-voter register. These goals were relevant to Afghanistan following the 2004–2005 elections and laid the foundation for the ELECT project between 2006 and 2008. In 2008, ELECT was significantly expanded to prepare for the 2009 presidential election. In 2009, the project document was revised several times, each time adding responsibilities, reflecting in part demands from donors and UNAMA.

After the 2009 presidential elections, both UNAMA and UNDP ELECT were criticized, perhaps unfairly, for some of ELECT's

defects.[87] In order to maintain its relevance and adapt to a more difficult situation, UNDP again restructured the ELECT project. The 2010 redesign redirected the project towards addressing key problems that had affected ELECT in 2009, including a lack of transparency in project management and communications with stakeholders, a very large budget in excess of $300 million, and the notion that ELECT was responsible for conducting elections. In addition, the management of ELECT was placed under UNDP and a high-level expert was recruited as the new ELECT Chief Technical Advisor. While the style of the previous Chief Technical Advisor has been widely described as abrasive, the new one displayed diplomatic skills and leadership which, combined with the full support from and coordination with UNAMA and the UNDP Country Office, proved essential in improving the effectiveness of ELECT.[88] ELECT's visibility in the electoral process was reduced and the visibility of the Afghan electoral authorities, particularly the IEC as the leader of the electoral process, was enhanced. UNDP was at last in a position of support to national institutions, rather than tasked with conducting elections. This has made the programme more relevant.

Donors continue to support UNDP and ELECT as the most appropriate channel to provide technical electoral assistance, due principally to UNDP's global experience in post-conflict situations, long-term institutional development and capacity-building perspective, and direct experience with elections support in Afghanistan. Other reasons include neutrality, fiduciary risks when channelling funds to Government accounts, the relative nimbleness with which UNDP can approve projects and launch implementation, the need for coordination and collaboration between the different actors, the reliability in reporting the use of

---

86 The Phase A report was reviewed for this ADR, while the Phase B team members were in Kabul during the ADR mission and met with the ADR team to discuss evaluation findings.

87 UNDP, 'ELECT Final Evaluation', 2011, p. 6.

88 Ibid., p. 4.

inputs and production of outputs, and the control afforded donors over the use of funds.[89]

Effectiveness

The primary objective of UN electoral assistance to Afghanistan—and most prominently ELECT—is to support the efforts of Afghan electoral authorities to prepare and conduct credible elections in an insecure environment. This objective is based on the sound assumption that credible, responsive leadership and strong institutions are necessary for stability, and are a precursor to reconstruction and development.[90]

In the broadest definition of an effective electoral effort, ELECT has been successful in its assistance to the IEC. Since its inception in 2006, ELECT has assisted the IEC in administering elections in an extremely challenging security environment, with almost no prior experience in electoral administration. And although there were numerous shortcomings in the electoral administration, elections did occur, people did vote, results were tabulated, and winners took office. Without assistance from UNDP, it is doubtful that these events would have occurred at all. In this sense, ELECT has met the UN mandate of supporting a strengthened IEC that conducts and supervises elections. Also, UNDP was effective in helping to create the conditions for the participation of women in the electoral process. Despite these successes, UNDP's assistance was less effective in translating the achievements into sustainable electoral systems.

The presidential and provincial council elections in 2009 were extremely controversial and demonstrated that little progress had been made: the IEC required a significant amount of international support to implement the election, the quality of the election was arguably inferior to that of 2004, and costs had not been reduced. Widespread fraud and accusations of irregularities significantly undermined the result and raised serious doubts among stakeholders as to the viability of the 2010 *Wolesi Jirga* elections. Both UNAMA and UNDP ELECT had been perceived as responsible for the 2009 election process and were therefore widely blamed for some of its defects.[91]

ELECT significantly improved its performance in 2010 and was perceived as an effective partner that provided valuable technical advice and strong operational support. In stark contrast to 2009, its presence was seen as having mitigated the scope of potential problems. These improvements were a combination of ELECT's more focused nature, the experience gained in 2009, and the new leadership within ELECT and the IEC. Together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNDP Country Office, they built a more cohesive team that brought the diversity of stakeholders together for a more integrated and effective assistance effort.[92]

One of the major weaknesses of UNDP's electoral support to Afghanistan is its failure to have developed a reliable voter register indexed by voting centre[93], despite at least $200 million spent on this alone over the past decade. This weakness cannot be attributed to UNDP alone; the government has contributed, for example, by failing to appoint a ministry to house the registry. Nevertheless, UNDP's technical decisions have also been faulted.[94] A voter registry is seen as critical to mitigating the potential for multiple voting by individuals. Although electoral processes,

---

89   UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', Evaluation Office, 2009, p. 83.

90   Annual Progress Report, 2010, p. 7.

91   UNDP, 'ELECT Final Evaluation', prepared by H. Boneo, K. Collin, T. George-Coker and C. Slavu, 2009, p. 6.

92   Ibid., p. 4.

93   The present registry is only partially indexed geographically. It is basically a list of voters without means to link a particular voter to a particular voting centre.

94   UNDP Evaluation Office, Electoral Assistance Evaluation – Afghanistan Country Study, 2011, p. 11.

including inking a voter's finger and recording names of voters who vote, have been implemented to curtail voter fraud, thousands of duplicate voter registrations and more than 17 million voter registration cards have been issued to Afghanistan's 11 million voters. These factors raise concerns about whether any election can be credible in Afghanistan without an accurate registry.

The issue surfaced again in June 2012, as preparations for another voter registration effort emerged with the IEC's elections operational plans for the 2014 presidential election. A UNDP- sponsored feasibility study was conducted in June 2012, with the final report provided to stakeholders in August 2012. The IEC embraced the overall conclusions of the study, which recommended a new nationwide voter registration campaign and the establishment of voter lists specific to polling centres, as the surest route to enhance integrity in the voting process. This approach also intended to improve confidence among Afghan electoral stakeholders, who had expressed reservations about past voter registration practice and concerns about the 17 million voter registration cards in circulation among Afghanistan's 11 million voters.[95] However, the study was met with mixed responses, primarily from the donor community. Some donors assumed UNDP was just asking for more money, while others tried to promote the idea of a national biometric identity card (the so-called *e-tashkera*). In the end, the Government of Afghanistan decided, instead of following the feasibility study's recommendation, to support another voter registration 'top-up' exercise, i.e. adding the names of new voters to the existing list. The absence of a sustainable voter registry indexed by voting station continues to be a concern.

Planning and delivery for the 2014–2015 electoral cycle is ongoing. Both the IEC and ELECT II have spent periods without key staff in place, resulting in slow progress and heavy workloads for senior advisors. Crucially, there have been significant vacancies in the IEC staffing table, including the two Deputy Chief Electoral Officers and three out of 10 Heads of Departments. Such vacancies leave UN advisors in the unenviable position of having no capacity to build, and often result in international advisors substituting for, rather than advising, national counterparts. This has been evident in ELECT II, and runs contrary to the philosophy and intent of the project, which is to support an Afghan-led election.

Lengthy donor meetings have resulted in amendments, project revisions and discussions regarding the ELECT project implementation, distracting international support efforts. It is important to recognize that continuous project revisions run the risk of politicizing and delaying the elections support effort, as happened in the past.

There were several delays in the preparations for the upcoming elections. The approval of two electoral laws (July 2013) has taken many months of protracted debate, and the selection of a new IEC Chair and Electoral Complaint Commission members only occurred in mid-September 2013. Security was another major concern. For the first time, Afghan National Security Forces were entirely in charge of security for an electoral event. IEC staff have been kidnapped in Faryab and an election official was murdered in Kunduz in September 2013; both the provincial and the national IEC offices in Kabul were attacked late March 2014.

Operational difficulties were another source of concern. The election was preceded by winter, during which it was expected that shipping equipment around the country would be difficult. Fortunately, the winter was mild and election logistics continued unaffected. Security on voting day also proved strong. The overall level of violence was much lower than the Taliban had threatened. Despite those threats, and even though 14 percent of polling centres did not open (most of them in the eastern and southern

---

95   Ibid., p. 8.

provinces) as the army was unable to provide security, nearly 60 percent of the eligible voters cast their vote.

4.4.2 SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE AFGHAN LEGISLATURE (SEAL II)

Overview

With the election of the first Afghan Parliament in 2005, a UNDP preparatory assessment mission found that there was an urgent need to assist the Government of Afghanistan in establishing functioning parliamentary secretariats in both legislative houses, and to provide capacity-building and support to newly elected parliamentarians. Based on these findings, the Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature (SEAL) project was launched in February 2005.[96]

The activities of SEAL were implemented in two phases. First, SEAL focused on ensuring that the minimum requirements in terms of human resources, equipment, systems and institutional arrangements, as well as administrative support were in place for the initial functioning of parliament. Then, SEAL continued to build the capacity of the secretariats and their staff, and expanded its focus to the new Members of Parliament, in addition to ensuring that infrastructure and equipment was maintained until the full renovation of the interim parliament building.[97]

As the first phase of SEAL drew to a close in 2008, it was agreed that further international assistance was needed to build the capacity of the Parliament and help it become more effective in terms of executing its core functions. UNDP therefore developed a second phase (SEAL II), focused on enhancing the capacity of Members of Parliament and commissions to better understand and exercise their interrelated functions of law making, executive oversight, national budget approval and oversight, and representation. The project document also envisioned a strengthening of the secretariats of both Houses, but the focus was meant to shift from the sort of generic support in equipment and study tours provided during the first phase, to a dedicated effort to raise the capacity of Parliamentarians.[98]

SEAL II was envisioned to run from March 2008 through February 2012. However, it ended abruptly in March 2010. Funding was reduced in 2009 after the project manager left the project and could not be replaced, and the project was ended by UNDP in 2010, two years earlier than planned. A new project brief is currently being circulated by UNDP to determine if there is interest among donors to support the Parliament further.

Relevance

Following the acknowledged success of SEAL I in establishing the new Parliament, the continued need and relevance of SEAL II was initially embraced by national and international partners alike (secretariats, Members of Parliament, donors). The SEAL II project document contained a situational analysis that highlighted the fact that although the Afghan Parliament has the necessary constitutional powers required to play a key role in the democratic and governance system in the country, there was a serious need for further assistance to help support and empower Parliament with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. This indeed seemed to be the case. The project was in line with the aim in the UNDAF that stated that "transparent, effective and efficient legislative and policy framework and processes are established and implemented." The project was also relevant to the stated aim of the CPD and CPAP, and the interim ANDS that "State capacity is enhanced

---

96 UNDP Afghanistan, 'SEAL I Evaluation', 2006, p. 8.

97 Ibid., p. 8.

98 UNDP Afghanistan, 'Supporting an Effective Afghan Legislature (SEAL II, March 2008 –February 2012) Project Document', (undated), p. 2.

to promote responsive governance and democratization."[99] The programme was relevant from the beginning, and the decision for UNDP to continue working in parliamentary development was appropriate in terms of improving the governance structures and the general development situation of Afghanistan.

SEAL was also highly relevant because much of the assistance provided by UNDP and other development partners to Afghanistan has focused on the executive branch of government. Elected bodies have benefitted from very little assistance. In-person interviews suggest that there continues to be a need to provide assistance to Parliament and that Parliamentarians would welcome a new programme from UNDP, particularly because a parallel assistance programme supported by the State University of New York has also ended.

Effectiveness

SEAL I was well funded (more than $15 million) and effectively helped establish an operational Parliament at a time when no other support was available by equipping the secretariats and training staff. Donors were willing to channel funds through UNDP when capacity in national institutions was low. Under SEAL I, a UNOPS-executed project, the Parliament building was rehabilitated and the two secretariats built 'from the ground up', including everything from construction to the installation of essential equipment and furniture, to the establishment of essential systems such as an electronic payroll for staff.[100]

SEAL I procured materials, paid for activities and trips, and provided training opportunities for staff of the two secretariats, which may have improved the administration of certain parliamentary matters, but most of the assistance went to the Secretariats. However, insufficient attention was paid to the skills of the actual Parliamentarians, and although the 2010 SEAL

evaluation suggests that the staff training was effective and that the conduct of parliamentary business was improved through SEAL, reports indicate some of the recipients of SEAL activities left the programme after training to work elsewhere. The new Project Design and Brief indicates that the capacities of the upper levels of the secretariat have in fact weakened since 2005–2006.

SEAL II began in 2008 with a different focus than its predecessor. It direct its support at working more with the elected Members of Parliament to enhance their capacity to exercise legislative responsibilities; assist Parliament to oversee the activities of the Executive; strengthen Parliament's capacity for effective decision- and policymaking; and establish effective administrative structures and processes.

Progress reports indicate preparatory activities, including workshops on legislative drafting, budgeting and staff development; field visits by selected Commissions; international visits for staff and Members of Parliament; as well as the drafting of several internal policy documents and a Code of Conduct. An attempt was made to formalize and structure capacity-building activities (notably study tours abroad, in much demand from Members of Parliament) based on parliamentary commissions' work plans and capacity assessments. SEAL assisted a number of Committees to develop Terms of Reference and annual work plans.

However, SEAL II reports do not indicate whether the various 'draft' papers were ever finalized, and if so, whether they were implemented. According to the 2010 SEAL II evaluation, the project's effectiveness suffered because of an over-ambitious design and the lack of a clear focus. The report also mentions an uneasy relationship between the senior management of

---

99   Jones, D., 'Evaluation of Support for an Effective Afghan Legislature, Phase II (SEAL II),)', UNDP Afghanistan, May/June 2010, p. 19.

100   UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', Evaluation Office, 2009, p.33.

SEAL II and the secretariats of both Houses of Parliament in 2008–2009.[101] This may be linked with the change in focus between the two phases, from support to the secretariats to helping the Members of Parliament exercise their mandate.

Interlocutors discussing SEAL II commented that despite Parliament's need for assistance, donor funding stopped midway through SEAL II because of discontent with the project's failure to report on results achieved. By some accounts, there was also displeasure with the number of international travels funded by the project.[102] After the departure of the programme manager in early 2009, the project was left without management for one year, after which the only remaining donor (Sweden) withdrew its support and the project was cancelled.

In terms of the capacity of the Parliament to exert oversight over the Executive, the recent evaluation of outcome 3[103] noted that within elected bodies, members and assistance providers have placed a lower priority on the oversight function relative to other key functions, such as representation and law-making. This being said, the *Wolesi Jirga* has exerted some degree of oversight on ministries in certain areas, such as the capacity of ministries to utilize their development budget.

4.4.3 AFGHANISTAN SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME (ASGP)

Overview

ASGP, launched in 2006, was largely successful in its early years, characterized by stable and professional project management, close oversight by UNDP and a high level of interest and commitment on the part of national authorities. The most notable achievement during ASGP I was the considerable capacity-building (together some 180 non-*Tashkeel* staff) extended to the newly created Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG). IDLG was established by presidential decree in August 2007, with a mandate to improve governance and achieve stability at the subnational level. Previously part of MOI, IDLG reports directly to the President's Office, and is responsible for supervising provincial and district governors, provincial councils, and all municipalities except Kabul. The first phase also helped IDLG develop the Subnational Governance Policy; provided some training of subnational government officials; and supported the Public Administration Reform (PAR) process at the subnational level under the aegis of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC).[104]

Apart from this IARCSC PAR component, the first phase extended little practical assistance to the subnational level. A more ambitious second phase was designed and a considerable amount of donor funding sought ($180 million). The aim was to transition support from the Kabul-centred focus that characterized ASGP I, to the regional subnational governance level across all regions in Afghanistan.[105]

While the ASGP II project document did include a continuation of the PAR component through IARCSC, this component was later removed. Responsibility for supporting the IARCSC and PAR has been shifted to NIBP. IDLG thus

---

101   Ibid., p. 21.

102   However, it should be noted that there were also numerous study tours for staff and parliamentarians during SEAL I, which was evaluated as an effective programme in 2006.

103   UNDP, 'CPD Outcome 3 Evaluation – Draft Evaluation Report', by C. Collin, A.M. Jawhary and L. Robertson, Dec. 2013.

104   The independent Civil Service Commission was created in May 2002 as mandated in the Bonn Agreement to lead the Government's process for Public Administration Reform, with the aim of building a public administration that is sound, functional, transparent, effective, accountable, responsible, apolitical and impartial.

105   Gibbon, G., 'Evaluation of the Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme – I (ASGP I) 2006 to 2010 & Review of Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme – II (ASGP II) 2010 to 2014, Final Evaluation Report', UNDP Afghanistan, September 2011.

became the sole (and dominant) national partner in the programme.

The second phase did not receive the wide donor support originally expected. Its management was marred with disputes. UNDP did not re-appoint the Phase 1 Chief Technical Advisor, preferring a new candidate, who resigned after nine months into the job. Finding yet another Chief Technical Advisor delayed the project further; the incumbent began in late 2011. In the interim, delivery was severely affected, the relationship with IDLG was damaged, and as a result, DfID, Canada and Norway withdrew their support.

Another project management crisis occurred in October 2011. At that time, the UNDP Country Office management stopped paying IDLG staff salaries in order to force IDLG to extend financial support to provincial governor offices, although proper systems and bank accounts were not yet in place. When IDLG reacted negatively to such a treatment, the Country Office used the *Hawala* system to effect the payments, by-passing both the national partner IDLG and ASGP staff. Required bank accounts have subsequently been established in provinces, and these payments are now effected through bank transfers and with the approval of IDLG.

Since 2012, the programme has recovered some of the lost ground and delivery has picked up. Five regional offices were established and staffed with international advisors, who liaise with provincial governors. ASGP provided provincial and district governor offices, provincial councils, and municipalities with capacity-building assistance; IDLG hired some 200 non-*Tashkeel* staff and placed them in all provincial governor offices and provincial councils, and in some municipalities, to support their planning and management systems. Municipalities were also supported in revenue collection. At the policy level, a legal framework has been drafted to translate the Subnational Governance Policy into a series of laws for local governments and municipalities.

Relevance

Subnational governance is emerging as one of the most important issues in contemporary Afghanistan. Historically, the country's central government has often struggled to exert its authority over the rest of this very rural country, while villagers and tribes have tried to keep the central government at arm's length and protect their *de facto* autonomy. The decades-old struggle to reconcile these two national realities—the urban and the rural Afghanistan, the modern and the traditional—lies at the heart of the Afghan civil war.

Even if rural communities have resisted national government attempts to interfere in their affairs, they have never rejected the need for local governance and service provision. Rather, they have objected to arbitrary decision-making that is blind to local realities.[106] Meaningful decentralization processes, and improved and locally accountable service delivery are increasingly recognized as key to Afghanistan's future stability. This stabilization dimension of subnational governance explains in part the popularity of the issue with donors.

The Constitution of 2004, while conceiving of a very centralist state, also instituted local governments at the provincial and district levels. These remain weak, under-funded and without a clear mandate. District assemblies mandated in the constitution were never formally elected. The ANDS issued in 2009 failed to provide a coherent reform agenda. Disparate initiatives proceeded with no clear direction for the long-term roles of subnational administration. In such a context, clarifying the policy and legal framework, as ASGP is doing, is very relevant.

At the same time as decentralization progresses, proper controls need to be in place. Pushing for

---

106   Barfield, T. and Nojumi, N., 'Bringing More Effective Governance to Afghanistan: 10 Pathways to Stability', in Middle East Policy, Vol. XVII, No. 4, Winter 2010.

the transparent recruitment of district governors and staff[107] is therefore also considered a relevant step, as much pressure is exerted on IDLG to nominate non-deserving candidates.

However, the relevance of ASGP has been undermined by the presence of well-resourced programmes supported directly through IDLG by donors such as DfID and USAID and doing very similar activities, particularly the Performance Based Governors Fund (USAID), the Regional Afghan Municipalities Programme for Urban Population, which runs until June 2014, and Strengthening Provincial Administration and Delivery (DfID).

Effectiveness

At the central level, ASGP phase 1 provided considerable capacity development assistance to IDLG since its creation. The development of a coherent legal framework has been rather slow. Most of the laws involved are now awaiting Cabinet approval before submission to the Parliament. This includes the policy framework for the creation of official District Coordination Councils negotiated between IDLG and MRRD. These negotiations took about two years and were reportedly very difficult, but ended well in part thanks to UNDP's support and convening capacity.

Results have been slow to emerge at the subnational level. In the PAR component, IARCSC provincial training centres were created and used for instructing new local government councillors and public servants. During the first phase, 7,583 civil service employees were reportedly trained in these facilities. Pay and grading reform were also implemented, and merit-based appointments of district governors instituted in 2011 as a result of the programme. However, since the IARCSC PAR component was removed, support to subnational PAR has ceased and the IARCSC provincial training centres reportedly collapsed.[108]

The quality of the National Technical Advisors (non-*Tashkeel* staff) lent to provincial governor offices by the programme was considered poor by some of these offices. They described the National Technical Advisors as selected through patronage, unaware of their Terms of Reference, and uninformed about provincial structures and prerogatives. IDLG admitted that the hiring process was not transparent, and that National Technical Advisors were neither briefed nor managed properly. The non-transparent hiring of National Technical Advisors is all the more regrettable as it reversed previous ASGP gains regarding transparent merit-based recruitments for regional and district offices.

Moreover, the staff support to provincial governor offices, while occasionally useful while it lasts, does not fundamentally change the underlying structural issues, such as the fact that these offices cannot raise their own taxes and have no financial authority over the resources channelled to their provinces. Service delivery remains under the mandates of line ministries or municipalities. The current Provincial Development Plans are not systematically implemented as the provinces do not all have budgets to plan against.[109]

The component working on *municipal* development is more promising, and has made significant progress. Municipalities' capacity to collect local revenue and deliver municipal services such as trash removal has been reinforced in small but meaningful ways. This works on revenue collection integrates right from the start the notion of economic sustainability—a rarity among the programmes reviewed by this ADR. The component covers approximately 50 municipalities, whose drafting of a revenue collection plan was supported by the programme, with plans to roll out capacity-building to approximately 150 municipalities by the close of ASGP in 2014. In the cities of Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif, a few interesting and

---

107 Progress reports mention that 75 percent of all IDLG tashkeel recruitments are merit-based. It is unclear why this does not reach 100 percent, and why it does not affect non-*tashkeel* staff.

108 Gibbons, G., September 2011, Op. cit.

109 UNDP Afghanistan, 'Sub-National Governance and Development Strategy', July 2013.

pragmatic initiatives were supported, such as the rehabilitation of the Sina Stadium in Mazar and a refuse collection system in Herat.

The most strategic asset of the programme is perhaps its regional offices[110], which provide for a modest measure of coordination among UNDP projects with a similar regional presence. ASGP staff placed in regions could form the kernel of fully integrated UNDP regional offices. However, such regional staff need to liaise to a greater degree with regional UNAMA staff, notably in the Civil Affairs Section.

4.5 NATURAL RESOURCES AND DISASTERS RISK MANAGEMENT

During the evaluated period, the environmental sector received a minute fraction of the resources channelled through UNDP in Afghanistan. This has been the case since a 'criticality review' conducted by the UNDP Country Office after the attack on the Bakhtar guesthouse resulted in the consolidation, clustering and sometimes cancellation of 35 projects into 10 large programmes. The areas of environment and disaster risk reduction were considered poorly funded and insufficiently 'critical', and were therefore all but closed. The exceptions were two small projects described here, which support the National Environment Protection Agency and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

Likewise, the involvement of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme in Afghanistan is quite recent and remains modest so far.[111] It was not included in the ADR sample.

A recent national human development report focused on water and sanitation. Authored by academics from the Kabul, Balkh, Khost and Nangarhar Universities with UNDP support, the report drew attention to the fact that the majority of the country's irrigation schemes are managed by communities of water users through the traditional *mirab* water governance system.[112] The report will hopefully generate renewed attention to this much under-funded sector. The Country Office is supportive, and currently trying to access the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme to work on protected areas such as Band-e-Amir or the Wakhan Corridor.

4.5.1 STRENGTHENED APPROACH FOR THE INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN (SAISEM)

Overview

SAISEM was a small joint programme funded by the Millennium Development Goals Fund and implemented from 2008–2012 by UNDP ($2.3 million) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) ($2.7 million), in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; the National Environment Protection Agency; and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). UNDP was the administrative agent and UNEP an unpaid adviser. The programme aimed at strengthening Afghanistan's management of environment and natural resources to achieve sustainable development.

SAISEM was designed to promote a strengthened approach for the integration of sustainable environmental management into national sectoral strategies, to promote capacity and institution building of relevant government

---

110   As of February 2014, UNDP/ASGP had eight regional offices, in Kunduz, Mazar, Heart, Jalalabad, Bamyan, Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand.

111   At the end of 2013, it included seven small grants for a total of $266,000, in areas such as community-based rangeland management, climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection, substituting for plastic shopping bags in Kabul City, and the installation of wind turbines.

112   Kabul University, 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011 – The Forgotten Front: Water Security and the Crisis in Sanitation', Centre for Policy and Human Development, 2011.

counterparts to operationalize and implement the environmental concerns reflected in the national strategies, and support demonstration activities in the field. A final evaluation was completed in January 2013.[113]

Relevance

The programme directly responds to the environment and natural resources benchmarks as articulated in the interim ANDS, in which environment is one of six cross-cutting issues, and to the NPP on water and natural resource development. The top priority of the Government under this section of the ANDS is to "strengthen the capacity of the National Environmental Protection Agency to perform its regulatory, coordination, and oversight functions, and the capacity of line ministries to actively address environmental considerations in their program designs."

SAISEM was one of the three piloted joint programmes by the UN in Afghanistan with the aim of 'delivering as one', and therefore answers on a modest scale to a request of the Government.

Effectiveness

The project has obtained mixed results with enabling capacity for managing natural resources and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities at the community level. It supported the National Environment Protection Agency in developing National Environmental Mainstreaming Guidelines for Strategic Environmental Assessment, and helped institutionalize the State of Environment reporting process. It also reportedly established Provincial Environment Advisory Councils in 22 provinces and Environmental Sub-Committees in some DDAs and Community Development Councils (CDCs), although the effectiveness of these structures is undocumented. The FAO component reportedly rehabilitated 159 hectares of degraded rangeland in Badghis, Ghor and Herat provinces.

The final evaluation found very little coordination between the UN agencies involved, in spite of the 'delivering as one' objective of the project. There were very infrequent meetings, except during the last year, 2012, when cooperation was strengthened. For the most part, UNDP and FAO carried out their parts of the plan independently. A clear division of labour helped: while UNDP worked upstream at the national level, FAO was mainly concerned with working downstream, with provincial and district governments. Indeed, the National Environment Protection Agency's lack of outreach capacity towards provinces arose as an issue during the project implementation and evaluation.

4.5.2 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Overview

The National Disaster Management Project follows an earlier project (Comprehensive Disaster and Risk Reduction Project 2007–2010) that helped support the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority—a coordinating body for natural disasters attached to the Presidency.[114] The Authority performs as secretary to the National Disaster Management Committee, which regroups ministries with a role in disaster response (MRRD; the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; Ministry of Public Health; Ministry of Defense; MOI; Ministry of Public Works, etc.); UN humanitarian agencies (primarily the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme); and the Red Crescent Society. The same structure is replicated at the provincial level.

Both the past and present projects were of modest financial size (about $1.5 million each), with the current one funded out of UNDP core resources because no donor could be found. Support has included three translators (whose contracts

---

113   Ahmed, F.B., 'SAISEM - Final Evaluation Report', UNDP, MDG Achievement Fund, January 2013.

114   The Authority was part of MRRD until it was attached to the Presidency in 2006. It has kept strong links with the MRRD.

were recently terminated), and other technical assistance to, among other things, develop the Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and provide training.

Relevance

Afghanistan is prone to natural disasters. Strengthening disaster response capacity is therefore quite relevant. The project's partnership with UN humanitarian agencies and with the Red Crescent Society also appears relevant. The drafting of strategies and plans is perhaps less immediately relevant given the dearth of resources available for disaster risk reduction in the country.

Effectiveness

The most salient project output has been the methodological support to the establishment of rapid response teams. The teams are drawn from various stakeholders, and were reportedly used with success in the assessment of the 2010/2011 floods in Parwan, Balkh and Kabul provinces.

The National Disaster Management Project also helped the Kabul University Department of Environment Protection and Disaster Management develop a Strategic Development Plan for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action, reviewed the National Disaster Risk Management Act, and developed Provincial Disaster Management Plans. Whether these will lead to improved disaster response capacity remains to be seen. The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority is severely underfunded and, like the National Environment Protection Agency, has poor outreach into the provinces and districts.

4.6 INCOME GENERATION, LIVELIHOODS AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

By far the largest programme under this outcome is the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) implemented under the national implementation modality by the MRRD. A number of other projects that were also to be implemented by the MRRD under this outcome

have been 'subcontracted' to the NABDP as a way to use the delivery and engineering capacity of this programme: the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) project, the Counter Narcotic Trust Fund (CNTF), the AliceGhan refugee housing project, the Helmand Agricultural and Rural Development Programme, and the Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar project. These 'add-on projects' are reviewed briefly at the end of the section.

4.6.1 NATIONAL AREA-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (NABDP)

Overview

The National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) is one of the oldest UNDP projects in Afghanistan. The project is funded by a variety of donors and has spent approximately $290 million since its inception. A joint initiative of the MRRD and UNDP, it started in 2002 with the goal of contributing to a sustainable reduction of poverty and an improvement of livelihoods in rural Afghanistan. NABDP works to establish District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and train them in good governance practices and infrastructure project planning and implementation. The DDAs are tasked with preparing District Development Plans, which list priority projects, from which the NABDP will then select a few for funding and implementation.

The third phase of the programme began in July 2009 and is due to end in June 2015. It aims at full national coverage of DDAs, while building on the experience and capacities of already established DDAs. The programme expands the scope of the DDA role in local governance, conflict resolution, disaster management and increasing female participation. The DDAs are supposed to act as the principal district-level coordinating platform for an integrated area approach by all governmental and non-governmental actors.

In provinces where security is a strong concern (e.g. Kandahar, Uruzgan and Helmand), the NABDP has designed and implemented a

specific approach for the delivery and monitoring of infrastructure, known as the 'Kandahar model'. The model involved granting greater responsibilities to the DDAs to contract and supervise infrastructure delivery, and delegating procurement for projects in the southern region to the Kandahar office, which in some cases led to significant accounting issues.

Relevance

The NABDP was assessed as very relevant. It is one of the few projects funded by UNDP that delivers assistance beyond Kabul and provincial capitals to the vast Afghan countryside, where most of the population resides. Its national scope means that it has been able to extend development support to most districts in the country. Under national implementation, the project can claim to be an important link between the Government and the Afghan people, a way for the Government to demonstrate its usefulness to the average Afghan and strengthen its legitimacy as a result.

In contrast with the World Bank-funded National Solidarity Program and many NGO programmes, the NABDP is meant to support medium-sized infrastructure that can benefit several villages, and will thus not compete with, but instead complement, village-level infrastructure built by other actors. However, this intention is not always acted upon: many NABDP-funded projects are of a smaller size and scope than reflected in the project document. National Solidarity Program staff have frequently complained that NABDP should limit its project interventions to larger-scale projects that could impact the district, and refrain from undertaking smaller-scale projects at the community level, where the National Solidarity Program was designed to intervene.

Through the DDAs, the NABDP emulated and built upon the World Bank-funded National Solidarity Program[115] and its use of traditional local governance councils (called *shuras*) to plan development. This use of the traditional *shura* system means that:

1. The project uses local social capital and knowledge to identify micro-project ideas, needs and priorities, which helps it select micro-projects responding to real needs.

2. The project modus operandi inserts itself naturally into the context and is easily understood by all.

3. The DDAs benefit from the generally positive perception of indigenous governance systems described in Chapter 2: they are often perceived as legitimate locally, not thoroughly corrupted (though exceptions occur) and their decisions generally (though not always) accepted as expressing true local priorities.

However, the legitimacy of the DDAs is an issue for some community members, as well as the national government. Article 140 of the constitution stipulates that "*In order to organize activities involving people and provide them with the opportunity to actively participate in the local administration, councils are set up in districts and villages in accordance with the provisions of the law. Members of these councils are elected by the local people through free, general, secret and direct elections for a period of three years.*"

DDAs were *not* elected through direct, general elections facilitated by the IEC and, unlike district governors or provincial councils, they are not formal government institutions and their members are not government employees or representatives.

---

115 The National Solidarity Program was established by the World Bank and MRRD in 2003. It channels development assistance through village-level councils that are based on traditional village *shuras*, and are called Community Development Councils (CDCs). In developing the DDA's structure, the NABDP built upon the CDCs; in most districts, NABDP clustered several CDCs at the district level and asked CDC members to elect a 30-member District Development Assembly (DDA). The fact that both projects are implemented by the same ministry (MRRD) facilitated this collaboration.

However, many DDA members expressed a desire to be integrated into the formal political system and the MRRD has begun issuing DDA identification cards with a ministerial logo.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that the IDLG has also established district-level councils under the USAID-funded Afghanistan Social Outreach Programme (ASOP), numbering approximately 112 across the country, usually selected because of the presence of anti-governmental forces. There is a degree of overlap with DDAs, as ASOP councils have a loosely defined mandate to communicate the district's needs in terms of development. Unlike the DDAs, which are voluntary organizations, members of the ASOP councils used to receive a stipend between $120 and $180. Discontinuation of these stipends caused the disappearance of some of these ASOP councils.

Interministerial discussions—mostly between IDLG and MRRD—have been under way for the past two years to decide how to merge the ASOP councils and DDAs into one single district-level council to be called the District Coordination Council. The resulting policy, endorsed by the Cabinet in December 2013, foresees a provincial committee chaired by the governor to decide on the establishment of District Coordination Councils in each district. DDA members met by the mission expressed confidence that merging the two district councils could be straightforward because they are generally composed of the same local elders. However, MRRD staff and other development workers familiar with the DDA system (from NGOs and PRTs, who often consult with DDAs) have expressed concerns that this merger may undermine the local representativeness and legitimacy of district councils, especially if council members receive a salary from the central government.

As explained previously, an important factor in NABDP's relevance is that it is conceived as responding to needs identified in a participatory manner by DDAs. Yet in practice, the process of selecting a particular project for financing takes place at the central level in MRDD and is influenced by lobbying from Members of Parliament and other power brokers. This undermines the programme's participatory nature and thus weakens its relevance. Another factor reducing the project's relevance is the narrow menu of eligible infrastructures and activities (Table 10), which drives which micro-project the programme will pick and choose among DDAs' priorities. The dynamic at the time of writing district development plans and when selecting a micro-project for NABDP funding seems to be favouring the sort of simple, discrete projects that can get pushed through the system faster, such as micro-electric schemes, road graveling or canal clearing projects, which are not necessarily the highest priority for the community.

The frequent clearing of irrigation canals and karezes[116] by the NABDP is a case in point. Silt tends to accumulate in irrigation canals, requiring clearing either annually or once every few years, depending on usage and site. As described in the recent Afghanistan Human Development Report on water[117], Afghan irrigation infrastructure has for centuries been built and maintained by groups of water users, often involving several villages coordinated through a "*mirab*" (water chief) who regulates water rights and mobilizes community labour for maintenance. However, since 2003, the NABDP has funded nearly 500 canal- and karez-clearing projects throughout the country. Routine canal cleaning does not constitute a priority need for an external project like the NABDP, and may even undermine traditional self-help systems. Nevertheless, this type of projects is easy to implement and is therefore repeatedly selected.

NABDP staff noted that both DDAs and project staff occasionally struggle to place a community's needs within the eligible categories. Many DDA

---

116   A type of underground canal or horizontal well, draining water from mountainous aquifers.

117   Kabul University, 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011 – The Forgotten Front: Water Security and the Crisis in Sanitation', Centre for Policy and Human Development, 2011.

members commented on the narrow options at their disposal and advocated for more flexibility in the project selection process.

Since 2010, the programme has withdrawn from private sector promotion and transferred its Local Economic Development Unit to another MRRD programme, the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme supported by the World Bank, thus narrowing further its menu of eligible projects and rendering the NABDP unable to support even the simplest enterprise development project. This move contradicts the demand from the field, in that DDA members tend to prioritize job creation and livelihoods support as the most important areas for investment.

Effectiveness

Key reported results since NABDP inception include:[118]

- DDAs have been established through elections in 388 out of 402 districts in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Three years after initial formation, 123 DDAs have also held re-elections.

- District Development Plans have been compiled through community consultation processes in all corresponding 388 districts and updated in 123 districts. All District Development Plans are formulated in national languages (Dari and Pashto), and uploaded to the NABDP website.[119]

- Some 227 DDAs have received training on local governance, conflict resolution, gender equity, finance and procurement, and project implementation and management topics. To help them operate better, 229 DDAs have received small grants (called 'Grant in Aid').

- DDAs have installed 68 District Information Centres, meant to collect and provide reliable data regarding development and the social and economic aspects of their respective districts.

- A total of 1,891 productive rural infrastructure projects have been completed across all 34 provinces, while 803 projects are ongoing and 1,252 are in the survey and design process. Projects cover 14 diverse rural development sectors, such as irrigation, transport and education.

- With 28 ongoing micro-hydro power plants and 22 biogas schemes currently underway, the Energy for Rural Development of Afghanistan unit is promoting the sustainable use of resources through alternative energy technologies.

The Beneficiary Assessment conducted as part of the ADR[120] focused on the NABDP and provided some independent validation of reported results. With information collected through 40 project site visits, it provided ample evidence that most of the infrastructure built by the project is of reasonable technical quality and serves a clear and useful purpose (Table 10). Very few instances of unused or unusable equipment or buildings were found. In most visited sites, the interviewed community members were quite satisfied with the project.

In terms of effects at the outcome level, the recent 'outcome 6 evaluation' argued that the impact of NABDP-built rural infrastructure on economic development was undocumented and probably small, and therefore that NABDP was contributing little to CPAP outcome 6 ("income generation, livelihoods and private sector development"). This finding—which does not detract from results such as better health or education

118 Based on NABDP reports, mainly the programme factsheet available at www.undp.org.af/Projects/Report2011/nabdp/Project-NABDP-May2011-factsheet.pdf. Additional programme reports are available at www.undp.org.af/WhoWeAre/UNDPinAfghanistan/Projects/psl/prj_nabdp.htm.www.undp.org.af/WhoWeAre/UNDPinAfghanistan/Projects/psl/prj_nabdp.htm.

119 www.mrrd-nabdp.org/Development%20Plans.htm

120 Samuel Hall Consulting/UNDP, 'NABDP Beneficiary Assessment – Fieldwork Synthesis', October 2012.

possibly stemming from the construction of schools and clinics—is supported by the ADR and its Beneficiary Assessment, although moderate economic benefits probably accrue from better links to markets afforded by road and bridge works and from higher agricultural production resulting from irrigation works.

Achievements in terms of community mobilization should not be overstated: the NABDP has always accorded less attention to social and capacity aspects of the DDAs than to engineering aspects; staff in provincial offices have not been trained on how to interact with DDAs; and the Beneficiary Assessment collected a number of complaints about allegedly corrupt DDA chairmen. Until fairly recently, insufficient efforts had been invested into developing training packages and procedures to allow for adequate support to and oversight of DDAs.

The claim is frequently made that NABDP helps the Government provide services to Afghan communities, and therefore strengthens its legitimacy in the eyes of these communities. Like so many programmes in Afghanistan, the NABDP was designed with this political goal in mind: support nation-building and stability through the materialization of 'peace dividends' in the form of development assistance. Against this criterion, some interviewed DDA members and beneficiaries did stress NABDP's usefulness in establishing a positive relationship between their community and the Government, while others expressed a more sceptical attitude, stating in essence that any sympathy 'bought' by services may only last as long as the services last.

The development results stemming from the project have not been shared equitably. Geographic inequity emerged as perhaps the most important issue faced by the NABDP. While a primary aim of the project has always been to reach deeply rural areas that may lack exposure to government services, the general picture is that NABDP projects

tends to be concentrated around provincial capitals, and districts located far away from provincial capitals get only a fraction of what those located close to the provincial capital get. A similar concentration of activities in the most accessible areas is noticeable *within districts* as well. The reasons for such geographic inequity are threefold:

- **Access:** NABDP provincial offices, based in the capitals, inevitably access closer districts and localities with less difficulty than districts or localities located further away from their offices. Projects implemented closer to an NABDP office allow for more frequent monitoring and more technical assistance from NABDP. The NABDP delivers its infrastructure mainly through private contractors, and such contractors have their own access limitation in a country where most villages are inaccessible by car or truck, and many districts are insecure. DDAs located in nearby districts also benefit from easier access to, and greater lobbying capacity with, government officials and project staff than those from remote districts.

- **Political influence:** While the programme's theory is that DDAs will develop district development plans and these will be used as a basis for NABDP funding, in reality Members of Parliament have exerted a strong political influence on the selection of funded projects by leveraging their capacity to impeach individual ministers. Members of Parliament have routinely influenced what the NABDP should fund and where, and not surprisingly, they tended to favour their own power bases, often located close to provincial capitals. There have also been reports of undue interference from regional MRRD officials in the selection of projects.[121]

- **Budget allocation:** Unlike the World Bank's National Solidarity Program, the NABDSP does not regulate the amount a given district can receive; it uses no district budgets or even

121   UNDP Afghanistan, 'Independent Management Review of the National Area Based Development Programme III', by B. Comnas and K. Ghauri, December 2010.

Table 10. Typical NABDP development results per project type

| Types of infrastructure | No. of projects* | Cost (US$) | | Typical results (as per beneficiary assessment) |
		Total	Aver-age per project	
Productive rural infrastructure	**1,467**	**97,413,343**	**66,403**	
Road and bridges (including spot improvement and graveling)	415	32,769,644	78,963	Easier access to markets, social services and provincial/district administration
Water supply and sanitation (wells, drinking water supply systems, water tankers, latrines)	638	20,860,026	32,696	Decrease time for water collection, more and cleaner drinking water, less diseases
School buildings	149	20,312,355	136,325	Improved education (if staffed)
Administrative buildings (district offices, MRRD and NABDP offices)	91	10,091,225	110,893	Establish project/MRRD/DDA presence
Agriculture (agricultural inputs and veterinary)	53	4,271,927	80,602	Old activities, now discarded
Clinics and health posts	52	3,908,434	75,162	Improved health (if staffed)
Others (including community centres, libraries, training centres, rehab. of mosques)	69	5,199,732	75,358	Social impact (meeting places, conflict resolution), but some find such centres useless
Natural resource management	**1,647**	**79,485,136**	**48,261**	
River protection wall	643	44,267,515	68,845	A massive area of investment—protects dwellings and fields from erosion by flooded rivers
Construction and rehabilitation of canals, karezes, intakes, etc.	543	20,132,164	37,076	Expansion of agricultural production; in mountainous areas, irrigation infrastructure needs frequent repairs
Retaining walls (for canals)	131	7,555,852	57,678	Protection of irrigation infrastructure
Cleaning of canals or karezes	325	6,990,940	21,511	Undermines traditional maintenance systems
Piped water systems	5	538,666	107,733	Not visited
Rural energy development	**199**	**12,464,818**	**62,637**	
Micro-hydro plants	151	11,391,763	75,442	Small appliances and lights, symbol of modernity, but equity issues in distribution of electricity and frequent breakdown; as many as 60% of micro-plants would be non-operational
Power lines	4	421,961	105,490	
Bio gas plant	39	347,855	8,919	
Others (including solar panels, connection of admin. buildings)	5	303,240	60,648	Not visited
Local economic development	**95**	**4,158,686**	**43,776**	
Vocational and business training	84	2,098,617	24,984	Varied
Market construction	6	977,564	162,927	Not visited (old activities, now discarded)
Others (including city cleaning, microloan, study)	5	1,082,505	216,501	
Grand total	**3,408**	**193,521,983**	**56,785**	

*: include add-on projects such as DIAG, CNTF, HARDP, IALP-K2.

targets, thus allowing for large discrepancies in the budgets of different districts.

Moreover, there are also large imbalances among provinces because some donors have earmarked their contribution to specific provinces where they maintain a military presence.[122] The project has seldom tried to push back on such earmarked donations. The lion's share of NABDP resources has been targeted at six of the most instable provinces, where the work is most difficult to monitor, instead of the 28 more secure provinces with more favourable development prospects and where access and monitoring are more easily organized (Figure 13).

While the project built upon the traditional *shura* system, it also tried to strengthen democratic representation by establishing DDAs through a formal election process and opening them to women's participation. The original requirement was for an equal number of men and women in DDAs: 15 men and 15 women. This was later reduced to a minimum of 12 women, and most DDAs now have 12 women and 18 men members. In Herat and Balkh, female participation in public life tends to be higher than in the rest of the country and the project could easily set up DDAs with adequate female participation, but in eastern and southern provinces, including Kabul, the NABDP struggled to secure female DDA members because of

Figure 13. NABDP resources allocated per province (2002-2012)
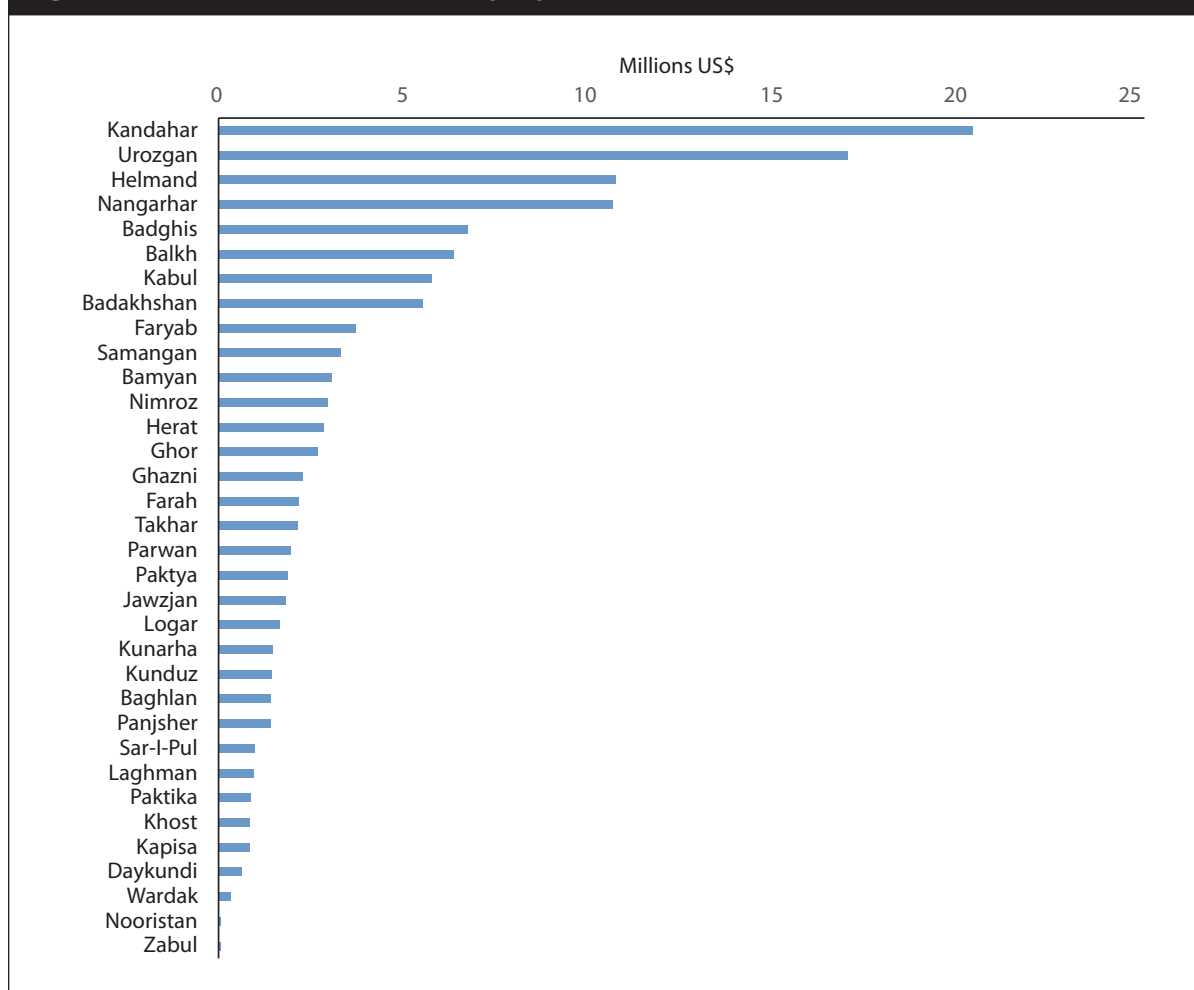
Source: NABDP data

---

122   Spain to Badghis, Canada to Kandahar, UK to Helmand, Germany to Badakhshan, Kunduz and Takhar, Australia and Denmark for Oruzghan, etc.

cultural restrictions preventing strong female participation in the public sphere.

Formal participation does not necessarily translate into increased substantive female participation in decision-making. Interviewed female DDA members often contended that although they were grateful to have the opportunity to be on a DDA given that *shuras* are traditionally only male, they did not participate actively in their DDA, either because they are not invited to DDA meetings or they cannot physically attend the meetings (many female DDA members are teachers in public schools and work throughout the day, while others cannot easily travel by themselves). Women also reported that their participation was hampered by lower levels of information about administration, finances and project management.

4.6.2 ADD-ON PROJECTS (INCLUDING CNTF AND DIAG)

A number of 'special projects' were nested in the NABDP in recent years in an effort to leverage the delivery capacity of the MRRD to achieve other development goals, or simply out of expediency. NABDP was viewed as a convenient channel for all projects implemented with MRRD. Each of these special projects has its own donor, budget and approach. Some are managed by NABDP while others are run by an independent unit within MRRD. They include:

- The largest special project is likely the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) project, which aims to contribute to stabilization through socio-economic development. A special DIAG unit was working in 110 districts where armed groups have been disbanded in order to implement productive infrastructure projects. The constructed infrastructure was reportedly selected in negotiations between communities, insurgents and DIAG teams. The project is now closed, and replaced by the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), which operates independently from NABDP.

- The Counter-Narcotic Trust Fund (CNTF), concerned with delivering infrastructure as a way to motivate rural communities to eradicate illicit crops (closed).

- The AliceGhan refugee housing project was implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and CARE International in the Qarabagh district of Kabul province.

- The Helmand Agricultural and Rural Development Programme funded by DfID and aiming to increase the economic opportunities of the rural poor in Helmand, including those that make a living from growing poppy, and the Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar project, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, with similar objectives of promoting licit rural livelihoods.

- The development of a Rural Technology Park, implemented by the Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development, a unit of MRRD, and funded by the Spanish.

In none of these projects did NABDP control the planning process. This seems to have led to poor results, at least in the case of CNTF and AliceGhan. The latter was a resounding failure due to exceedingly poor site selection (no drinking water and land tenure disputes at the construction site). NABDP has been tasked with completing the water supply to make the settlement habitable, which it hopes to do in 2014. As for the CNTF, the Beneficiary Assessment teams visited five CNTF-funded project sites in Balkh, Badakhshan, Kunduz and Badghis, all road-graveling projects implemented in 2009 and 2010. No beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries understood the special counter-narcotics nature of the project, and while some DDA members could name the funder, they also lacked an understanding of project's intention. In no location was the project determined to have lessened or eliminated the production of narcotics.[123] Similar findings apply to DIAG:

---

123   CNTF was discontinued in 2011, with issues appearing in the NABDP's 2nd Quarter Report for 2010 regarding the delayed release of CNTF funds by the Ministry of Finance.

community projects linked to demobilization efforts were not perceived as such by NABDP staff or communities.

The two rural enterprise development projects in Helmand and Kandahar are the only projects in the current UNDP portfolio that address enterprise development and job creation. Their inclusion under NABDP remained purely formal. They are managed separately as parts of the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Project, a national programme designed under the aegis of the World Bank to 'jump start' private sector growth in rural Afghanistan. The Rural Enterprise Development in Helmand project, funded by DfID, involves development of small and medium enterprises, establishing market linkages and access to finance. The Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar project, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, includes, besides a component of small and medium enterprise development, diversification of livelihood activities based on on-farm and non-farm activities (e.g. vegetables, grains and livestock trading; flour mills; shops; poultry and dairy farming; handicraft) as well as community/group financing of enterprises through creation of savings groups.

The ADR mission could not travel to Kandahar and Helmand, and the Beneficiary Assessment collected insufficient evidence about these projects. The ADR is therefore not in a position to opine on their effectiveness. However, a recent outcome evaluation[124] concluded that:

■ The Helmand Agricultural and Rural Development Programme project had consumed only $414,000 out of its $6.3 million budget, and that the Helmand province still produces 49 percent of the national opium crop, indicating that little results had been achieved on this front.

■ The Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar project appeared somewhat more successful, its village savings and loans association going some way towards meeting the needs of the rural vulnerable for credit to engage in on-farm and off-farm activities (e.g. sheep fattening, poultry production, tailoring or pickle-making). Its impact on poppy cultivation is unknown.

A recent study[125] pointed out that market-based programmes such as the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Project may successfully promote economic activity in areas of high agricultural potential with good market access, such as around Kandahar, but are unlikely to work in more marginal areas with limited landholdings, no irrigation, and/or no access to market. Even in areas with strong agricultural potential and good access to market, the large inequalities in landholdings prevalent in such areas (and typically in the plain around Kandahar) mean that the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Project's benefits are likely to be restricted to the better-off.

4.7 EFFICIENCY

Given the size and service-orientation of the Afghanistan country programme, efficiency represents a critical evaluation criterion, touching upon the issues of Country Office management, structure and staffing; operational capacity; project quality control systems; monitoring and evaluation; and communication and knowledge management.

In looking at the performance of UNDP in Afghanistan over the last five years, it is also essential to review the nature of the guidance and support from headquarters to assist the Country Office management, as well as the very specific constraints posed by the national and security context.

---

124   UNDP, 'Evaluation of CPD Outcome 6: Diversified Livelihoods, Private Sector Development and Public-Private Partnership', by A. Bhattacharjee, D. Posgate and H. Andersen, November 2013.

125   AREU Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 'Beyond the Market - Can the AREDP transform Afghanistan's rural nonfarm economy?' February 2011.

Country Office management

The early years of the period under review saw the development in the UNDP Country Office of a management culture characterized by:

- Frequent Country Office interference in individual programmes management, which tended to blur the necessary distinction between the implementation role on the one hand, and the supervision role on the other, leading to a concentration of both roles within the Country Office.

- Flexible support extended to key officials through a liberal use of Letters of Agreement and National Technical Advisors (non-*Tashkeel* staff).

- Rapid promotion of relatively junior national staff at posts of responsibility within the Country Office.

- Long, unpredictable and opaque recruitment processes for international staff, and staff leaving before the end of their term, leading to long periods of vacancy and operational weaknesses (e.g. in ACT, ASGP, SEAL, and many other programme).

- A growing reporting burden placed on programmes, with at times a weekly reporting system in place to feed donor weekly information meetings, as a way to assuage donors' requests for more information about results and challenges.

These issues have gravely affected the efficiency and delivery of key programmes. The frequent use of Letters of Agreement led to significant set-backs in some of the largest projects, such as NABDP, which was forced to hire some 200 new national staff during the period, only to fire them later when the minister who had insisted on their hiring was replaced. In the Policy Analysis and Development project currently under investigation, UNDP Letters of Agreement allowed

ministries to hire high-level and high-cost consultants with little oversight and accountability by UNDP. Similarly in ASGP, National Technical Advisors posted at the provincial level were reportedly hired in a non-transparent manner, leading to complains from provincial governor offices and damaging UNDP's reputation.

Important donors have reduced or in some cases withdrawn their support, and programmes were cut short as a result of management disputes and misunderstandings among partners (e.g. SEAL II ended midway through its planned implementation, and ASGP lost major donors due to disputes around issues related, *inter alia*, to the recruitment and poor performance of the first Chief Technical Advisor of Phase II).

The recently investigated LOTFA procurement fraud was in all likelihood a symptom of this more general management problem.[126] The project was previously regarded as well managed and efficient, but a number of concerns arose towards the end of 2011. One was about the procedures in place to ensure that only actual police, who are verified to be on the job, get paid. A second concern related to procurement for the food salary supplement received by the police. This food is procured locally by MOI for distribution to the Afghan National Police, and paid for by LOTFA. A third concern was whether procurement procedures have been followed properly by UNDP, which is in charge of all non-food purchases.

This last issue has been the subject of an internal investigation, leading to the termination of several national employees. The LOTFA international project director was placed on administrative leave, and a new manager ad interim was put in place in 2012, pending the recruitment of the current manager, which was completed in October 2013. UNDP has taken several proactive steps to manage reputational risks, including proactive engagement with the donors, releasing

---

126   UNDP, 'Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan - Management Review', December 2012.

a summary audit report, commissioning an in-depth management review, and placing an operations manager within the project. Generally, donors interviewed by the evaluation team considered that these measures were satisfactory, that the financial losses were minute in relative terms, and that trust was being rebuilt in what they consider an indispensable project. Only one donor (Japan) requested a refund.

However, the hypothetical presence on the payroll of 'ghost policemen' (fictitious, deceased or otherwise absent employees) could not be thoroughly investigated, as this would imply systematic visits to police precincts in a large number of districts. Based on its regular spot-checking activities, the Monitoring Agent has identified a small number of incorrect payments (double payments to the same person and payments to people not in attendance), which totalled about 2 percent of the payroll. The UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations found some inflation in the reporting of police numbers, but concluded that that they did not result in an inflation of payroll amount. A budget line entitled "other MOI entities," for a few thousands policemen per month, was nevertheless found undocumented and is not paid anymore.

The management review recommended, *inter alia*, that LOTFA evolve into a true multi-donor trust fund managed by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office in New York, recognizing the sharper controls available through it, and that the project Steering Committee be changed from a purely informative forum to one that sets policy, is involved in discussing issues, and takes decisions. Additional controls may be warranted

within MOI, which is in charge of procurement for the food component and is the only entity able to systematically identify 'ghost policemen'.

Such problems are to be expected where it is almost impossible to monitor achievements and personnel in large parts of a country. Correctly accounting for personnel remains a major issue in the army as well, and the issue of 'ghost soldiers' has been mentioned in reports by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction and others. However, it is clear that the previous UNDP Country Director and LOTFA Manager had failed to communicate implementation challenges to all programme stakeholders in a timely and transparent manner. Instead, the approach taken was to provide a carefully edited version of events. For instance, as revealed by the Management Review[127] commissioned in 2012, the LOTFA Monitoring Agent used to be barred from presenting its results to the project board, and forbidden to access MOI officials directly.[128]

UNDP's credibility was compromised when donors started to notice a dissonance between the official language used at meetings and the messages emanating from other sources of information, such as evaluations or private discussions with programme personnel. Many donors stressed to the ADR team that UNDP had had a tendency to not report transparently on significant implementation problems. The Strategic Review of October 2011 included extensive consultations with UNDP's partners, and its report reflected their frustration.[129] A lack of transparent reporting is also highlighted in the more recent LOTFA Management Review.[130]

---

127   Ibid.

128   Ibid., paragraphs 44 and 45. See also paragraph 60: "LOTFA, UNDP and MOI have not made adequate use of the [Monitoring Agent] and the information it produces (unlike the World Bank's [Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund], which engages much more effectively with the same MA). LOTFA management went so far as to prohibit direct contact between the MA and the MOI."

129   Ibid., paragraph 67: "Many donors were concerned over both financial and substantive reporting from UNDP. In particular, they were dissatisfied with the lack of what they considered results-based reporting."

130   Ibid., paragraph 44: "Past reports submitted by LOTFA [...] were silent on key issues and challenges. A reader had the impression that all was well, there were no major concerns, and if there were issues, they were hidden with oblique references)."

Since his appointment in April 2012, the new Country Director has attempted to restore both the normal functioning of a Country Office and good working relations with Government and donors, radically improving the image of UNDP in country in a matter of a few months. However, the process of reforming the administrative, logistic and oversight mechanisms of the UNDP Country Office will clearly take more time.

The process has started and involves a 'soft re-profiling' exercise, with a review of staff profiles, structural transformations, and re-alignments to make administrative staff more service-oriented. Weekly staff meetings have been instituted, as well as a women's caucus to help raise the number of female staff and promote gender integration in UNDP programmes and the Country Office. The Country Office has also taken the initiative to eliminate the 20 to 30 cases of Afghan Letters of Agreement staff receiving more than $10,000 per month.

An Oversight and Compliance Unit was set up and has been functioning for about a year. However, a perception has developed among programme managers that the Country Office, once administratively flexible but interfering with programme operations, is now increasingly becoming control-oriented, rather than supportive in administrative matters, and that this may result in slow delivery. A gap has grown between the Country Office—staffed with junior, rapidly promoted national staff with little experience—and the programmes and their management units, some of which are vastly funded, with their own business units headed by several international staff sometimes of high calibre, and funded massively by donors. In their relation with the project managers they are supposed to supervise, the Country Office staff may tend to compensate for a perceived position of weakness by being overly fiscal and bureaucratic in the approval of implementation reports, budgets and work plans.

This problem is probably linked to the LOTFA investigation and the many audits that followed. Country Office staff are eager to distance themselves from the administrative practices followed in previous years and now discredited. This is understandable, but does not explain why simple documents such as the Annual Work Plans for 2013 took so much time to finalize, thus delaying implementation. The current Country Office management is trying to raise the bar in terms of accountability, but it also needs to instil an *esprit de corps* and mutual understanding between the programme staff and the staff of the Country Office. Under the trying conditions of Afghanistan, strong morale, commitment and team spirit are required to deliver good quality programmes.

Headquarters supervision and backstopping

As already noted, the UNDP programme in Afghanistan is the organization's largest by far, accounting for some 15 percent of all UNDP programme expenditures worldwide over the period 2009–2013 (Table 11). The overheads generated are divided equally between headquarters and the Country Office, and represents a very significant income for both. The LOTFA project (circa $500- 600 million per year) alone returns some $12 million annually to New York. Yet up to mid-2012, one single programme officer was responsible for backstopping Afghanistan in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. From 2009 to 2011, Afghanistan did not receive significantly more attention from headquarters than much smaller programmes implemented in other countries. Central bureaux such as the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) reported feeling excluded from the country by the Country Office, while the Country Office pointed out that Afghanistan was not a priority for BCPR and that their requests for assistance had been unheeded. Whatever the case, a lack of headquarters oversight and backstopping was evident.

In March 2011, the country was placed under the purview of the UNDP Executive Team for Protracted Crises and Complex Emergencies, chaired by the Associate Administrator.[131] Following a visit to Kabul by the Associate Administrator, a decision was taken to mandate a Strategic Review of the Afghanistan country programme. The Strategic Review, undertaken over the period 10-22 October 2011, would ultimately lead to the appointment of a new Country Director in April 2012.

Since 2012, a new division focused specifically on Afghanistan has been established in RBAP at headquarters (staffed with four professionals and supported by a programme associate), a high-level Inter Bureau Task Force on Afghanistan chaired by the RBAP's Deputy Director has been instituted to provide a forum for identifying issues and for UNDP headquarters to respond in an integrated and swift manner. As a result, an appropriate level of headquarter oversight has been restored and much substantive support is now being provided by Bureau of Management, BDP and BCPR, as well as by the Regional Service Centre in Bangkok.

Two auditors have been hired solely for the Afghanistan programme, paid out of programme management fees. Many more audits have taken place. Most of the programmes have been audited.[132] In addition to the project audits, key functional audits were conducted in the areas of human resources management, asset management, financial management and procurement to strengthen the Country Office operational support extended to programme activities, while ensuring that all the standard policy and procedures are met. These audits are taken very seriously and good progress has been made in implementing their recommendations.

However, ex-post audit cannot and should not be the only way to enforce abidance to rules and regulations. The Afghanistan country programme is large enough to warrant a back office with much stronger procurement and recruitment units than exist at present.

Security and logistic constraints

UNDP's efficiency in Afghanistan needs to be considered within the lens of a country in the midst of perpetual conflict over the last 30 years, and reflects broader trends. The ADR conclusion about UNDP's low efficiency in Afghanistan is consistent with the widely accepted view that international efforts to develop and rehabilitate

Table 11. Afghanistan programme expenditure as a share of all UNDP expenditures						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*	**Total**
	(all data in million US$, from ATLAS as of 6 January 2014)					
UNDP as a whole						
Total expenditures	5,779	5,777	5,558	5,350	4,801	**27,265**
of which, programme expenditures	4,262	4,769	4,552	4,346	3,883	**21,813**
Afghanistan						
Total expenditures	568	789	769	656	556	**3,339**
of which, programme expenditures	549	769	744	630	527	**3,219**
share of all UNDP expenditures	10%	14%	14%	12%	12%	**12%**
share of all UNDP programme expenditures	13%	16%	16%	14%	14%	**15%**

* Data for 2013 are estimates.

131   The Executive Team is the highest level decision-making forum in UNDP on crisis-related issues.

132   There have been over 23 internal and external audits conducted since the beginning of 2012, i.e. one per month on average.

the country have had disappointing results in relation to the funds invested.[133]

Poor security has strong effects on timelines and costs, with multiple staff evacuations, restrictions of staff movement, threats, and periodic attacks on soft targets at the provincial and capital levels, leading to interruptions in the different activities. Running costs are exceptionally high, as offices must be made secure, travel is highly restricted, living arrangements for international staff are limited and expensive, and the pressures of working under these conditions requires rest-and-recuperation leave for international staff every six weeks, which tend to slow down and disrupt programme implementation.

In nationally implemented programmes, the security of advisors operating from the premises of government ministries, such as in LOTFA, NABDP or NIBP, is of particular concern. The security operations in these offices are managed by the ministries and UNDP cannot impact them beyond ensuring basic security and safety norms in the room where the advisors are located. This has in some cases led to personnel leaving their job. The Anti-Corruption and Transparency (ACT) project suffered from prolonged absences and frequent changes in project managers and other human resource, which delayed delivery of project outputs and caused the project to lose direction. The Gender Equality Project (GEP) also faced difficulties in identifying, recruiting and retaining qualified national and international female personnel, with security being clearly the main deterrent.

Some interlocutors also talked of the "nervous spouse syndrome" to describe a recurring phenomenon, whereby an international candidate applies to a job and goes through the entire process of interviews, only to decline the job once offered.

UNDP uses a high number of local staff, which is vital for conducting business, especially in areas where foreigners may present a high-value

target for groups opposed to the current government. Ensuring that locally hired staff are sufficiently skilled, protected, paid and monitored for performance is a continuing challenge. High turnover rates among both national and international staff are also a major constraint, as talented nationals quickly move up the ladder through the multitude of international agency-paid positions within and outside of government, and internationals tend to stay in the country for short periods of time—one or two years on average.

As a result of poor security, UNDP's ability to monitor and evaluate the performance of service providers outside Kabul remains very low, leaving open the possibility of discrepancies between the quality and quantity of services and goods paid for and those actually delivered, and weakening UNDP's capacity to report to donors and the Government about programme results and challenges. The Country Office is thinking about using third-party monitoring agents, as already implemented in LOTFA. Unfortunately, UNDP lacks connections with research centres, line ministries and NGOs, entities that could potentially help in monitoring. The apparent rationale for not working with NGOs was to rely exclusively on indigenous capacities of local communities and the Government. As a result, UNDP cannot use the capacity of the most capable NGOs to access remote areas of the country, and this compounds geographic inequity and monitoring issues.

In election support, UNDP has been successful in delivering complicated logistics. However, this often occurred *despite* UNDP procurement and recruitment rules rather than because of them, and the effort often cost a great deal of goodwill as well as money. Evaluations pointed out that recruitment and procurement systems used by UNDP in Afghanistan were not conducive to time-bound programmes and events such as elections. This disconnect between tight electoral timelines and UNDP's 'one-size-fits-all'

---

133 See, for instance, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 'Afghanistan: Lessons from Ten Years of Aid – synthesis paper', by I. Sud, September 2012.

procedures continues to haunt the electoral assistance effort, in spite of the recent introduction of 'fast-track' hiring procedures.

The cost of these elections, notably the 2009 presidential and provincial council elections, has been driven up by a heavy reliance on foreign staff and goods. In particular, the large number of expatriate staff (more than a hundred) placed at the provincial level in 2009 was a major cost driver. The budget for the two elections (presidential and provincial council) amounted to $190 million, with actual expenditures reaching $161 million. UNDP managed to reduce the cost for the 2010 election. ELECT benefited from a highly experienced Chief Technical Advisor, with strong leadership and expertise, whose reduced use of expatriate staff and increased controls over contracting, especially for transport, resulted in significant savings for 2010 compared to the previous year, estimated at about $20 million in the final evaluation.[134]

Synergies between UNDP programmes

A perceived lack of synergies between parallel programmes has affected the Afghanistan country programme for some time. The issue was already flagged in the previous ADR.

As explained in section 3.2, the Country Office has operated a cluster system to facilitate strategic coherence, collaboration, and joint planning and learning among programmes working on related issues. The lack of programmatic synergies therefore points to a weakness in the cluster system. There is a lack of understanding among programme staff and unit heads about what precise functions the clusters should exercise as compared to programme units, and about what kind of incentives can be provided to support their activities. In contrast to programme units, which are administrative entities within the Country Office that exert oversight, monitoring

and support functions, clusters have no authority over individual programmes. Collaboration is on a voluntary basis.

One of the dynamics launched by the Strategic Review was an analysis of programme coherence and the identification of areas for joint programming. So far, this has mainly concerned programmes implemented at the provincial level, such as ASGP, NABDP and APRP. A programme coherence review conducted in 2012[135] proposed to reinforce the cluster system, although its recommendations were not very specific.

During most of 2013, clusters were busy developing cluster strategies to inform the next country programme. The ADR is not in a position to comment on the quality of these strategies, as most were still in draft form during the evaluation mission, but it supports the principle of strategizing at the cluster level, and commends the Country Office management and the policy unit for their role in supporting this initiative, which could result in greater intellectual initiative and stronger coherence and tighter collaboration among different UNDP programmes.

The new UNDP strategy for subnational governance proposes a radical approach to improve synergies between UNDP's work on subnational governance (ASGP) and its support to infrastructure development at the district level (NABDP): to develop a new successor programme that would combine the work of the ASGP and NABDP and address institutional development, the promotion of local accountability, and service delivery issues in a comprehensive and geographically equitable way.

However, the idea to involve several government entities in a common programme with shared objectives appears to run counter to a tendency

---

134 Carrio, J., Nelson, S., Ruescas, C., Claudio, M., and Navarro, C., 'Final Evaluation: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow', June 2011, p. 4. The total of expenditures incurred by UNDP for the 2010 parliamentary election was $125 million, for a budget of $149 million.

135 UNDP Afghanistan, 'Programme Coherence for Improved Development Impact', October 2012.

for UNDP programmes to deal with one single government entity at a time. ASGP phase 1 used to combine support through IDLG and IARCSC, but the present second phase is almost solely devoted to IDLG, which became a dominant partner. NABDP is likewise working with MRRD as its main partner, MBAW with MOF, and so on. In a climate of rivalries between administrations, ministries, and levels of governance, the Government's efforts to access aid flows in a predictable and Afghan-led manner translate in practice into specific government entities asserting control over specific programmes. For a given Government of Afghanistan programme partner, sharing a given programme with another ministry may result in less control over programme management, lengthier budgetary negotiations, and a financial loss.

The idea of a joint IDLG-MRRD programme in support of local governments, merging two very substantial programmes such as NABDP and ASGP, is theoretically valid but will be difficult to operationalize.

UNDP may have to rely on other tools than joint programmes, such as more flexible collaborations around specific objectives. There is a precedent for this: the NABDP, which has good civil engineers on payroll and a somewhat decent monitoring system, has been routinely used by other UNDP projects (e.g. DIAG, CNTF) to deliver infrastructure throughout Afghanistan. While some of these add-on projects have not performed well, this was mainly because of poor planning and site selection rather than poor delivery. Other UNDP projects trying to deliver infrastructure on their own and without the requisite monitoring and engineering capacity, such as the JHRA, have had very poor results. This example shows that good results can be obtained when several UNDP programmes collaborate based on their comparative advantages, without necessarily having to combine different programmes in the same joint operation.

Subnational presence

Synergies between programmes implemented at the local level could also result from the consolidation of project presence in the provinces into UNDP sub-offices led by individuals with the capacity and authority to represent UNDP at that level. The ADR sees the UNDP regional (subnational) offices as an important opportunity, as PRTs are leaving.[136] Afghanistan has a very centralized governance system, and needs greater devolution of power and resources to the provincial and district levels. Pending a constitutional reform towards greater decentralization, the channels available to donors to support provinces and districts are limited to UNDP (e.g. NABDP, ASGP); the World Bank (e.g. National Solidarity Program, Capacity Building for Results Framework); and a few other actors, such as DFID. Accordingly, UNDP can play a key role at the local level while not being isolated.

However, presently UNDP's regional offices are ill-equipped to grab such opportunities, and poorly supported administratively and logistically by the Kabul office. UNDP needs to emphasize the importance of the regional level, rather than see it as peripheral. It needs to invest more in its regional offices and develop their management tools (e.g. bank accounts) and facilities (e.g. finalize an agreement with UNAMA to lodge staff and offices in their regional compounds). There is also a need to move from a purely project-based regional staff to more integrated UNDP offices with some common services and greater coordination and collaboration between projects. The regional level is the easiest place to start looking for synergies and to build a culture of inter-programme collaboration, and possibly inter-agency cooperation.

4.8 SUSTAINABILITY

Very few of the results described in the above sections are sustainable beyond the end of international support. The lack of clear and credible exit strategies is noted in the report in numerous areas.

---

136 It is also a risk, illustrated by the attack on the Mazar-i-Sharif UNAMA guesthouse on 1 April 2011.

There are a few exceptions, such as the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, which is a bit of an oddity among UNDP partners in that it is a non-governmental entity expected to engage in resource mobilization. In any case, UNDP's operational and financial responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee were successfully transferred in March 2012 to the Committee secretariat and its supporting donors. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee is currently an autonomous entity run by its own secretariat, which manages the administration of financial, technical and logistical responsibilities for its members. Overall though, UNDP and its programmes have relied on the assumption that they are in Afghanistan to stay.

Even in the NABDP, admittedly one of the best programmes, sustainability emerged as a weakness. The programme pays insufficient attention to operation and maintenance issues. NABDP micro-projects often involve several communities and therefore do not lend themselves to community-based maintenance. Stronger links with line ministries (e.g. for schools, clinics or public works) and NGOs may help resolve this difficult issue. In one positive example visited by the evaluation mission, the NABDP had built a large hospital compound which the Ministry of Health could not immediately support with staff and equipment. The building remained unoccupied for two years, in spite of constant lobbying by the DDA chairman. Ultimately an NGO agreed to support the hospital operations in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health, to the great relief and pride of the DDA members and chairman. There are also less positive examples, in which a lack of local ownership and maintenance system translated into a NABDP-funded infrastructure falling into disrepair.

In the democratic governance focus area, a major weakness of UNDP's support to Afghanistan has been the failure to develop a reliable voter register indexed by voting centre. Each s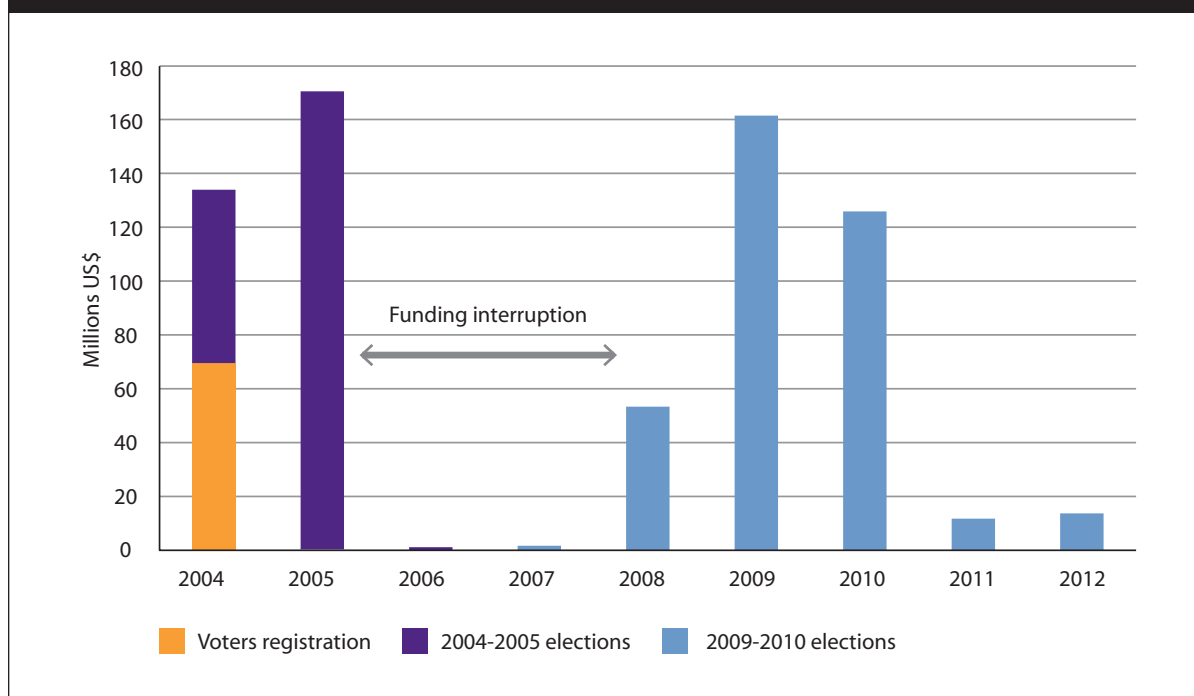uccessive project has searched for a quick fix to the problems left by the previous project's registry. More generally, the physical capacity built in provinces by successive phases of ELECT tends to vanish after each election process, and thus each new phase has to rebuild this regional/provincial capacity in preparation for the next election. A number of factors contributed to this poor record, some beyond UNDP's control, such as intermittent funding allocated by donors for each specific election in contradiction with the 'election cycle approach', which calls for longer-term funding (Figure 14), or the government not being able to decide which ministry should house the registry, but UNDP's own technical decisions can also be faulted.

It is also important to note that national authorities have made limited financial contributions to the electoral institutions and process, and provide no national funding for elections except for basic staff salaries. Evidently, elections have been undertaken in a manner that leads to unsustainable costs, sending the message that Afghanistan cannot afford democracy.

Similarly, there is no economic scenario, however optimistic in its assumptions, leading to a future where Afghanistan could afford the massive police force it has developed with donor support over the past decade.

Another example of poor sustainability through a search for quick-fix solutions is the reliance of the donor-funded 'second civil service' (non-*Tashkeel* personnel) to stop-gap capacity in various institutions. These staff generally perform core institutional functions rather than train regular civil servants. Most of the relationships were controlled by individuals and few were of an institutional nature. The national staff funded by the programmes was almost never transferred onto the relevant *Tashkeel*. The only ministry that reports the creation of *Tashkeel* staff is the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which added three permanent M&E positions in their *Tashkeel* for 2013, ensuring sustainability and productivity of the M&E unit once funded by UNDP through the GEP project.

Figure 14. UNDP expenditures in election support

Millions US$

180
160
140
120
100
80   Funding interruption
60
40
20
0

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

■ Voters registration   ■ 2004-2005 elections   ■ 2009-2010 elections

Source: ATLAS

In a vivid counterexample, an ASGP evaluation report speaks of the "collapse of the IARCSC provincial training centres" once support was withdrawn.[137] Fortunately, UNDP maintains a partnership with the IARCSC, with which continuous engagement is key to resolving the issues affecting the performance of the public service. The example of the Ministry of Finance Budget Office is also telling: the MBAW project developed a comprehensive exit strategy as early as 2006, but has been unable to implement it successfully. One would expect that the Ministry of Finance is well positioned to create *Tashkeel* positions. Yet as of evaluation time, project staff still held substantive functional roles within the ministry.

As for line ministry capacity, there is evidence that capacity has been built through UNDP as well as through donor-financed technical assistance, but with equally disappointing sustainability prospects given that staff salaries at the line ministry

level are also heavily externally financed. Thus, while capacity has been developed—including by UNDP—there is no assurance that such capacity will be retained by the concerned public agencies absent continued external support.

4.9 OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

As detailed in the present chapter, UNDP delivered important, visible contributions to Afghanistan's development during the period under evaluation. The present ADR has documented the following development results, with related caveats:

■ Despite some significant lapses in oversight of the LOTFA programme, UNDP has **helped Afghanistan develop and operate a growing police force**. Newly recruited police officers have followed a diversified training effort, even if many hired in previous years

---

137   Gibbons, G., September 2011, Op. cit., p.22.

still lack basic literacy. The steady growth of the police force over the years—and hence the remarkable growth of the LOTFA project—is linked to what an interlocutor called a "perverse metamorphosis" of the police into yet another counter-insurgency outfit, at the expense of community policing. LOTFA has introduced a modest community policing component in recent years and has helped increase the representation of women within the police services, but a more systemic reorientation and re-tooling of the police force may be in order.

■ **Over 2,000 micro-projects have been implemented by the NABDP, from roads and bridges, to schools and health centres, irrigation works and river protection walls**. Results are quite promising, if geographically concentrated around provincial capitals (geographic inequity). The DDAs with which the programme works benefit from the generally positive perception of indigenous governance systems (*shuras*) and may soon receive formal legal status. Nonetheless, the DDAs need greater attention from a programme that remains very much about brick-and-mortar and is lacking softer skills such as community organization.

■ UNDP has funded equipment, buildings, furniture and the hiring of a large number of national and international technical assistance personnel to **strengthen the capacity in various governmental units** (*inter alia*, the President's Office, the Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, MRRD, IDLG, the IEC and the IARCSC). While it was useful to stop-gap capacity, the sustainability of the approach followed by UNDP has been called into question. Few of these initiatives have been based on a thorough assessment of capacities, both present and required to implement a given mandate. Due to capacity and fiduciary concerns, the national implementation modality in Afghanistan has so far been applied to a limited number of programmes (albeit the largest ones: LOTFA, NABDP and APRP).

The frequent recourse to direct implementation has in some cases hampered national ownership and capacity transfers.

■ **Results in the area of electoral assistance were significant, although they fell short of expectations.** The presidential and provincial council elections in 2009 were held but proved extremely controversial and demonstrated that little progress had been made in building national capacity. The IEC required a significant amount of international support to implement the election, the quality of the election was arguably inferior to that of 2004, and costs were not reduced. The 2010 election was a much-improved electoral event, and did manage to save costs as compared to 2009. So far, the 2014 presidential and provincial council election seem to be progressing well. However, the lack of an accurate voter registry indexed by voting station remains a serious concern, since it would help mitigate the potential for multiple voting.

■ In the critical area of subnational governance, policy and legislative support was provided to the drafting of the country's **Subnational Governance Policy** and related legislation, and capacity-building support was extended to provincial and district governor offices and municipalities, notably in the area of revenue collection.

■ In the area of gender, women's participation in national and local elections and their presence in the national parliament and in provincial councils, when they could not even leave their houses before 2001, send **a powerful message about political equality**. Results of UNDP gender-dedicated programmes include contributions to gender-responsive budgeting, an increased capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to interact with line ministries and monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan, support to a few provincial Department of Women's Affairs offices, and engagement with religious leaders on the issue of the rights of women. However, strong cultural sensitivities proved

significant constraints, leading in some cases to personal threats to project staff.

There are also areas that yielded limited results so far:

- A few interesting initiatives with line ministries and the support to the independent Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee notwithstanding, **anti-corruption efforts** supported by UNDP have so far suffered from insufficient political commitment, even as progress against corruption has been listed both at the London and Kabul conferences as a key condition to further international assistance.

- Results in the **justice sector** have also fallen short of expectations. In spite of the new legislation introduced and some modest physical and individual capacity created, the Afghan judiciary remains one of the least trusted among government institutions. Traditional justice systems, analysed in a UNDP National Human Development Report in 2007, remain dominant but unattended by UNDP programmes.

- Effectiveness in the **demobilization** process is seriously in question. Years of demobilization and disarmament efforts have led to mediocre results, due to the lack of an overarching peace agreement and overly complex, unpractical programme design where a plethora of institutions and ministries are involved in the reintegration process. Similarly, anti-narcotics efforts have had little positive impact, as poppy production is reaching record cultivation levels.

- **Natural resources and disaster risk management** received some 0.1 percent of the resources channelled through UNDP in Afghanistan during the period under review. These resources were used to strengthen the capacities of the National Environment Protection Agency and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

UNDP's goals during the 2010-2014 CPD would have been ambitious in normal circumstances, and it was inevitable that the programme would fall short in a number of aspects, given the difficult security conditions and complex political situation in the years following the design of the CPD.

In terms of capacity development, UNDP has mainly supported the central and executive branch of government. Paradoxically, scarce support went to the weakest pillars of the Afghan state: local governments (e.g. municipalities), the legislature and the judiciary.

Among the outcome-level objectives stated in the CPAP, there has been some progress towards the realization of outcomes 1 to 5. However, UNDP achieved very little against outcome 6: "increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships." The main project listed under this outcome is the NABDP, which has had good results in delivering transport, irrigation and social infrastructure, but had stopped working on private enterprise development at the beginning of the review period. Of all the programmes reviewed, only the Rural Enterprise Development project implemented in Kandahar and the Gender Equality Project have provided some modest support to agro-industry and cottage industry development. As the next chapter argues, this lack of attention to poverty alleviation and economic development should be corrected.

Chapter 5

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The review of whether UNDP is best positioned to contribute to Afghanistan's stabilization and development entailed an analysis of UNDP's niche within the development and policy space in Afghanistan, the degree to which its programmes respond to the country's development challenges, the balance between upstream (policy-level) and downstream (project-level) initiatives and between interventions at the central level (capital) and subnational level, and a review of how its strengths, comparative advantages and human development philosophy were applied. UNDP's ability to partner and coordinate with a wide range of national and international stakeholders was also reviewed, as well as its capacity to address emerging issues and primarily the current security, political and economic transitions.

5.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Over the evaluated period, UNDP's programmes have clearly focused on a small number of national priorities articulated in the ANDS. This document, which UNDP itself help draft during the previous programming period, served for the period in review as a blueprint, approved by both the Government and the international community, for the development of a democratic and stable Afghanistan. The ANDS was a turning point in that it allowed the Government to assert its leadership over a development agenda hitherto dominated by NATO and donors. It has since then been further delineated in the NPPs, and a degree of priority in terms of reforms and aid established by the TMAF. The targets set by the London and Kabul Communiqués and reaffirmed in the TMAF are that 80 percent of aid should 'align' with the NPPs and that at least 50 percent of development assistance be channelled through the national budget of the Afghan Government (on-budget support).

Though UNDP was not much involved in the development of the NPPs and its involvement in the TMAF was limited, the degree to which its programmes align with both the TMAF and NPPs can be objectively assessed as very good. UNDP concentrates most of its assistance on four clusters: agriculture and rural development (NABDP); human resources development (with NIBP and GEP); governance (with MBAW, ACT, ASGP, JHRA, human rights programmes); and security (the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme is itself an NPP). The only significant UNDP project not aligned with any NPP appears to be ELECT, and its absence in the long lists of priorities contained in each NPP indicates that greater UNDP involvement in the NPP design process could have been useful, as it would have ensured that such a vital programme be mentioned.

If one excludes LOTFA from the analysis, 75 percent of resources are aligned with some NPP or another. When the 'Justice for All' NPP is endorsed, the percentage of UNDP programmes aligned with the NPPs will increase further. UNDP exceeds the criteria of 50 percent on-budget assistance, given that over 90 percent of the resources committed by LOTFA, which accounts for 75 percent of the UNDP country programme, have been applied to the MOF for disbursement in the form of police salaries and allowances.[138]

---

138   UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) Phase V', by Atos Consulting, April 2012.

Beyond such a technocratic analysis, UNDP and the UN in general have displayed in Afghanistan a genuine commitment towards national ownership and leadership. UNDP programmes have in their overwhelming majority reflected this commitment, and have associated national institutions as partners and in various implementation roles, whether individual projects happen to be under direct implementation by the Country Office or under national implementation. The largest non-LOTFA project, NABDP, is under national implementation by the MRRD, and results from field studies indicate that it is perceived as governmental at the district and village levels, and thus contributes positively to the public perception of the Government.

A FOCUS ON SERVICE DELIVERY

This commitment to national ownership is not always recognized, and tends to be blurred by an excessive focus on service delivery. In the context of Afghanistan, where development programming has been dominated by political and security players and concerns, UNDP has during the evaluated period largely focused on channelling funds, on recruitment and payment of personnel, and on delivery of materials and services sought by donors, sometimes at the expense of working towards national development priorities or the development outcomes outlined in UNDP's own programmatic documents. The situation in the country, in particular the high-profile role of ISAF countries and the presence of UNAMA, militate against a more prominent role, but UNDP could have played a stronger policy setting role—as befitting its increasing financial clout.

Over the period under review, UNDP has channelled approximately 10 percent of all ODA to Afghanistan, evidently benefiting from an environment characterized by abundant aid resources coupled with a dearth of reliable delivery mechanisms. As a result, UNDP has been criticized for substituting for government capacity and competing with the government for donor resources. This pertains, of course, to the debate about who should manage aid flows.

The vast sums of money poured into Afghanistan, especially for security but also development, have exacerbated the issue of corruption within both government structures and international actors. Major irregularities have been uncovered in a number of UN agencies and international development actors, including UNDP with the LOTFA procurement fraud. The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction regularly reports on massive waste and 'unaccounted expenditures' in both US military and civilian programmes.

Nonetheless, UN agencies are still perceived as providing a relatively safe channel for donors' resources. One could argue that UNDP has been all too happy to accept this service delivery role, and should have resisted it in some cases when the needs were not strong enough to merit an intervention, or when the risks were too high. Some of these delivery mechanisms, such as LOTFA, have also proven less reliable than they appeared. But in most cases, UNDP did try to use its strategic position and modicum of influence to defend national priorities, develop national capacities and progressively transfer responsibilities to national institutions. ELECT is a good example of this transition. In contrast to the 2009 election when UNDP ELECT assumed a strong and visible leadership role, the project kept a low profile and played a technical and operational support role to Afghan electoral authorities in 2010. Afghan bodies—primarily the Independent Electoral Commission and Electoral Complaints Commission—were responsible and accountable for the entire electoral process. Moreover, they were widely perceived and publicly acknowledged to have fulfilled this role. Increased Afghan leadership also helped reduce the costs associated with elections.[139]

---

139   2010 Progress Report, Op. cit., p. 19.

The highest cost stemming from this strong service orientation of UNDP Afghanistan during the evaluated period has been to lower the profile and capacity of the organization to provide high-level strategic advice to the Government and donors. In spite of a few excellent contributions, such as the three National Human Development Reports, UNDP is perceived in Kabul as a service provider, not as an intellectual resource. Its capacity to influence national policy and programmatic choices has weakened as compared to the previous programming period.

BEYOND KABUL – WORKING IN RURAL AFGHANISTAN

Another issue that surfaced in this ADR[140] and took centre stage in some programmes relates to geography. In NABDP, remote locations have received a fraction of what more accessible districts have obtained from the programme, and a few insecure provinces have received much more funding from the programme than the large number of more secure provinces. In ASGP, a project meant to support decentralization, most of the capacity-building and financial resources have been spent in Kabul. These examples illustrate a broader phenomenon: in a country where poor security and difficult terrain combine to hamper access to most valleys and villages, the massive international development assistance—including the one channelled through UNDP—has tended to remain in the capital city, with limited 'trickle down' to the provincial, district and village levels.

The issue is important because the war in Afghanistan is not and never was simply between invaders and Afghans. Since the 1920s, it has also been a conflict between Afghans: between the populations in the cities supporting modernization, even forced modernization, and seeking to extend the writ of Kabul over the countryside, and those in the countryside violently opposed to social change and Kabul's perceived interference in their traditional societies. The vehicle for these modernization efforts have changed—from constitutional monarchy to the republic of Daoud Khan, then to Soviet-backed socialism, and now with Western-supported liberalism and democracy—but the essence of the conflict has remained the same.[141]

In all these modernization attempts, the process has inevitably involved the imposition onto rural Afghan societies of many foreign norms and ideas. However, the present attempt included some consideration for Afghan indigenous governance systems, such as *shuras*, which remain a bedrock of Afghan society. In their modernized shape (formally elected, engendered), 'Community Development Councils' and 'District Development Assemblies' provide the social capital necessary for the National Solidarity Program or NABDP to work. Reconciling the central government in Kabul with such traditional local governance and conflict resolution systems could hold one of the keys to future political stability and security.[142]

Likewise in the justice sector, the 2007 National Human Development Report recommended increased consideration of the traditional justice systems, which adjudicates an estimated 80 percent of all cases, rather than working almost exclusively to strengthen the official judiciary. This recommendation was unfortunately never implemented.

With the exception of the small Helmand Agricultural and Rural Development Programme and Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar projects, private sector development constitutes another significant gap in UNDP programmes. UNDP has all but disengaged itself from this area, following a pattern in donor funding that

---

140   The issue was noted in the previous ADR.

141   Parenti, C., 'Ideology and Electricity: The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan', in The Nation, 7 May 2012.

142   For a thorough analysis of this issue, see Ponzio, R., 'Transforming Political Authority: UN Democratic Peacebuilding in Afghanistan', in Global Governance 13, 2007, pages 255-275.

appears as widespread as it is ill-conceived. While the banking sector still needs reinforcing after the Kabul Bank bankruptcy, and previous microcredit schemes have generally not been successful in the country, joblessness levels remain very high. Close to half a million young people enter the job market each year, and even if most of them are absorbed by the agricultural sector, some may radicalize out of frustration with a lack of adequate economic opportunities. Finding creative ways to invest in the private sector appears more warranted than ever.

5.2 USE OF COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

ALIGNMENT WITH UNDP'S MANDATE

UNDP has been part and parcel of the state-building effort: facilitating elections, building the capacity of the new democratic institutions, underwriting the deployment of national justice and police systems, supporting provincial and district governor offices, and even contributing to increased service delivery at the district level.

At times, this has involved playing roles peripheral to UNDP's mandate, such as in the LOTFA's salary payment component. If LOTFA is considered as a police enhancement programme, then it falls quite readily within the UNDP remit to assist conflict-affected countries to enhance basic government services and restore the rule of law. The original rationale—security is a necessary precondition for development—remains sound. However, UNDP's mandate and comparative advantage are less clear when it comes to managing the payroll.

With this exception, the objectives set in the CPD and CPAP that were described in Chapter 3 are appropriately in areas of UNDP's competence, especially in the Afghanistan situation, where the political neutrality of the organization could effectively be brought to bear.

NEUTRALITY

In the current situation, UNDP has maintained a strong relationship with the Government of Afghanistan while being under pressure from major donors to support programmes that primarily reflect their interests. UNDP has been able to leverage its neutrality, relative to the different donors and the legitimate political forces in the country, to act as a non-politicized conduit from donors to government, e.g. in the case of ELECT.

However, it would be impossible to present UNDP as neutral in relation to the broader Afghan conflict. As explained above, UNDP has played a significant and visible role in rebuilding the current Afghan state. UNDP is deeply involved with the Afghan National Police, which are perceived as the frontline of anti-insurgency efforts[143] and have been heavily targeted by insurgents, and with the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Programme (APRP), which seeks to encourage the demobilization of the Taliban. Even the series of projects supporting the Afghanistan Independent Electoral Commission, and earlier on taking direct responsibility for delivering the succession of elections held in the country over the last decade, has attracted hostility from those opposed to the democratization process. The bombing of the Bakhtar guesthouse in 2008 targeted an ELECT team residing there.

UNDP is fully engaged to support the Government and cannot therefore be conceived as neutral *vis-à-vis* the parties to the conflict. Nor would political neutrality be desirable. It would negate the very mandate and principles of a multilateral organization whose legitimacy stems from the UN charter, and which is mandated to advance democratic governance and gender equality. It would also bring no benefit whatsoever, given that the insurgents are unlikely to distinguish between the UN organizations

---

143   Although efforts are now underway to introduce 'community policing', i.e. policing that would stress more classic policing roles such as public protection and rule of law, rather than counter-insurgency roles.

collaborating closely with the Government and those—like UNICEF, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or the World Health Organization—trying to maintain an image of impartiality.

That said, some projects involve greater security and/or reputational risks than others, and may appropriately be turned down by UNDP. The APRP is an apt example. Considered a high priority by the Government and donors, it suffers from poor design and from the lack of a comprehensive national reconciliation process that would make large-scale demobilization a feasible proposition. Nevertheless, UNDP agreed to implement it. In doing so, it accepted an overly politicized and poorly conceived endeavour, shouldered too large a liability, failed to articulate clear expectations, and must now live with the resulting poor delivery and low effectiveness of the programme.

Another example is the *e-tashkera*, a project to issue biometric identity cards to all Afghan voters. The idea is supported by the Ministry of Interior and pushed by some donors who want to integrate it in UNDP's electoral support programme. However, the principle of an electronic identity card has not been submitted to the Parliament yet; the project would take years to implement and thus would not impact on the upcoming elections; and the sophisticated technologies involved would be difficult to maintain once external assistance stops. UNDP has rightly opted to not involve itself in this project, which does not correspond to the needs and abilities of the country, but the pressure from some donors has been strong.

The UN system, including UNDP, has paid particular attention to supporting women's participation in society. UNDP support has been extended to the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission and to the Ministry of Women Affairs and its offices at provincial level via the GEP project. A number of sectoral strategies

and policy documents have been 'engendered', and the district assemblies planning for NABDP assistance have been asked to include female members. The Government has also been eager to show greater gender equality; for example, in the Parliament though a system of quotas, among governors with the nomination of Ms. Habiba Sarabi in Bamyan, or through the hiring of many female police officers.

Despite these examples and the heavy international backing of gender issues (including as part of the TMAF framework), Afghan women remain unconvinced that the limited gains achieved are secure, even without the influence of the Taliban. As a woman parliamentarian put it, "There is no political commitment for women's rights. There is no verbal or actual support." According to this view, the progress made so far would be superficial and symbolic. This is not surprising in such a deeply traditional society. Several generations will likely pass before deeper changes can begin to take root. The most pressing issue, violence against women, continues unabated and is frequently condoned by the police and judiciary, at least in rural areas.

In fact, some of the progress listed above has been met with push-back:

- LOTFA female police recruits are not always welcome in their precinct, and some have allegedly been raped.

- A training of religious leaders by the GEP project on the right of women in Islam was followed by death threats towards project staff.

Another issue is that formal participation in forums or events does not necessarily translate into increased substantive female participation in decision-making. From the result of the NABDP Beneficiary Assessment, it appears that DDAs often meet without their female membership. Sometimes women meet separately and report to the DDA chairman. Women members are typically allowed to plan for one 'women's project' (e.g. a beekeeping or sewing project), while more

significant infrastructure projects are handled by the male members of the DDA. Yet NABDP's infrastructure projects affect entire communities, including women. Similarly, female Members of Parliament report feeling somewhat marginalized in the legislature.

Nevertheless, symbols of progress are important, and the most potent one on gender came from the elections: images of women happily voting in the presidential or parliamentary elections have been broadcasted extensively, sending a powerful message about political equality. Similarly, the fact that women are now represented in the national parliament and in provincial councils, when they could not even leave their houses before 2001, represents an important signal that society is changing. The report from the outcome 6 evaluation points to "*a gradual shift in attitude of communities and male-dominated power structures in provinces and districts towards women's participation in economic activities and local governance.*"[144]

Within the UNDP portfolio of programmes, GEP could have played an important coordination and integration role, building on other UNDP-supported projects and institutions, but this potential has not been realized. Most collaborations between UNDP programmes on gender and women's issues have been opportunistic and personality-led (i.e. based upon interactions between the senior management of respective UNDP projects). This is gradually being rectified as GEP has assisted the Ministry of Women's Affairs in playing a greater role in reviewing several NPPs for gender mainstreaming content and consistency.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development of governments and civil society is an intrinsic part of any development strategy, and particularly crucial in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan,

where the ultimate goal for UNDP and its development partners is to build a democratic state from the foundations up. The UNDP Afghanistan country programme 2010-2013 treats capacity development as a key cross-cutting principle for implementing all of its programmatic areas.[145]

The portfolio required a combination of capacity development inputs at the individual, institutional, and policy levels. These different levels emphasise that many factors influence an institution's capacity to carry out its mandate, over and beyond individual staff performance: enabling policies, organizational culture and behaviour, core values, business processes and structure, and working environment.

For instance, the UNDP project ELECT provided technical assistance to the IEC, but also helped draft the electoral laws that were under review by the Parliament at the time of evaluation, i.e. a law defining the voting and voter registration system (policy level), and another defining the mandate, composition and level of independence of the IEC and the Electoral Complaint Commission (institutional level). In another example, the support UNDP provided to the Ministry of Finance was multi-pronged as well, with support to the design and implementation of budget planning and management procedures, policy analysis, support to the NPP process, and help in preparing for the Tokyo conference, in addition to the training of Ministry of Finance personnel. Similarly, the NIBP provides international and national advisors and 'coaches' to the Afghan Government at the national and subnational levels, but also provides limited support the development of policies and strategies, such as the Public Administration Reform (PAR).

The Government has been the recipient of the majority of UNDP capacity development interventions, initially in the form of constructing

---

144   UNDP, 'Evaluation of CPD Outcome 6: Diversified Livelihoods, Private Sector Development and Public-Private Partnership', by A. Bhattacharjee, D. Posgate and H. Andersen, November 2013.

145   UNDP, 'UNDP Country Programme document for Afghanistan (2010-2013), September 2009.

buildings, supplying vehicles and office furnishing, graduating to the topping-up of salaries of entire ministry departments, in some cases, and progressing onto various courses, in tandem with short trainings and study tours for key individuals.

There was a progressive and welcome diversification during the period under review from an almost exclusive focus on central institutions in Kabul, towards subnational governance bodies, mainly through NABDP and ASGP. This focus on the subnational level was to be a defining characteristic of the present country programme, according to the CPD 2010-2014.

The international community continues to fund large numbers of national and international technical assistance personnel, at very high and unsustainable cost, to strengthen capacity in various governmental units. Sometimes these technical assistance personnel work without national counterparts on *Tashkeel* (i.e. regular civil servants) whose capacity it is supposed to build. Such non-*Tashkeel* personnel, paid a minimum of three times their counterparts on *Tashkeel* and many very substantially more, now number approximately 7,000. Some 2,200 of them would be financed by UNDP, mainly through Letters of Agreement. UNDP has therefore been one of the main actors in the creation of this second civil service.

The recognized competence of staff from the Ministry of Finance serves to illustrate this capacity dilemma, even if this issue is not specific to MBAW or the Ministry of Finance. Virtually all of the senior staff in the Ministry are nationals employed under special arrangements with donors, notably UNDP (134 posts in the Budget Office alone, which remains completely dependent on UNDP-financed staff). There are, clearly, considerable risks of 'brain drain' from the existing system if capacity-building efforts are not carefully dimensioned and sequenced with national fiscal capacities. Recently, UNDP in conjunction with the other major donors involved in such schemes has assisted the government to rationalise the salary scales relating to

such appointments, with a view to seek convergence with those on *Tashkeel*.

As often the case, there was a lack of in-depth capacity assessments to ensure that each capacity development response would be targeted at pertinent capacity gaps. Topics prioritized for training were skewed towards international community needs, and what Afghans want in order to improve their employability (good English, computer skills, planning and financial reporting skills) rather than what the Afghan civil service requires to deliver its mandate, such as greater proficiency in *national* languages, increased outreach and improved service delivery. Training in English language and computer literacy may in fact reinforce the flight of trained personnel from the civil service (de-capacitation or 'capacity stripping').

In conclusion, UNDP has so far approached capacity development in a disjointed manner, attempting to stop-gap institutional capacity by funding a 'second civil service' in a non-sustainable manner rather than supporting the resolution of structural issues faced by the civil service. It is high time to rationalize this area of support, e.g. through closer collaboration with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and the Public Administration Reform (PAR), which provides the only holistic process of review and reform of the public sector.

5.3 COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Since 2010, UNDP in Afghanistan has been able to leverage strong partnerships with the Government at the central and subnational levels, as well as with donors to develop its programmes and improve performance. Its relations with UN sister agencies, the World Bank, civil society and the private sector have tended to be weaker. These partnership patterns are consistent with the image of a UNDP chiefly concerned with service delivery at the expense of its high-level policy dialogue on politically sensitive themes.

Reorienting the programme towards more substantive support is therefore likely to require better coordination within the UN Country Team and broader partnerships, in particular reaching out to non-state actors.

RELATIONS WITH UNAMA

UNAMA is a political mission managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is funded as part of the general United Nations Secretariat budget, and as such, it has been hard hit by Member States concerned with cutting the overall Secretariat budget. Unlike most political missions, which tend to be of limited size and focused on the 'good offices' function, UNAMA's Security Council mandate includes a number of functions in common with peacekeeping missions, including civil affairs, human rights, rule of law and aid coordination.

Thus UNAMA has the responsibility both to coordinate with ISAF and to coordinate humanitarian and development aid.[146] This point is of particular interest to UNDP, which plays a significant aid coordination role in conflict and disaster situations, at least where there is no political or peacekeeping mission mandated by Security Council. As in other transition situations, UNDP will be expected to pick up some of the coordination responsibilities from UNAMA as the political mission winds down.

Many mutual benefits could potentially accrue to UNAMA and UNDP from their collaboration, especially during this transition period, including in security, logistics and information sharing. UNAMA has a political mandate and access to the Security Council, while UNDP, with its significant resources, is working in areas that are vital for stabilization and peace. In practice, however, a surprisingly low level of operational collaboration has taken place between the two largest UN bodies in Afghanistan.

The personal relationship between the senior managers of UNAMA and UNDP are excellent, and the entities collaborate effectively in a small number of areas, notably elections. The political Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General is coordinating and managing political arrangements, while the UNDP ELECT project serves as the technical arm of the UN system in supporting and building the capacity of the IEC. In a few provinces, such as Herat and Ghor, UNAMA and UNDP have collaborated in the compilation of provincial development plans.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to characterize the arrangement as a well-integrated mission. UNAMA operational collaboration with other UN agencies is limited.[147] There are opportunities for synergies between UNAMA and UNDP that have not been systematically pursued. These include the potential for co-location of offices in provinces—an issue that has marred relations between UNDP and UNAMA for some time. UNAMA is reluctant to accept other UN agencies in its large (and largely empty) regional compounds.[148] Closer collaboration with UNAMA staff dealing with civil affairs (particularly provincial aid coordination efforts) and rule of law may also be warranted. The strength of the mission lies in its political role and countrywide deployment of staff, yet there is little evidence of the work of the Political Affairs or other relevant staff linking their information gathering and analysis with the extensive governance programmes operated by UNDP.

---

146 This has caused some tension with UN agencies, funds and programmes concerned with humanitarian assistance, which have tried to avoid being too closely linked with UNAMA's political mission in order to protect the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

147 According to some UN agency heads, the Comprehensive Mandate Review undertaken by the UN Secretariat in 2010/2011 was a missed opportunity to refocus UNAMA on its difficult political agenda and allow the UN Country Team greater space to coordinate its humanitarian and developmental agenda.

148 Despite having closed nine provincial offices this year following budget cuts, UNAMA retains 10 regional offices in Afghanistan, plus offices in Kabul, Islamabad and Teheran.

Further budget cuts to UNAMA, coupled with the Government of Afghanistan's insistence on 'normalization' and greater UN integration, are likely to result in further reductions in its subnational presence and greater focus on its political mandate, including human rights. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General has accordingly established a Senior Policy Group involving his deputies and the representatives of the major agencies, including UNDP, to propose a future division of functions. However, earlier efforts to compile an Integrated Strategic Framework that might have more clearly defined the common objectives of UNAMA and the UNCT were set aside and now await the new UNDAF.

THE UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM

The UNCT brings together some 26 agencies (including UNAMA) of varying strength and outlook, coordinated through a network of working groups and subgroups against the notional background of the UNDAF adopted in 2009.

Following the extension of the UNDAF to 2014, work has commenced this year on a new CCA, with a view to agreeing on a new UNDAF by year's end. All UN organizations, including UNDP, are expected to orient their future programming within the UNDAF, commencing in 2015.

UNDP's interaction with other agencies and its role in the UNCT were limited at the beginning of the cycle. The UNDP Country Office senior management was inward-looking, focused on resource mobilization for its own programmes, and the ways and means to strengthen the delivery of rapidly increasing resources. As a consequence, the leadership role that UNDP traditionally plays in UNCTs, including in developing key policy positions, was lacking. For example, government capacity-building only started to be the subject of a coordinated approach (focused on developing a salary scale for non-*Tashkeel* staff) following the arrival of the new UNDP management team.

Lacking strong leadership from UNDP, agencies found themselves also marginalized by UNAMA and excluded from the main coordination mechanisms managed by the mission. To justify such an approach to aid coordination, agency critics within UNAMA have pointed to the short-term perspective adopted by most UN agencies, the weakness of their intellectual leadership, and their overriding concern for obtaining resources for their individual programmes.

In the Afghan context, being excluded from some aid coordination mechanisms does not seem to affect UN agencies' capacity to raise funds. The larger UN agencies have managed to mobilize significant resources through their bilateral links with donors, and are expected to receive increased funding during the transition as PRTs close down and donors search for alternative delivery mechanisms for their pledged assistance.

The lack of integrating mechanisms within the UNCT is more of a concern, and has meant that individual agencies develop their own programmes on a bilateral basis with individual ministries, sometimes without knowledge of the efforts of other UN agencies with the same ministry. This has not been helped by a Resident Coordinator Office funded by the UNAMA budget but perceived as weak in substantive terms by a number of the agency heads.

To promote dialogue, the UNCT has been meeting with the Government on a biannual basis under the joint chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Minister for Foreign Affairs. Improvement in sectoral coordination was a major aim of the high-level meeting between the Government and UN agencies in February 2013.

As early as July 2010, President Karzai requested the UN to adopt a 'One UN' approach at the Kabul Conference. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accepted this request, yet so far links between agency programmes have remained minimal, including in areas where there should be a common interest, such as the status of women.

A three-year UN Coherence Plan (2012–2014) was agreed upon. The plan focuses on three areas: 1) developing integrated annual work plans with an initial geographic focus on Kabul, combined with pilot projects at the regional level and a programme focus on selected UNDAF outcome areas for 2013; 2) communications and advocacy; and 3) developments and implementation of a two-year business operations plan to guide coherence in core areas, e.g. common premises, logistics and procurement. As of 2013, a joint Government of Afghanistan/UN task force chaired by the DSRSG/RC/HC and the Deputy Foreign Minister has been established to further the 'One UN Approach'.

Three common programmes have been financed by the Millennium Development Goals Fund, two of which include UNDP as a partner:

- *Joint Access to Justice at the District Level project* ($6.5 million, with UNDP, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Women and UNICEF): The Joint Access to Justice at the District Level project, also called the Peace Through Justice programme, aimed at strengthening both supply and demand for access to justice across Afghanistan's more than 350 districts, through public-awareness raising, training of local justice actors, and rehabilitation of tribunals and penitentiaries. The UNDP component formed part of the JHRA project.

- *Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environmental Management into the ANDS project* (SAISEM) ($5 million, with UNDP, FAO and the United Nations Evaluation Group): SAISEM aims to assist Afghanistan in integrating environmental management by formulating appropriate policy frameworks, building the capacity of related institutions, and piloting community-based natural resources management interventions. This project is analysed in section 4.5 of the present report.

- *Feeding the Children of Afghanistan Together* ($5 million, with FAO, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization): Feeding the Children of Afghanistan Together is helping to establish policy frameworks, legislation, national capacity, coordination mechanisms and information management, and promotes dietary diversification at household level.

In terms of financial size, these projects represent less than 0.1 percent of the entire UNDP portfolio over the evaluated period. Their results are discussed in Chapter 4.

Given the regular recurrence of natural disasters in Afghanistan, disaster risk reduction would appear to be a useful link between the preoccupations of the humanitarian agencies and development actors. UNDP has in the past been involved in capacity-building with the Afghanistan disaster management authority, but sustained efforts to build the necessary preparedness and resilience are still required.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN

Looking back over the last four years, it appears that the senior management of the Country Office established and maintained close relations with a number of senior governmental officials and politicians. These relations permitted UNDP considerable and often privileged access. The relations with certain government officials were so close that they ran the risk of diverting programmes from more generalized development objectives to ensuring that the particular preoccupations and priorities of selected government counterparts were met.

Some senior Afghan government interlocutors, including those with extensive experience dealing with UNDP, were forthcoming with their criticism of both the policy and the programmes that were being pursued up to 12 months ago. UNDP's operational modalities were a particular point of contention. The new Country Office management has assuaged some of these concerns. A review of the Letters of Agreement modality as applied in Afghanistan is being

undertaken with other donors, and much effort is being invested in redressing the situation at LOTFA.

At the macro level, key government counterparts emphasized the importance of UNDP critically reviewing its programmes and aligning them more closely with government priorities, particularly the 22 NPPs. They were also critical of UNDP procedures, notably the time taken for recruitment of staff and procurement of materials and equipment. These concerns echoed many other government representatives, especially in the provinces, who noted delays in salary payments, unresponsive project managers and programme officers in Kabul, or appointment of unqualified National Technical Advisors by ASGP.

On the other hand, and perhaps unsurprisingly, ministries and offices that received UNDP assistance expressed appreciation. This included a broad range of officials from the President's office, Parliament, IEC, provincial governors, IDLG, the Ministry of Finance, MRRD and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Institutions that UNDP had recently stopped supporting (Parliament, the High Office of Oversight, IARCSC) keenly advocated for renewed support.

Indeed, UNDP is supporting programmes at the heart of government; consequently, its potential to influence policy options was and remains significant. However, there is little evidence that such options were pursued.

In a similar vein, UNDP has been working in Afghanistan for more than 50 years. Indeed for most of that time the *Dari* word for "United Nations" (*Melal-e-Motahed*) was synonymous with "UNDP." As a consequence, the organization is widely known and for the most part appreciated across the country. Many senior Afghans—including influential ministers and deputy ministers, provincial governors, parliamentarians and other officials in a wide range of ministries and provinces—have collaborated with or even worked for UNDP in previous

years. This represents a major yet invisible asset for the organization, and one that has yet to be brought to bear.

UNDP AND DONORS

The UNDP Afghanistan programme depends heavily on earmarked contributions by donors. With only 2 percent of expenditures coming from core resources, it is imperative that the Country Office maintains superior relations with its development partners. However, this does not mean that UNDP should be used by donors as a mere conduit for assistance, as appears to have been the case during the review period. If clear development objectives are established and agreed upon, UNDP should be able to bring to bear its worldwide access to expertise in both policy and personnel, notwithstanding the origin of the resources.

While donors continue to rely on UNDP for a wide array of programmes, the uneasiness about UNDP's performance expressed by some donor representatives goes well beyond the recent LOTFA case. Concern has been expressed by key donors about the capacity of UNDP to report on the impact of the millions of dollars spent through different programmes. In particular, UNDP has invested heavily in support to subnational governance, capacity-building and rural development through the ASGP and NABDP, and has been unable to document the impact of this work on the lives of Afghans as convincingly as required. The issue has harmed relationships with key donors during the evaluated period, particularly when donors noticed a dissonance between the information officially communicated to them and that obtained from independent sources.

In 2011, requests for more genuine, transparent information about results and challenges led the Country Office management to initiate monthly and even weekly briefing meetings with donors. These meetings were generally appreciated by donors, but led to project staff having to prepare weekly progress reports and thus created

unwarranted disruption for programme managers. The weekly meetings have since been appropriately discontinued, with only the monthly meetings continuing.

It should be noted that the overwhelming bulk of UNDP programming in Afghanistan is in areas that are complex and often difficult to quantify outcomes. Donors do recognize this.

When asked to identify achievements related to UNDP's efforts in recent years, donors tend to cite the largest programmes with which UNDP is associated: LOTFA, ELECT and APRP. LOTFA remains indispensable and is generally highly valued by donors. ELECT, although conceived primarily as capacity-building support for the IEC, is at the heart of donors' concerns regarding the transition. Notwithstanding the inevitable criticisms in the context of a high-stakes transition, donors fully recognize the importance of UNDP's role in this process. APRP, despite its modest results so far, is strongly supported by key ISAF countries, as it aims to facilitate demobilizations from Taliban ranks.

The Afghanistan development scene features a range of 'new donors', including China, India, Russia and the United Arab Emirates. UNDP's initiation of a programme of secondment of civil servants (NIBP) mainly from India is an innovation that has been welcomed and is being expanded to other countries.

RELATIONS WITH ISAF

UNDP interaction with the international military coalition has been largely indirect, linked primarily to issues of logistical support and security for the past and future elections. More substantive collaboration is limited to the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP). NATO has also had a police training mission that collaborates with LOTFA.

The future of the PRTs and their programmes beyond 2014 represents another issue of interest for ISAF-contributing nations. PRTs have supported and funded a wide range of programmes throughout the country and have been useful in creating infrastructure – although at high cost and contributing significantly to aid dependency and the spread of corruption.

Numerous donor countries withdrawing their troops are now looking to alternatives, and in particular to the UN system to continue programmes previously operated by PRTs. UNDP is, for instance, negotiating to take over several activities financed by the United Kingdom in Helmand. The attraction of the resources available is considerable.[149] However, the UN country team is aware that with these resources will come much liability. Often little thought was given to staffing or sustainability, and in a number of areas relatively new schools and hospitals now need to be closed. A sense of entitlement may also have developed around PRTs, with certain commanders used to being at the receiving end of the assistance. The UN Country Team has adopted a policy position, in essence agreeing that only those programs prioritized by the Afghan Government and part of national programmes will be considered.

UNDP AND CIVIL SOCIETY

UNDP involvement with civil society has been particularly weak, even in comparison with the World Bank, whose National Solidarity Program is largely implemented by NGOs. The Afghan government itself works with numerous NGOs, especially the Ministry of Health, whose service delivery is largely subcontracted to civil society organizations. Yet UNDP's assistance is targeted at, and implemented almost exclusively by, governmental institutions.

This imbalance deserves to be corrected. At this time in its history, the nation requires strong

---

149   In Helmand, the Provincial Reconstruction Team employed over 100 expatriate civilians and disbursed over $100 million a year.

public pressure and active civil society organizations to exert lobbying for improving education and health, accountable government, the battle against corruption and in particular support for the role of women. It also requires a competent and free media. Another consideration is logistical: in an environment where security conditions are worsening, NGOs will probably retain a better capacity than UN organizations to move around the country to either implement local projects or monitor them; building more structured relationship with the best NGOs would therefore appear in order.

5.4 EMERGING ISSUES – POSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE

Afghanistan is facing three major transitions. The most evident are the security transition, which sees the departure of practically all foreign forces before the end of 2014, and the political transition, which is expected to mark the end of President Karzai's term with the election of a successor in April 2014. But equally important is the economic transition. The Afghanistan economy remains especially aid dependent. Despite massive pledges by donors at the Chicago conference ($4.1 billion per annum for the security forces) and in Tokyo ($16 billion for the period 2012-2015), it is widely expected that donor funding will eventually decline, even if pipeline commitments will likely postpone the direct impact for several years.

The departure of 130,000 international troops will also significantly impact the Afghanistan economy. The closure of some 1,300 military bases including 28 PRTs and 49 Stabilization Teams, all of which employ an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Afghans, is likely to have a serious effect. The United States, for example, spent some $22 billion in 2011 for contracts in Afghanistan—a substantial sum even if a major proportion is spent externally. With the closure of military bases and PRTs, significant numbers

will be added to the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed, especially in the provinces.

Despite the ambitions of the ANDS for private sector-led development, foreign investment has dried up and domestic attention has been focused on trading. Significant hopes have been placed in the development of the extractive industries in Logar by China and Parwan by India, but these projects have stalled. With the notable exception of poppy, which benefits from high prices and a sophisticated financial support system from dealers to farmers, little attention and investment has been paid to the agricultural sector, which provides livelihood for some 70 percent of the population.

Even without such setbacks, World Bank analysis[150] prepared for the Tokyo conference (July 2012) estimated that, at the end of the Transformation Decade in 2024, the Government of Afghanistan would still be running a deficit of some 22 percent of GDP.

The international commitment for security funding is regarded by observers as relatively firm. On the other hand, the Tokyo commitments for development are subject to progress by the Afghan authorities on the TMAF. These relate to delivery of credible presidential and national assembly elections in 2014/15; tackling corruption; protecting human rights (in particular, the status of women); improving governance, including at the subnational level; and improving services to the most disadvantaged. All will be difficult to achieve in the current conditions, let alone amid the uncertainties of the next few years. Without troops in theatre, confronting a difficult international and domestic economic climate, and presented with at best mixed achievements, donor governments may reduce the delivery of their Tokyo commitments.

The most immediate and prominent of the Tokyo benchmarks is the delivery of 'credible' presidential elections in 2014. Defining what

---

150   Hogg, R., Nassif, C., Osorio, C.G. and Byrd, W., 'Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014', The World Bank, May 2012.

constitutes 'acceptable' or 'credible' elections in advance is proving difficult. Most observers, however, recognize that it must include reasonable participation in the eastern and southern provinces. These are the predominantly Pashtun areas of Afghanistan, which contain the bulk of the districts where the Taliban insurrection could try to disrupt the election process. Women's participation in these areas is generally low for cultural reasons. Memories of the 2009 and 2010 elections and of their widespread fraud are very much alive. Issues such as the independence of the IEC and of the Electoral Complaint Commission, voter registration, electoral laws and judicial review of disputes are controversial and influenced by the political situation. These issues are closely monitored by UNAMA in its political assistance role, and by the international community. As the international organization responsible for technical support to the process, UNDP is particularly well placed to serve as a scapegoat for donors and the Government alike in the event that there are shortcomings, however small its actual influence on the core political issues highlighted above.

There is also a fourth transition foreseen for the UN system. The Afghanistan Minister of Foreign Affairs has signalled in a letter to the UN Secretary-General[151] that the Government is seeking a new relationship with the UN, emphasising the importance of both political and development activities being "Afghan driven and Afghan led," and the UN system adopting a "more enabling and less delivery" approach. The Government is seeking "normalization" of UN operations in Afghanistan, and greater coherence between the different UN agencies funds and programmes, and more on-budget international support.

As donor support declines, some in the Government see the UN system as competitors for available funds. This is in particular the line adopted by Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, head of the Afghan Transition Coordination Commission and presidential candidate in the 2014 election.

With the expressed desire of the Afghanistan Government for 'normalization' of the UN presence in the country, the footprint and mandate of UNAMA are most likely to be reduced. UNDP can therefore expect demands to assume additional functions, as attention shifts to development goals if the evolution of the political and security situation and the availability of personnel and resources allow it. Current efforts to develop coherent policy approaches in the key areas of focus identified by the new UNDP Country Office management should be particularly helpful in this respect.

---

151   The 'Rassoul letter', named after Dr. Zalmai Rassoul, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, was sent on 1 March 2011 to provide the Government's vision of what the next UNAMA mandate should include.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapters reviewed programme achievements in detail and identified a set of common operational and strategic factors explaining, enhancing or constraining programme performance. The present chapter incorporates the most salient findings of the evaluation into overarching conclusions, and sets out a number of considerations and recommendations relevant to the formulation of the next Country Programme.

CONCLUSIONS

1. As UNDP approaches the multiple transitions ahead, it brings with it significant assets, including its long association with Afghanistan, widespread geographic coverage, access to key government institutions, and potential access to significant resources.

UNDP has a recognized comparative advantage in working with the Government in addressing a large array of governance issues at the national and subnational levels, from elections to the capacity of elected bodies, ministries and institutions. UNDP is considered highly relevant, even essential, in the rule of law sector, in support to elections, improvement in legal systems, and efforts to promote human rights and reduce corruption. Through its high-level access to policymakers, its long-term partnership with key government institutions (at the provincial and district levels), and its corporate expertise on institutional and human capacity development, UNDP is well placed to contribute to the implementation of a range of national priorities in a variety of domains, such as agriculture and rural development, human resources development, governance, disaster preparedness and security.

UNDP is viewed by the Government and donors as the UN organization best suited to carrying out general governance and rule of law work in crisis-affected countries. In particular, the way that UNDP operates, through a combination of national implementation and direct implementation, provides flexibility for donors and the Government to shape and manage programmes to a significant degree and adapt to changing circumstances. This operational flexibility has both advantages and drawbacks. It enables programmes to be tailored more toward local needs, but also provides some reputational risk for UNDP when programmes are poorly managed.

2. UNDP also has to overcome a number of disadvantages, including the perceptions that it is accustomed to the role of service provider, that it competes with the Government for donors' funds, that it lacks substance and independence, and has insufficient capacity to demonstrate tangible results.

The present management of the Country Office has expressed its determination to refocus UNDP's work on addressing key development needs. The major and excellent effort being devoted to developing policy frameworks and strategies linked to government priorities in UNDP areas of concentration is an important part of this process. The new management has radically improved the image of UNDP in the country, but the process of reforming the administrative, logistic and oversight mechanisms of the Country Office will clearly take more time. Another urgent task for the Country Office leadership is to remobilize the Country Office and project staff behind the new vision, and develop an *esprit de corps* between them, including staff positioned at the subnational level in the regional project offices.

3. UNDP's goals during the 2010-2014 CPD would have been ambitious in normal circumstances; it was inevitable that the programme would fall short in a number of aspects given the difficult security conditions and complex political situation in the years following the design of the CPD. Important achievements have been made and are described in this report. However, there remain strong imbalances in terms of programme areas, geographic distribution of assistance, and types of beneficiaries.

Among the CPAP outcomes, there has been some progress towards the realization of outcomes 1 to 5. However, UNDP achieved very little against outcome 6: "increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships." The main project listed under this outcome is the NABDP, which achieved good results in delivering transport, irrigation and social infrastructure, but stopped working on private enterprise development at the beginning of the review period. The geographic distribution of its assistance is also unequitable.

In terms of capacity development, UNDP has mainly supported the central and executive branch of government. Paradoxically, scarce support went to the weakest pillars of the Afghan state: local governments (e.g. municipalities), the legislature and the judiciary. This imbalance, which goes well beyond UNDP's assistance and applies to the entire state-building effort of the international community in Afghanistan, threatens the stability of the whole edifice. The legitimacy of the Afghan state would also benefit from greater recognition of the central role played by customary institutions in the everyday lives of Afghans in a wide array of domains, from dispute resolution to justice, water governance or, nowadays, development planning.

4. Very few of the key development results UNDP contributed to are sustainable beyond the end of international support. Overall, UNDP programmes have relied on the assumption that they are in Afghanistan over the long

term. The lack of clear and credible exit strategies is noted in this report in numerous areas.

There is no economic scenario, however optimistic in its assumptions, leading to a future where Afghanistan can afford its large police force. Similarly, one of the major weaknesses of UNDP's support to Afghanistan has been the failure to develop a reliable and accurate voter register indexed by voting centre, a failure which continues to weaken the Afghanistan democracy and makes elections more expensive than they should be.

More generally, UNDP and its programmes have so far approached capacity development in a disjointed and *ad hoc* manner, attempting to stop-gap institutional capacity through the funding of a 'second civil service' in a non-sustainable manner, rather than supporting the resolution of structural issues faced by the civil service. Since 2010, UNDP has extended weak and intermittent support to the Public Administration Reform (PAR) process under the aegis of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), which provides the only holistic process of review and reform of the public sector.

5. During the first years of the period under review, and before a new Country Director improved leadership and oversight from UNDP headquarters, efficiency suffered from the development in the UNDP Country Office of a questionable management culture.

Lengthy, non-transparent recruitments of staff and constant interference from the Country Office in the management of individual programmes lead to a concentration of supervision and implementation roles within the Country Office; a growing reporting burden placed on programmes; efforts to 'control the message' rather than communicate achievements and set-backs transparently; and flexible support extended to key officials through a liberal use of Letters of Agreement. The efficiency and delivery of key programmes was clearly affected and a few partnerships and programmes cut short (SEAL, ASGP).

During the period 2008–2010, what became the largest UNDP country programme ever did not receive significantly more attention from headquarters than much smaller programmes implemented in other countries. It was only after the inclusion of Afghanistan under the purview of the Executive Team for Protracted Crises and Complex Emergencies (March 2011) that an internal strategic review was launched (October 2011), leading to a series of further missions and ultimately a change in Country Director (April 2012). Since his appointment, the new Country Director has attempted to restore the normal functioning of a Country Office and good working relations with Government and donors, radically improving the image of UNDP in country in a matter of a few months. UNDP headquarters have remobilized around Afghanistan, and much substantive support and oversight are being provided by UNDP headquarters.

6. Efficiency needs to be considered in the context of a country in the midst of perpetual conflict over the last 30 years. Running costs are exceptionally high and poor security has strong effects on timelines—stronger than generally recognized.

Offices must be made secure, travel is highly restricted, living arrangements for international staff are limited and expensive, and the pressures of working under these conditions require frequent paid rest and recuperation leave. UNDP's poor efficiency in Afghanistan is therefore to be situated within the very specific national context, and is consistent with the widely accepted view that international efforts to develop and rehabilitate Afghanistan have had disappointing results in relation to the funds invested.

UNDP uses a wide number of local staff, which is vital for conducting business, especially in areas where foreigners may present a high-value target for groups opposed to the current government. Ensuring that locally hired staff are sufficiently skilled, protected, paid and monitored for performance is a continuing challenge. High turnover rates among both national and international staff are a major constraint, as talented nationals quickly move up the ladder through the multitude of international agency-paid positions within and outside of government, and internationals tend to stay in the country for short periods of time (one or two years on average).

7. Many donors appear to be open to increased financing of development activities through UNDP, recognizing that there are limited alternatives if they are to deliver the resource commitments made at the Tokyo conference (July 2012). Yet the trust of some important donors in UNDP's capacity to effectively deliver quality programmes on a national scale has been undermined during the period under review. Winning back their confidence will be necessary if UNDP is to be successful in re-casting itself as a substantive partner.

Donors and the Government of Afghanistan are also seeking greater transparency from UNDP, and clearer reporting about results and constraints. They want to know the impact of the programmes and activities that UNDP is managing, which calls for greater attention to outcomes and their monitoring, evaluation and communication.

During a brief period in 2010/2011, efforts to inform donors about programme achievements almost in real time, through weekly meetings, translated into massive and disruptive reporting requirements placed on all UNDP programme staff. The abundance of international advisors among agencies and donor embassies in Kabul, often with little field experience and brief presence in country, generates a fair amount of distraction in coordination forums, as well as attention to the minutiae of programme design, leading to long, protracted negotiations for amendments and changes to strategies and programme document. The recent ELECT project reformulation was a case in point. Winning back donors' confidence is also essential in order to reduce such disruptions.

Many donors remain reluctant to make direct contributions to the national budget and are

seeking alternative mechanisms for fulfilling their 'on-budget' commitments, such as trust funds. Multi-donor trust funds have been found useful in other crisis-affected countries, particularly to promote greater aid coordination, yet so far LOTFA has been the only trust fund set up by the UN in Afghanistan.

8. UNDP's close association with the Government corresponds to the organization's mandate and approach, and is aligned with the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which recognizes national leadership and transparency as critical for success.

Since the Kabul Conference, the Government of Afghanistan has increasingly demonstrated its political will and its ability to take the lead on development and governance. The transition process, which fully restores the leadership of the Government in a sovereign Afghanistan, will translate into an increased role of the Afghan Government in the management of UNDP programmes, and possibly greater use of the national implementation modality.

However, state-building in Afghanistan has been premised on the expectation that peace and prosperity can come to the country as the state extends its authority to the countryside. The goal of the ANDS, for instance, is to facilitate development by strengthening government agencies, not necessarily by strengthening society or processes within society that might further development. As a result, Afghans also have very little ownership in the Kabul-centric structures and programmes that have been created for them as a result of donor planning efforts; many perceive both the Government and the international community as having profited from international contracts with little concern and results for the population.

9. Over the reviewed period, UNDP has had insufficient ties with civil society, including civil society organizations and NGOs. At this critical juncture, the Afghan nation requires strong public pressure and active civil society organizations to lobby for improving education
and health, gender equality, accountable government, and the battle against corruption.

It also requires a competent and free media. Another consideration is logistical: in an environment where security conditions are worsening, NGOs will probably retain a better capacity than UN organizations to move around the country to either implement local projects or monitor them, and building more structured relationship with the best NGOs would therefore appear in order.

10. Greater coherence and collaboration among UNDP programmes active at the subnational level, such as ASGP and NABDP, would be desirable to heighten impact and help save personnel, financial and logistic resources. The Country Office's genuine efforts in this direction have met with little progress thus far.

The idea of developing a new successor programme that would combine the work of the ASGP and NABDP and address institutional development, local accountability and service delivery issues in a comprehensive and geographically equitable way may be difficult to implement. In the past, government entities have displayed a tendency to *not* share programme components with other governmental entities, to avoid delays and competition for resources. UNDP may have to rely on tools other than joint programmes. Synergies among programmes implemented at the local level could also result from consolidating project presences in the provinces into UNDP sub-offices led by individuals with the capacity and authority to represent UNDP at that level. In taking this step, UNDP would belatedly follow the current practices of UNAMA, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and most other UN agencies in the country, and would be better able to ensure programme coherence and coordination with activities supported by other donors.

11. Opportunities for synergies between UNAMA and UNDP have not been systematically pursued, beyond their effective collaboration on elections. Over the years, an unfortunate

distance or disconnect seems to have persisted between UNAMA and the UNCT. The UN mission in Afghanistan has been and remains one of the organization's most difficult. Progress has been frustratingly slow, and the numerous set-backs along the way, in particular the 2009 elections, have put the Integrated Mission model to serious test.

UNAMA's mandate is likely to evolve towards 'normalization', which includes in the Government's vision a reduction in UNAMA's regional presence. UNAMA has already transferred some of its regional offices to UNOPS, and this evolution could continue, thus providing UNDP easier access to these regional offices. Although aid coordination may remain a UNAMA mandate in the short term, UNDP expertise and involvement may be required to ensure that coordination leads to more substantive results than appears to be the case at present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite severe management issues during the review period, UNDP remained highly valued by the Government and donors. Its involvement and support will be increasingly needed in the months to come, during the ISAF withdrawal and presidential elections. The new Country Office management has made promising moves to address management challenges and put UNDP in a strong position to support the people of Afghanistan during the transition. It will take a concerted effort to prepare for the challenging years to come.

The future context is uncertain. Security and access to different parts of the country may become more difficult, and the policy of those who will be governing Afghanistan from 2014 onward could require significant changes in the approaches currently being devised. This caveat applies to the following recommendations as well.

1. UNDP needs to continue to rebuild confidence with the Government and its donors so that they will be more likely to support the

ideas, frameworks and directions promoted by the organization.

Building upon the recent CPAP review, UNDP should maintain a forum with key ministries to regularly discuss programmatic alignment and involve these ministries in joint decision-making about the next country programme, thus building ownership and trust. UNDP should also involve the Government more closely during the implementation of all its programmes, including by reinforcing the role of joint programme steering committees.

Assuming a greater role in policy advisory services and advocacy on issues of importance to UNDP, the Government and the international community will require the exercise of intellectual leadership for priority initiatives and innovative funding mechanisms, as opposed to simply making UNDP's mechanisms available for channelling funds largely on donor terms. Meetings with donors to update them on project and programme progress should continue, ideally once a month.

With support from UNAMA, the necessary dialogue with donors should also be pitched at the right strategic level rather than discussing the minutiae of programme implementation, a practice that has sometimes led to operational disruptions.

2. During the next country programme, UNDP should continue to prioritize democratic governance and the rule of law, where it brings to bear a clear comparative advantage. However, the next country programme must devote greater attention to the weakest pillars of Afghan democracy (local governments, the legislature and the judiciary) and should try to contribute more convincingly to the fight against `poverty and (where possible) environmental protection, in accordance with its poverty-environment nexus strategy.

UNDP should continue its assistance to municipalities, provincial and district governor offices and provincial assemblies with a view to promote

effective decentralization, in close coordination with other partners active in this area. It should also revive its assistance to both houses of Parliament—with a strong focus on supporting and training parliamentarians themselves rather than just the secretariats—and strengthen its efforts to build the capacity and integrity of the judiciary.

With the majority of the Afghan population under 25 years, programmes aiming to educate, train and promote the gainful employment of the youth should be a high priority. They would help address both poverty and security, since a less disaffected youth may be less sympathetic to anti-governmental elements. This represents an important area for potential cooperation with other international organizations and with the private sector.

The NABDP must make a concerted effort to strengthen the equity and effectiveness of its operations and reach out more convincingly to remote districts, including by tightening its procedures to limit political influence in resource allocation, allocating resource ceilings to districts, and accepting donors' contributions on the condition that they are not entirely tied to a region. It should also open its menu of eligible projects to fund agricultural production or marketing projects (over and above irrigation works).

Ultimately, for Afghanistan to move beyond the continuing demand for humanitarian assistance, concerted efforts need to be made to address disaster management issues and promote resilience. The first priority is to help Afghanistan build up a civil emergency response capability. This work would bring opportunities for collaboration with the World Bank and UNISDR, and would have important connections to LOTFA and community policing. One could envision a separate section of the LOTFA effort focused on civil disaster preparedness and response, under the leadership and coordination of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

Although there are important needs in the environment sector, other UN agencies such as UNEP or FAO are probably better placed than

UNDP to contribute at the upstream policy level. At the local level, credible downstream interventions in support of natural resource management would require a strong field presence in some of the most remote areas of the country, implying a significant security risk. Programmes addressing urban environmental issues would be easier to implement, would fall closer to UNDP's mandate in supporting local (municipal) governance, and would prove quite relevant given the rapid growth of the urban population in recent years.

3. UNDP should examine the possibility of setting up additional multi-donor, multilateral trust funds in support of the transition.

In order to promote aid coherence and effectiveness, UNDP should invest time and efforts in designing and setting up additional trust funds, for instance targeted at under-funded issues such as the poverty-environment nexus. These trust funds should ideally be overseen by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office and incorporate governance elements ensuring that it is Afghan-led and owned, with strong check-and-balance mechanisms to create joint ownership.

This includes the LOTFA trust fund. Once its fiduciary controls have been reinforced and overhead issues agreed with all partners, LOTFA should ultimately be overseen by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office in view of the improved supervision that office can offer. UNDP should also provide more substantive support to the Afghan police through community policing, human rights training, policy advisory support to the Ministry of Interior, and possibly (as noted in recommendation 2) to take part in systems for disaster preparedness and response.

4. UNDP should strengthen its involvement in aid coordination forums and processes.

The present transition represents an opportunity for a renewed effort from UNDP towards UN agency coordination and collaboration. Given UNDP's long experience both globally

and previously in Afghanistan of promoting substantive, operational programme collaboration between international donors and the Government, the leverage its substantial programme delivery provides, and the prospect of UNAMA's scope of activities being reduced, UNDP should devolve increased attention to aid coordination processes, especially at the sectoral and subnational levels. It should also focus more attention on the search for greater operational coherence within the UNCT.

5. UNDP Country Office management should, as a matter of priority, improve operational capacity and programme effectiveness by rebuilding a cohesive team of national and international staff committed to achieving results for Afghanistan.

This report has highlighted serious human resource management issues in the Country Office, with slow and non-transparent recruitment processes under previous management, as well as a widening divide between the Country Office and programme staff resulting from tensions between delivery imperatives on the one hand, and the need for controls and due diligence on the other.

The burden of mobilizing Country Office and project staff behind the new vision, and bound by the same *esprit de corps*, falls on the Country Office leadership. This will not be easy in the prevailing climate. Administrative support from UNDP to its programmes and projects needs to become more proactive and solution-oriented, all the while enforcing a stricter observance of UNDP fiduciary duties, even in nationally implemented projects.

The cadre of national staff in the Country Office should be reinforced with more senior national personnel with the experience, connections and gravitas necessary to develop partnership with the Government while reaching out to Afghan civil society. The cadre of international staff also requires strengthening as regards policy advisory services, but attracting senior, substantive staff to

countries in conflict is often difficult. One mechanism employed in such circumstances has been to contract high-level expertise to monitor and advise on programme development from outside the country with occasional strategic visits. Such resources could be attached to major programmes, to clusters, or to the new Policy Unit.

6. Subnational governance and service delivery should continue to be a major component of the UNDP Country Programme. To that end, UNDP should also establish regional offices that can better integrate UNDP project activities.

UNDP's project offices in regions, currently ill-equipped and poorly supported administratively and logistically by the Kabul office, need to be significantly strengthened, their management tools (e.g. bank accounts) developed and facilities found (e.g. finalize an agreement with UNAMA to lodge staff and offices in their regional compounds).

There is also a need to move from a purely project-based regional staff to more integrated UNDP offices with some common services, and with staff mandated to represent UNDP, with delegated authority to promote greater collaboration between UNDP projects and with local authorities and other aid programmes. The regional (subnational) level is the easiest place to start looking for synergies and to build a culture of inter-project collaboration. Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif could be early pilots, give the generally adequate security conditions and significant UNDP programme presence there.

7. Given the extensive *de facto* local autonomy that has been a feature of Afghan governance in the past, specific attention needs to be paid to engaging with customary Afghan governance and judicial systems, which may not be up to international standard but have the important advantages of legitimacy and efficacy, and could play a useful role in the edification of the Afghan state.
Such an outreach effort aiming to reconcile the

central government in Kabul with the hinterland, together with the continuous strengthening of local governments, is perhaps the only way to bridge however partially the sense of alienation from their government currently harboured by many Afghans.

In this respect, the current efforts by IDLG and MRRD to give to District Development Assemblies (DDAs) created by the NABDP a formal role in the Afghan polity may represent an important milestone of progress, if the process respects the downward accountability and local legitimacy of district assemblies. UNDP has supported this process and should continue to do so, with a view to sustain important social capital created by the UNDP programme.

NABDP should also review its menu of microprojects to eliminate routine canal and *karez* cleaning, which may undermine customary governance and maintenance institutions for traditional irrigation systems.

Support to the judiciary is another domain where UNDP could work to a greater extent with customary institutions. While the effort to support the development of formal legal systems is entirely justified and even *essential* to build a functioning Afghan state, the UNDP rule of law programme documents also recognize the importance of engaging with informal and traditional justice mechanisms. While keeping the emphasis on strengthening the capacity and integrity of the formal legal system and on upholding human rights and gender equality, the rule of law programme should translate its pledges into action by working more closely with informal and traditional justice systems and actors, for example to discuss standards of traditional law in the area of women's and children's rights, with a view to progressively raise them (ideally in collaboration with GEP, UN Women and UNICEF).

8. The strategic coherence of UNDP's capacity development initiatives should be strengthened through stronger support to the Public Administration Reform process. Sustainability of capacity-building results needs more serious consideration in programme design and during implementation. The recourse to large numbers of non-Tashkeel staff as a stopgap measure must be reduced, and UNDP should consider a gradual increase in the use of national implementation to help raise capacity in a sustainable manner.

UNDP should work closely with the Government, the World Bank and other development partners to explore credible solutions to retain at least some of the present national advisors in the *Tashkeel*. This will require consensus around which core functions to retain, which staffing competencies are required, and how they are to be financed. In the meantime, all National Technical Advisors (non-*Tashkeel* staff) should follow a transparent process of recruitment and performance review, possibly leading to dismissal in case of poor performance.

Rapid staff rotation, particularly among international staff, has affected programme delivery and institutional memory. To the extent possible, UNDP should make use of international technical advisors already experienced in Afghanistan and willing to stay for a few years.

While the agreement with the Government of India to provide subsidized assistance to the NIBP is a great asset to draw upon, a careful balance of international Capacity Development Advisors from different national and professional backgrounds appears to be desirable to ensure a more appropriate, and occasionally challenging, facilitation and support to Afghan ministries. This in turn, may help dilute the chances of Capacity Development Advisors being steered into capacity-substitution activities.

Once a threshold of capacity has been established, its utilization in programme implementation helped further consolidate capacity, e.g. in electoral support and in the NABDP programme nationally implemented by MRRD. On a case-by-case basis and with due consideration for the fiduciary and security risks involved,

UNDP should consider a gradual increase in the use of the national implementation modality in Afghanistan to help raise capacity in a sustainable manner.

9. UNDP should make preparations to reduce its exposure to poor security conditions, by outsourcing some activities, in particular monitoring and evaluation, and by moving some administrative functions outside the country. It could also consider disengaging itself responsibly from its riskiest programme, the largely ineffective APRP, or radically simplifying its institutional arrangements.

The Country Office should accelerate its search for qualified, independent third parties able to undertake monitoring on a national scale, including by using international and domestic contractors, research groups, NGOs and local staff to facilitate monitoring and evaluation throughout the country. UNDP has already worked with a third-party monitoring agent for LOTFA, and should continue to expand such options to other programmes, drawing on the experience of other partners and countries in similar circumstances, including Somalia. Greater use might also be made of new technology, including remote sensing.

Contingency plans being prepared by the Country Office should include consideration of moving some back office support functions outside the country, as a way to lower the security risk, all the while allowing for the strong procurement and recruitment units which the Afghanistan Country Programme deserves and which are lacking at the moment.

APRP is a difficult and risky programme with significant design issues, and has so far delivered limited results at a very high cost. In the absence of peace negotiations with the armed opposition, UNDP will likely not achieve much and should therefore consider withdrawing from the programme at the end of the present phase (July 2015). APRP has other 'windows' than the one managed by UNDP, and should therefore be able to continue without UNDP support if the next Government decides to extend it beyond the present phase. Alternatively, if the next Government and partners are keen to extend UNDP's involvement in the programme, they should let UNDP play a role in the design of the next phase, and allow for a radical simplification of the programme's institutional arrangements.

10. The Country Office urgently needs to expand its communications capacity to ensure that the Afghan Government, Afghan citizens as well as development partners are aware of UNDP's goals and the impact its programmes have on helping improve the lives of average Afghan people.

A significant investment will be required to communicate broadly about UNDP's contributions to national and local development, but this investment should be seen as a contribution to development results, as many project evaluations have pointed out that poor communication and outreach was hampering progress. This is especially important when it comes to services at the subnational level.

A priority in this regard would be to communicate NABDP's achievement in a more convincing manner. Given its relative success, its national scope, and the attention it pays to gender mainstreaming, the NABDP is already one of the UNDP programmes most frequently visited by monitoring missions, dignitaries and journalists. UNDP should capitalize upon it to a greater extent. Afghanistan Human Development Reports also provide a substantive basis for advocacy as well as collaborating with civil society and academic partners.

Improving UNDP's image in the country could also enhance security for UNDP staff and collaborators, though greater publicity also opens up the possibility of insurgent attention.

11. UNDP should reach out to civil society, including through regular information events during the build-up to the elections and by

involving carefully selected NGOs as pro-gramme implementers, primarily at the pro-vincial and district levels, but also in lobbying, awareness-raising and civic education efforts.

At this time in its history, Afghanistan requires an active civil society to exert pressure on issues such as accountable governance, the battle against corruption, and women's empowerment. Strengthening ties with Afghan civil society as well as with research networks and academics would help UNDP develop a finer understanding of the national context and a stronger capacity to contribute substantively to the development of the country, through policy advisory services and advocacy.

In the coming years, NGOs may also retain a better capacity than UN organizations to imple-ment and/or monitor projects throughout the country. UNDP programmes active at the subna-tional level should be encouraged to collaborate with NGOs possessing a strong field presence.

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts country evaluations called 'Assessments of Development Results' (ADRs), to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to development results at the country level. ADRs are carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.[152] The overall goals of an ADR are to:

- Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;

- Support greater UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and partners in the programme country;

- Serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions at the country level; and

- Contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels.

The Evaluation Office plans to conduct an ADR in Afghanistan during 2012/2013. The ADR will contribute to a new country programme, which will be prepared by the Country Office and national stakeholders.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Throughout the course of its history, Afghanistan often found itself on the path of invading armies. It became a buffer state between the British and Russian empires in the late 19th Century, and a Cold War battlefield between the United States and the Soviet Union during the late 20th Century, when a war took place between the Soviet-backed Afghan government and US-backed mujahedin rebel forces from 1979 to 1989. After the Soviet withdrawal, a civil war pitted mujahedin factions against one another during the 1990s. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban regime, drawn from the Pashtun majority, came to control 80 to 90 percent of the country in the Centre and South, and fought bitterly against the Northern Alliance, drawn mainly from Afghanistan's minority communities.

In September 2001, the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington perpetrated by Al Qaeda led to a massive US bombing campaign of Taliban positions, rapid Northern Alliance advances and the toppling of the Taliban government. As envisaged in the Bonn Agreement (December 2001), a new constitution was adopted in 2003 and presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2004 and 2005. The new constitution created a presidential form of government with a bicameral legislature: the House of Elders (*Meshrano Jirga*) and the House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*). The president is elected and appoints cabinet ministers and provincial governors.

In December 2001, the Security Council authorized the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help provide basic security for Afghanistan. NATO countries contributed varied levels of troops to ISAF over the years, with the US being the main contributor. In 2011, the total number of foreign soldiers reached about 150,000. In the meantime the newly-trained Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police reached over 200,000 personnel.

---

152   Available online at www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf

In 2008, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan approved the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) for 2008-2013, which resulted from extensive consultations with all strata of society, in a process facilitated by UNDP. The ANDS is based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) plus security.[153] It serves as Afghanistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and frames the work of all development agencies in the country.

New elections were held in 2009 (presidential and provincial council elections) and 2010 (parliamentary elections), organized for the first time by the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC). The 2009 elections were widely characterized as marred by lack of security, violence, extremely low voter turnout (about 33 percent)[154], and widespread fraud. 1.26 million votes were excluded from the final counting. It took two months to decide the outcome. Within UNAMA, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General who oversaw the elections came into public disagreement with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General over the process, and was fired as a result.

The 2010 parliamentary elections elected members of the House of the People (Wolesi Jirga) through a "single non-transferable voting" system. There were again allegations of massive fraud, and the election commission voided more than 20 percent, or 1.3 million, of the ballots after investigations.

After a decade of massive security, development and humanitarian assistance, some progress has been made in reconstructing the country, its economy and its governance system. However, much of this international aid – $57 billion against $90 billion pledged according to the International Crisis Group[155] – has been disbursed through structures bypassing governmental institutions. State institutions remain fragile and their capacity to deliver basic services and security throughout the country is still weak. Insecurity is particularly problematic. The insurgency has intensified since 2006, especially in the south and east of the country. Weak rule of law, corruption, narco- trafficking, and frequent civilian casualties from ISAF counter-insurgency operations also contribute to poor levels of human security. In part as a result of this widespread insecurity, the human development situation in the country remains dire. Globally, Afghanistan ranked 172 out of 187 countries in the 2011 human development index ranking. Poverty appears on the rise since 2005.[156] With a female literacy rate of a mere 14 percent, high levels of gender-based violence and a weak access to justice, Afghan women face formidable challenges.

NATO allies have set a timetable to withdraw most foreign troops by the end of 2014. Starting in 2011, ISAF has begun to transfer security responsibilities to Afghan armed and police forces.

Afghanistan is a UN integrated mission. The work of all UN agencies in the country is coordinated by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a political mission established by the Security Council in 2002 at the request of the Government to assist in implementing the Bonn Agreement.[157] UNAMA is

---

153   Security was identified as the ninth Millennium Development Goal (MDG) by the Government.

154   Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)-UNAMA, 'Joint Monitoring of Political Rights, Presidential and Provincial Council Elections, Third Report', 1 August – 21 October 2009.

155   ICG, 'Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan, Asia Report N°210', 4 August 2011.

156   UNDP Country Programme Document for Afghanistan (2010-2013), April 2009.

157   The mandate of UNAMA is extended annually. On 22 March 2012, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2041 renewing UNAMA's mandate until March 2013. Important new elements of the 2012 mandate are its reference to the role of the United Nations in the elections planned for 2014, and the importance given to the active and equal participation of women in the electoral process. The new mandate also stresses the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive political process to support reconciliation.

mandated to lead and coordinate the international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on National Priority Programmes, cooperation with NATO/ISAF for transition, reconciliation, elections, regional cooperation, human rights and humanitarian assistance.

3. UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Since 2002, the primary aim of UNDP in Afghanistan has been to support stabilization and state building, in a conflict country where the international community tries to buttress a nascent government. The UNDP Country Programme Document for Afghanistan (CPD) for 2010-2013 reflects the ANDS and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) priorities, and takes account that UNDP operates under the overall mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The CPD lists the following intended outcomes:

1. Capacity in state and non-state institutions increased to contribute to overall stabilization and peace building;

2. Effectiveness of the justice system is improved and access to justice is increased.

3. Government has improved ability to deliver services to foster human development and elected bodies have greater oversight capacity;

4. The state and non-state institution is better able to promote democratic participation and be accountable to the public;

5. Capacities of national and local governance bodies are improved for better natural resources and disasters risk management;

6. Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships.

These outcomes are being pursued through the following interventions:

- **Direct support to key democratic milestones and events:** UNDP facilitated the adoption of the constitution and supported the presidential, parliamentary and provincial council elections, mainly through the ELECT project (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow);

- **Support to the rule of law** through the management of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) which helps the Government to pay and train the national police force, and through projects meant to fight corruption (Accountability and Transparency Project or ACT) or to improve access to justice and human rights at the central and district levels (Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan or JHRA)

- **Institutional development and capacity-building** to the legislature, the judiciary, key ministries, agencies and commissions at the national level, mainly through the National Institution-Building Project (NIBP), as well as support to subnational governance levels (provinces, districts), mainly through the Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP); in addition, a variety of projects have supported the capacity of key national institutions, often by embedding advisors in governmental positions.

- **Poverty reduction and provision of basic social services**, mainly through the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) which tries to provide infrastructure, social services and economic projects through the channel of district assemblies so as to strengthen their capacity to plan and implement development projects;

- **Demobilization and disarmament initiatives** such as the Afghanistan Peace & Reintegration programme (APRP), and the older Afghanistan New Beginnings (ANBP, also known as "DDR project") and Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programmes.

The above-listed interventions are the largest ones. The programme portfolio used to include

many smaller projects in a very wide area of topics, until a 'criticality review' conducted by the UNDP Country Office after the attack on the Bakhtar guest house (Oct. 2009)[158] resulted in the consolidation, clustering and sometimes cancellation[159] of some 35 projects into 10 large programmes. As a result, the Afghanistan programme is now well consolidated around a small number of key interventions, each being rather large.

The financial size of this programme is staggering by UNDP standards. From 2004 to 2012, UNDP has spent approximately $4 billion in Afghanistan.[160] Expenditures during recent years are displayed in Table 1. Of these expenditures, 2.41 percent come from 'regular' resources (core UNDP funds), and 97.6 percent from 'other resources' (donors funding). The LOTFA trust fund accounted for about 75 percent of all expenditures since 2009 (Table 1).

Table A1. Expenditures since 2009		
Year	Total Expenditures (million US$)	Of which LOTFA
2009	568	51%
2010	790	71%
2011	769	77%
2012	660	75%

This makes of Afghanistan the largest UNDP Country Programme, and represents approximately 13 percent of all UNDP expenditures worldwide. As of March 2013, 507 national staff and 86 international staff were under UNDP's payroll in the country.

Generally speaking, the programme has been thoroughly evaluated at the project level, albeit with uneven quality, and the recent strategic review has added to this evaluative evidence in particular with regards to internal management and relations with donors. However, there is still a dearth of information about the results that the programme has achieved, in particular at the provincial and district levels, an issue that has harmed relationships with donors.

The previous ADR, conducted in 2008, recommended that UNDP adopt a more direct presence outside Kabul to enhance the outreach of its programmes to ordinary Afghans. This was a key objective of the current country programme.[161] A recently-conducted strategic review[162] recommended, among other things, to strengthen the synergies among the three UNDP programmes implemented at the subnational level: the NABDP, the APRP and the ASGP. A programme coherence mission was conducted in April 2012 to this effect.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE ADR

The objectives of the Afghanistan ADR are to:

- Provide an independent assessment of the progress or lack of, towards the expected outcomes envisaged in the UNDP programming documents. Where appropriate, the ADR will also highlight unexpected outcomes (positive or negative) and missed opportunities.

- Provide an analysis of how UNDP has positioned itself to add value in response to national needs and changes in the national development context.

---

158 The attack was meant to disrupt the (once-planned, then cancelled) run-off to the 2009 presidential elections. It killed five UN staff including two from UNDP/ELECT, two Afghan security personnel and an Afghan civilian.

159 For instance in the areas of environment and disaster risk reduction.

160 ATLAS data.

161 The UNDAF also makes frequent reference to the importance of working at the subnational level.

162 Rajan, R. et al., 'Strategic Programme Review of UNDP Afghanistan: The Way Forward – a Transformation Agenda for UNDP Afghanistan', UNDP, 2010.

- Present key findings, draw key lessons, and provide a set of clear and forward- looking options for the management to make adjustments in the current strategy and next country programme.

5. SCOPE

The ADR will review the UNDP experience in Afghanistan and its contribution to the solution of social, economic and political challenges. The evaluation will cover the period since the last ADR (conducted in 2008), i.e. 2009–2013, corresponding approximately with the current programming period (2010–2014).

The evaluation will undertake a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio and activities during the period under review, specifically examining UNDP contribution to national development results. It will assess key results, specifically outcomes—anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative, intentional and unintentional—and will cover UNDP assistance funded from both core and non-core resources.

6. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has two main components, the analysis of development outcomes and the strategic positioning of UNDP.

6.1 DEVELOPMENT RESULTS BY THEMATIC AREA

The assessment of the development results within each thematic area will entail a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio of the ongoing programme cycle as well as of related non-project activities. The evaluation will document and analyse achievements against intended outcomes and linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes. A core set of criteria related to the design, management and implementation of its interventions in the country will be used:

- **Relevance:** Is the country programme, as designed and implemented in each thematic area, aligned with the main priorities for development expressed by the Government? Is it addressing pressing development challenges? Was the selection of geographical and thematic areas of intervention guided by need?

- **Effectiveness:** Did the UNDP programme accomplish its intended objectives and planned results? What are the most salient results achieved under each focus area? What are the unexpected results it yielded? How do these achieved results compare with planned results? To what extent are long-term development needs likely to be met across the practice areas?[163]

- **Efficiency:** What resources have UNDP and donors made available to the Afghanistan programme (staff, financial resources)? How judiciously were these resources utilized? Could the programme have achieved more with the same resources, or made the same contribution with fewer resources?

- **Sustainability:** To what extent are the results that UNDP contributed to through the country programme sustainable? Were appropriate exit strategies included in project design and implemented? Are the results achieved well known and 'owned' locally and nationally? Were national stakeholders adequately involved in programme delivery? Did UNDP engage in national capacity development to improve sustainability prospects? With what results?

6.2 STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The evaluation will assess the strategic positioning of UNDP across thematic areas and through the promotion of high level policy dialogue, both from the perspective of the organization and the development priorities in the country. This will

---

163   In particular, results achieved under capacity-building will require a strong evaluation focus, in order to shed light on the evolution of such institutions as the Independent Electoral Commission or the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

entail a systematic analysis of UNDP's place and niche within the development and policy space in Afghanistan, and of the strategies used by UNDP Afghanistan to strengthen its position in the development space and in the core practice areas. The evaluation will analyse a core set of criteria contributing to the strategic positioning of UNDP:

- **Strategic relevance:** Has the programme as a whole been addressing the main development challenges of the country? Were there critical gaps in UNDP programming? Did UNDP apply the right programming strategies within the specific political, economic and social context of the country? Is there an adequate balance between upstream (policy-level) and downstream (project-level) initiatives? Between interventions at the central level (capital) and subnational level? Between regions in the country?

- **Responsiveness:** How responsive has UNDP and its programmatic focus and strategies been to emerging needs and an evolving country context? What were the missed opportunities in UNDP programming?

- **Use of comparative strengths:** Are all interventions clearly within UNDP's mandate? To what extent were they designed to make use of UNDP's comparative strengths, e.g. promoting capacity development, impartiality and neutrality in policy advice, convening capacity and public-private partnerships, and South-South cooperation? Has UNDP used its global network of expertise to bring in examples of good practice or share experience?

- **Equity, gender equality and human development:** Was the country programme based on an assessment of inequality problems? Did it attempt to contribute to gender equality and human rights? Are some projects targeting women, the most vulnerable or the youth? Are there cases of "elite capture", i.e. projects benefiting mainly the richest segments of society? Did UNDP

interventions in any way influence the existing inequities in society?

Although an evaluative judgment will be made using the criteria above, the ADR will also identify how various explanatory factors have influenced UNDP's performance. The analysis of the following factors, while chiefly envisaged as contributing to an assessment of strategic positioning, should also help explain the degree to which the planned development results have been achieved:

- **Coordination:** Internally, are there adequate coordination, collaboration and synergies between the different interventions, entities and practice areas that make up the UNDP country programme? Externally, did UNDP contribute to the coordination of the UN country team, and of development assistance to Afghanistan? How well is UNDP's work integrated in to UNAMA, e.g. through a clear division of roles and a shared vision of the overriding strategic objective of the UN presence in Afghanistan?

- **Partnerships:** How well has UNDP been able to leverage partnerships with the Government at the central and subnational levels, UN system, civil society, private sector, donors and international development partners to improve performance, while at the same time protecting UNDP's neutrality? Did partnership with the Government of Afghanistan lead to an adequate sense of national ownership of the programme? Is UNDP considered a trusted, credible and neutral partner by all stakeholders, able to play a useful role in substantive, high-level policy dialogue on politically sensitive themes? Have partnerships generally been balanced (based on mutual respect, shared goals and shared risks), or are there cases of strongly imbalanced partnerships?

- **Management and oversight:** Does the country office have the technical and managerial capacity to effectively implement its programme and engage in policy advice or advocacy? Was the management of the

programme adequate in terms of: (i) office structure, staffing; (ii) project quality control systems; (iii) monitoring and evaluation; (iv) knowledge management; and (v) communication? Are there significant administrative and operational bottlenecks that should be resolved or reduced? What were the effects of poor security on project delivery and oversight? On the quality and location of interventions and results?

Based on the analysis of the criteria and factors listed above, the ADR Team will propose recommendations and strategies for the future, taking into consideration that the current transition process, culminating in 2014 with the departure of all NATO troops, creates a need for new strategies and for different scenarios.

7.   DATA COLLECTION

Data collection will be consistent with the EO ADR Manual (dated January 2011). It will triangulate the results of multiple methods, which could include document reviews, workshops, group and individual interviews, direct observations during field visits, and surveys. All the findings must be supported by evidence and validated through consulting multiple sources of information.

At the core of the data-collection process will be the evaluation matrix which links each of the criteria and related evaluation questions to data sources and data-collection methods. In so doing it ensures a logical approach to using the evaluation criteria.

A strong participatory approach will be taken involving a broad range of stakeholders including those beyond UNDP's direct partners. These stakeholders would include Government representatives of ministries and agencies, civil-society organizations, private-sector representatives, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and, importantly, the beneficiaries of the programme. Furthermore, in order to identify key development challenges

of the country, the evaluation team may conduct interviews and consultations beyond those involved directly or indirectly in UNDP country programme.

8.   EVALUATION PROCESS

The process can be divided in three phases, each including several steps, as follows.

Phase 1: Preparation

Desk review: Initially carried out by the EO (identification, collection and mapping of relevant documentation and other data) and continued by the evaluation team. This will include general development related documentation related to Afghanistan as well as a comprehensive overview of the UNDP programme over the period being examined.

Inception meetings: Interviews and discussions between EO and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), the Bureau for Development Policy and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will help scope and plan the evaluation.

Preparatory mission: A mission by the EO Evaluation Manager to Afghanistan in order to:

- Discuss plans and scope for the ADR with relevant colleagues in the country office, in the Government and among the donor community;

- Discuss with the Government its involvement in this exercise;

- Gather up-to-date information about the main projects, their staff and counterparts;

- Assess whether the evaluation is doable, at what cost, and within what timeline;

- Define the ADR methodology further so as to help prepare TORs;

- Identify candidate consultancy firms to conduct a 'Beneficiary Assessment', described below.

Phase 2: Conducting the ADR and Drafting the Evaluation Report

Beneficiary Assessment:[164] the main evaluation mission will have limited mobility throughout Afghanistan, due to the severe security constraints and regulations imposed on UN personnel. However, a large part of the UNDP portfolio in the country is implemented at the local level, notably in the areas of rural development, subnational governance and rule of law. It is thus envisaged to contract a local consulting group to undertake an assessment of at least one large UNDP-funded intervention implemented at the local level, to assess its contribution to development results as seen by the main intended beneficiaries of this assistance in a representative sample of provinces and districts. The selected intervention is the National Area- Based Development Programme (NABDP).[165] The Beneficiary Assessment will have its own, distinct TORs, complementing the present document.

Main evaluation mission (20 days in country): This mission will be conducted by an independent Evaluation Team of international and national consultants led by the EO Evaluation Manager, and will focus on data collection and validation. The team will visit a small sample of significant project and field sites, and will try and spot-check the quality of the Beneficiary Assessment in a few locations.

The main mission will be concluded by debriefing meetings with the country office, the Government and the main donors, and sanctioned by a so-called 'factual report' presenting the evidence collected so far against each evaluation question, and the remaining information gaps. The factual report may also include tentative conclusions and recommendations.

Outcome evaluations: The main evaluation mission will also allow EO to help the Country Office plan for their own outcome evaluations. These are scheduled to take place during 2013 and cover the following planned outcomes:

- **Outcome 3:** The state has improved ability to deliver services to foster human development and elected bodies have greater oversight capacity.

  Current Projects: Afghanistan Integrity Initiative (starting); Afghanistan Subnational Governance Programme (ASGP); National State Governance Project (NSGP); National Institutions Building Programme (NIBP); Gender Equality Project (GEP)

- **Outcome 6:** Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships.

  Current Projects: National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP); Rural Enterprise Development in Kandahar and Helmand.

The ADR (managed by EO) will be independent from the two outcome evaluations (managed by the Country Office) but it is designed to benefit from their analysis and findings, if found of good quality.

Second evaluation mission and stakeholder workshop (10 days): Due to the large size of the Afghanistan country programme, it is likely that the first mission will not suffice to collect all the necessary information. As mentioned above, the Country Office has plans to conduct its own Outcome Evaluations during the summer. It is likely that a second ADR mission will be required

---

164   The Beneficiary Assessment is described in greater detail in its own specific TORs.

165   The NABDP is a large, well-established programme which started in 2002 and is implemented in rural areas all over the country by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). Its purpose is to contribute to a sustainable reduction of poverty and an improvement of livelihoods in rural Afghanistan through small infrastructure projects selected in a participatory manner within District Development Assemblies (DDAs). Among all the interventions currently funded by UNDP and implemented at the local level in Afghanistan, it has the longest history and the widest geographical scope, which makes it a good candidate for an in-depth assessment of results achieved at the subnational level.

to integrate this additional material into the ADR report. The second mission will be concluded by the stakeholder workshop.

Therefore, a reduced team (composed of the team leader and team members for strategic positioning and for conflict) will travel to Kabul for a 10 day mission, scheduled after the outcome evaluations, in order to: (i) review the quality of the outcome evaluations and integrate their findings in the ADR; (ii) complete data collection through targeted queries designed to fill data gaps left by the main evaluation mission and outcome evaluations; (iii) meet with key national stakeholders in a workshop format to present the results of the evaluation, elicit further comments from a wider set of stakeholders, and examine ways forward in Afghanistan. The workshop will have three purposes: 1) to discuss and fine-tune the ADR conclusions and recommendations based on participants' comments; 2) to strengthen the national ownership of development process and facilitate greater buy-in by national and local stakeholders in taking the lessons and recommendations from the report forward; and 3) account to national and international stakeholders for the results achieved by UNDP.

Analysis, reporting and review: The information collected will be analysed and reported in the draft ADR report by the Evaluation Team. The draft will be subject to: comments and factual corrections by key clients (including the UNDP country office, RBAP, BCPR, the Government, and key donors); a technical review by the EO; and a review by one external expert. The EO will prepare an audit trail to show how comments were taken in to account. The EO Team Leader shall finalize the ADR report based on these final reviews.

Phase 3: Follow-up

Management response: The UNDP Associate Administrator will request relevant units (in the case of ADR, usually the relevant country office and regional bureau) to jointly prepare a management response to the ADR. As a unit exercising oversight, the regional bureau will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Communication: The ADR report and brief will be widely distributed in both hard and electronic versions. The evaluation report will be made available to UNDP Executive Board by the time of approving a new CPD in June 2014. It will be widely distributed in Afghanistan and at UNDP headquarters and copies will be sent to evaluation offices of other international organizations as well as to evaluation societies and research institutions in the region. Furthermore, the evaluation report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website and made available to the public.

9. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 UNDP EO

The UNDP EO Evaluation Manager will ensure smooth coordination and liaison with RBAP, other concerned units at headquarters level and the Afghanistan country office management. He will conduct the preparatory mission, support the design of the evaluation, lead the main evaluation mission, and collate the draft and final reports based on team members' inputs.

EO will provide ongoing quality assurance during the preparation of the evaluation design and final report. EO will also contract a Research Assistant to facilitate the initial desk review and a Programme Assistant to support logistical and administrative matters. EO will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ADR. These will include costs related to the Beneficiary Assessment, the participation of the team members, as well as the preliminary research and the issuance of the final ADR report. EO will also cover costs of any stakeholder workshop convened as part of the evaluation.

9.2   THE EVALUATION TEAM

It is envisaged that the main evaluation team will be composed of the following members:

- The EO Evaluation Manager will be responsible for leading the team, coordinating data collection and the production of the draft and final report; he will also review programme results in the poverty reduction, rural development and environment portfolio.

- An expert in integrated UN missions, strategic positioning and partnerships, with a background in complex crisis as well as a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking, policy advice and coordination of complex UN programmes in conflict-affected countries;

- A **governance specialist** with the broadest experience possible in evaluating "state building", including election support, anti-corruption and human rights programmes;

- A **conflict/security specialist** with experience in evaluating peace-building, conflict resolution and rule of law in conflict-affected countries;

- A **capacity building specialist** with experience in evaluating large institutional strengthening programmes.

- A **gender specialist** could complement the team (tentative) to review the manner in which the programme has mainstreamed gender considerations.

The team members can be either national or international. They must be independent, that is, they must not have been directly involved in the formulation or implementation of the evaluated UNDP programmes in Afghanistan. Experience in conflict/post-conflict situations will be required. Prior experience in Afghanistan will be a desirable characteristic for all team members.

The evaluation team will be supported by a Research Assistant based in EO in New York.

The evaluation team will abide to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation and will adhere to its Code of Conduct.[166]

9.3   THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY OFFICE

The Country Office will support the evaluation team in liaising with key partners. It will provide the team with all necessary information regarding UNDP activities in the country and contribute to the organization of a stakeholder workshop by the end of the evaluation process. The country office will also be requested to provide additional logistical support to the evaluation team as required, for example assisting site visits. The Country Office will contribute support in kind (for example office space for the Evaluation Team) but the EO will cover local transportation costs.

9.4   THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The UNDP Evaluation Office is keen to strengthen the involvement of national authorities in the ADRs, while ensuring an independent assessment process and results. In Afghanistan, the main government counterpart to UNDP – the Ministry of Finance who chairs the UNDP CPD committee and is also in charge of broader aid coordination – will be asked to coordinate Government's inputs, in terms of:

- Providing written comments on the ADR terms of reference;

- Organizing an introductory meeting at the start of the main evaluation mission to brief the evaluation team on Government's areas of priorities and interests;

- Participating in the debriefing upon completion of the main mission;

---

166   UNEG, 'Norms for Evaluation in the UN System' and 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System', April 2005.

- Providing written comments on the draft ADR report; and

- Participating in the final stakeholder workshop.

10. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The outputs expected from the Evaluation Team[167] are:

- The "factual report" to be completed by the Team Leader based on Team Members' inputs after the main evaluation mission. It will be reviewed internally in EO, and shared with concerned UNDP units (Country Office, Regional Bureau and central bureaus) for comments and factual corrections. It will be shared with the partners attending the stakeholder workshop.

- The ADR report, produced after the second mission and the stakeholder workshop, and commented through the following process:

  □ The Team Leader will prepare a draft report ('zero draft') based on Team Members' inputs, for internal review by EO. He will make appropriate revisions to the report based on comments provided by EO. The draft will be written in accordance with the format and style as instructed by the Evaluation Office. The main text will have a maximum of 80 pages.

□ Once cleared by the Evaluation Office, the revised report ('first draft') will then be submitted to concerned UNDP units for comments.

□ Based on the comments received from RBAP and the Country Office, the team will further revise the report, while recording any changes made in an 'audit trail' matrix. This version ('second draft') will then be shared with other stakeholders (Government, donors, UNAMA) for their comments.

□ Based on the comments received from stakeholders, the team will produce the 'final draft' and submit it to EO. The final evaluation report will be presented to the Executive Board, and will be made available to the general public.

- A PowerPoint presentation for the debriefing meetings concluding the first mission, and another version for presentation at the Stakeholder Workshop.

Detailed outlines for the ADR report and sections will be provided to the Evaluation Team by the Evaluation Manager. All ADR products will be written and published in English. A summary of the report will be translated in national languages (Dari and Pashtoo), as well as in French and Spanish.

---

167   The outputs expected from the company to be contracted to undertake the Beneficiary Assessment Team are defined under specific TORs.

11. DURATION AND TIMING

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

Activity	Estimated date
Desk review	February-March 2012
Preparatory mission	March
Terms of Reference shared with UNDP-Kabul, RBAP & Government	30 May
Beneficiary Assessment field work	July-September
Beneficiary Assessment report 1st draft	31 October
Beneficiary Assessment report final version	31 December
Main evaluation mission	March-April 2013
Factual report submitted to the Evaluation Office	30 May
Factual report shared within UNDP	15 June
Comments received from concerned UNDP units	30 June
Factual report finalized	15 July
Outcome evaluations (managed by Country Office)	June-August
Outcome evaluations reports become available	20 September
Team Leader comments on Outcome Evaluation reports	30 September
Second evaluation mission and stakeholder workshop (10 days)	October
ADR "zero draft" for EO review	30 October
ADR first draft shared with UNDP	15 November
Comments received from UNDP	30 November
ADR second draft sent to Government	1st January 2014
Comments received from Government	31 January 2014
Report finalized	28 February 2014

Annex 2

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 'Subnational Administration in Afghanistan: Assessment and Recommendations for Action', by Evans, A. et al., March 2004.

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 'Beyond the Market - Can the AREDP Transform Afghanistan's Rural Nonfarm Economy?' February 2011.

Aikins, M., 'Contracting the Commanders: Transition and the Political Economy of Afghanistan's Private Security Industry', Centre on International Cooperation, New York University, October 2012.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2007.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2008.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2009.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2010: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2010.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2011: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2011.

Asia Foundation, 'Afghanistan in 2012: A Survey of the Afghan People', 2012.

Barfield, T. and Nojumi, N., 'Bringing More Effective Governance to Afghanistan: 10 Pathways to Stability', in *Middle East Policy,* Vol. XVII, No. 4*,* December 2010.

Beath, A., Christia, F. and Enikolopov, R., 'Winning Hearts and Minds through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan', World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 6129, October 2012.

Bhatia, M. V. and Sedra, M., 'Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict: Armed Groups, Disarmament and Security in a Post-War Society', Routledge, February 2011.

Democracy International, 'Survey of the Afghan Parliament', July 2012.

Democracy International, 'Survey on Political Institutions, Elections, and Democracy in Afghanistan- Final Report', November 2012.

Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 'Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co- operation', Busan, Republic of Korea, 2011.

Hogg, R., Nassif, C., Osorio, C.G. and Byrd, W., 'Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014', The World Bank, May 2012.

International Crisis Group, 'Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan - Asia Report N°210', August 2011.

International Development Committee, 'Afghanistan: Development progress and prospects after 2014', Sixth Report of Session 2012-13, House of Commons, Parliament of the United Kingdom, July 2012.

Lyall, J., Blair, G. and Imai, K., 'Explaining Support for Combatants During Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan', in *American Political Science Review*, November 2013.

Nixon, H., 'The 'Subnational Governance' Challenge and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance', in *Snapshots of an Intervention, the Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance (2001–11)*, Martine van Bijlert and Sari Kouvo (ed.), The Afghanistan Analysts Network, 117-123, 2012

Nixon, H., 'Subnational Statebuilding in Afghanistan', Synthesis Paper Series, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, April 2008.

OECD, '2011 OECD Report on Aid Predictability: Survey on Donors' Forward Spending Plans 2011- 2013', 2011.

OSCE/ODIHR, 'Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Presidential and Provincial Council Elections – Election Support Team Final Report', 8 December 2009.

OSCE/ODIHR, 'Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Parliamentary Elections – Election Support Team Final Report', 26 November 2010.

Parenti, C., 'Ideology and Electricity: The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan', in *The Nation*, May 7, 2012.

Ponzio, R., 'Transforming Political Authority: UN Democratic Peacebuilding in Afghanistan', in *Global Governance* 13, 255-275, 2007.

US Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Afghanistan's High Office of Oversight Needs Significantly Strengthened Authority, Independence, and Donor Support to Become an Effective Anti-Corruption Institution', SIGAR Audit 10-2: High Office of Oversight, December 2009.

Wilton Park Reports, 'Winning 'Hearts and Minds' in Afghanistan: Assessing the Effectiveness of Development Aid in COIN Operations', in *Report on Wilton Park Conference 1022, March 11-14, 2010*, July 2010.

World Bank, 'Interim Strategy Note for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the period FY12- FY14', March 2012.

World Bank, 'International development association and international finance corporation interim strategy note for Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the period FY12-FY14', March 2012

NATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Afghanistan Civil Society Forum, 'Baseline Study for Pilot Democratic Policing Across 8 Districts of Northern Kabul Province', March 2010.

Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 'A Capacity Development Assessment Report', Training and Capacity Building Department, March 2013.

Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 'Operational Plan for the 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections (draft)', April 2013.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan National Development Strategy FY 1387-1391 (2008 – 2013), A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction', April 2008.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', 26 January 2004.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, '1387 National Budget Statement', Ministry of Finance, 2008.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, '1390 National Budget Statement', Ministry of Finance, 2011.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'National Policy for Unified District and Village Governance and Development', Submission to Cabinet of the Government of Afghanistan, Independent Directorate of Local Governance and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, 13 April 2008.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2012', Ministry of Finance, 2013.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2011', Ministry of Finance, 2012.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Development Cooperation Report for 2010', Ministry of Finance, 2011.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Capacity Development to Accelerate NAPWA Implementation', Programme 4, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Independent Directorate of Local Governance, 'National Priority Program for Local Governance', 2012.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Towards a Self-Sustaining Afghanistan: An Economic Transition Strategy', 2011.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010', October 2010.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010', Ministry of Public Health and Afghan Public Health Institute, November 2011.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and The World Bank, 'Poverty Status in Afghanistan: A Profile based on National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/08', July 2010.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), Joint Report for the first Senior Officials' Meeting, July 2013.

Kabul University, 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011 – The Forgotten Front: Water Security and the Crisis in Sanitation', Centre for Policy and Human Development, 2011.

Ministry of Counter Narcotics and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Afghanistan Opium Survey 2012 – Summary of Findings', November 2012.

Qarizada, Shafiq, 'Future of Afghanistan's Development Context', undated.

UN DOCUMENTS

STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

UNAMA, Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) - UN position paper on inclusive and sustained growth and development

UNAMA, TMAF - UN position paper on corruption

UN OCHA, 'Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Afghanistan 2013', December 2012.

UNDP, 'Strategy for Legitimate and Inclusive Governance, ver. 2.0', March 2013.

UN, 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', October 2000.

UNDP, 'Sub-National Governance and Development Strategy', July 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Note on Country Office focus and Strategies', 2013.

UNDP, 'Building the Capacity to Learn – The focus of the UNDP Country Programme (2015-2020)', 2013.

UNDP, 'Supporting Capacity Development in Conflict and Fragile Contexts', Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and Bureau for Development Policy, 2010.

UN, 'The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security', *Report of the Secretary-General S/2013/350*, 13 June 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Cluster Strategy and Approach', 2012.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Common Country Assessment Macro Framework 2013', 2013.

UNDP, '20 Results in Afghanistan', January 2012

UNDP, 'Results Oriented Annual Report for Afghanistan', 2004.

UNDP, 'Equity and resilience in a complex environment – a short note on country office focus and strategies', 2013.

UNDP, 'A sustainable capacity to deliver – the proposed focus of the next UNDP Afghanistan country programme', 2013.

UNDP, 'Conflict and Peace Capacities in Afghanistan: Assessment Report', May 2013.

UNDP, 'Strengthening risk management in UNDP's country office in Afghanistan (draft)', 15 April 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Challenges and achievements of the concluding programme period 2010 – 2013', 27 May 2013.

UN, 'UN policy framework, conditions and guidance for transition of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)', December 2012.

UNDP, 'Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007 - Bridging Modernity and Tradition: Rule of Law and the Search for Justice Report 2007', 2007.

UNAMA, 'Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict', 2012.

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission/UNAMA, 'Third Report on the Joint Monitoring of Political Rights, Presidential and Provincial Council Elections', 1 August – 21 October 2009', undated.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENTS, COUNTRY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN AND UNDAF DOCUMENTS

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Presentations to the next CPD brainstorming sessions', 30 June 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Concept note for 2020 – 2014 Country Programme Action Plan review and brainstorming session on the new Country Programme Document', May 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2013 between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the UNDP', December 2009.

UN, 'UNDAF in Support of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy - 2010-2013', October 2009.

UN, 'Mid-Term Progress Report for the UNDAF for Afghanistan' (not published), 2013.

UNDP, 'UNDP Support to CCA/UNDAF and Mechanics of CPD Formulation', 9 May 2013.

UNDP, 'Country Programme Document for Afghanistan (2010-2013)', September 2009.

EVALUATIONS

Ahmed, F. B., 'SAISEM - Final Evaluation Report', UNDP, MDG Achievement Fund, January 2013.

Atos Consulting, 'Evaluation of the Law and Order Trust Fund For Afghanistan (LOTFA) Phase V', UNDP, April 2012.

Carrio, J., Nelson, S., Ruescas, C., Claudio, M. and Navarro, C., 'Final Evaluation: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow Project', UNDP Afghanistan, June 2011.

Cook, M. and Finn, D., 'Election Evaluation Mission: Afghan Voter Registration 2003 and Elections Projects 2004/2005', UNDP Afghanistan, May 2006.

Coonjohn, J., 'Afghanistan: Final Assessment', High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, UNDP, October 2012.

DFID, 'Project Completion Report, Afghan Elections 2009-2011', updated June/July 2011.

Gibbons, G., 'Programme Evaluation of the Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme – I (ASGP I) 2006 to 2010 & Programme Review of Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme – II (ASGP II) 2010 to 2014, Final Evaluation Report', UNDP Afghanistan, September 2011.

Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, 'Report of the Public Inquiry into the Kabul Bank Crisis', November 2012.

Jones, D., 'Evaluation of Support for an Effective Afghan Legislature Project, Phase II (SEAL II)', UNDP Afghanistan, May/June 2010.

Lafrenière, L. et al., 'Mission undertaken in Afghanistan in relation to the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme', Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP, 2006.

Poulton, R-E., 'DIAG Evaluation - Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups in Afghanistan, a project of the United Nations Development Programme & the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)', EPES Mandala Consulting, April 2009.

Rajan, R. et al., 'Strategic Programme Review of UNDP Afghanistan: The Way Forward – a Transformation Agenda for UNDP Afghanistan', UNDP, 2010.

Samuel Hall Consulting/UNDP, 'Fieldwork Synthesis of NABDP Beneficiary Assessment', October 2012.

Sud, I., 'Afghanistan: Lessons from Ten Years of Aid', Independent Evaluation Group, The World Bank, September 2012.

The World Bank, 'Afghanistan Country Program Evaluation, Evaluation of the World Bank Group Program, 2002–11', Independent Evaluation Group, 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Project Evaluation', August 2011.

UNDP, 'Afghanistan Programme Coherence for Improved Development Impact', Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, October 2012.

UNDP, 'Afghanistan Voter Registration Feasibility Study', report prepared at the request of the Independent Electoral Commission of Afghanistan under the ELECT II support programme, August 2012.

UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', Evaluation Office, 2009.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Final Evaluation', June 2011.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'SEAL Project Evaluation', 2006.

UNDP, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes - Afghanistan Case Study', Evaluation Office, 2011.

UNDP, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) - AFG/0071252 - Independent / External Mid-term Evaluation Report - Project Period 26 June 2009-30 June 2012', prepared by Fainula Rodriguez and Hangama Anwari, August 2011.

UNDP, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Project Evaluation - Management Response', November 2012.

UNDP, 'UNDP Support to Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report', February 2013.

PROJECT DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Comnas, B. and Ghauri, K., 'Independent Management Review of the National Area Based Development Programme III', UNDP Afghanistan, December 2010.

UNDP, 'Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) - Management Review', December 2012.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) 2002-2013 - Project Overview', undated.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project Mid-Term Review, Phase A', February 2013.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project Revised Framework Project Extension', April 2013.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project Document', 2006. UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project Annual Progress Report', 2010.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow Phase II (ELECT II) Annual Progress Report', 2012.

UNDP/ ELECT Project, 'Q & A on Elections', undated.

UNDP, 'Risk Compact for the Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow Phase II (ELECT II) Project', undated.

UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project 2006-2011', undated. UNDP, 'Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) Project Document, Revision 3', May 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan, Patterson, John, 'Supporting an Effective Afghan Legislature (SEAL) Project Design and Brief', 2013.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Supporting an Effective Afghan Legislature (SEAL II) Project Document (March 2008-February 2012)', undated.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Traditional Justice in Afghanistan, Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA)', May 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Fact Sheet', 2012.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Project Annual Progress Report', 2011.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Project Paper', 2011.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Project Document', 2011.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA) Phase II Project Document', November 2012.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) Quarterly Project Reports', 2007- 2009.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Making Aid and Budgets Work (MABW) Project Document', May 2007.

UNDP Afghanistan, 'Making Aid and Budgets Work (MABW) Project Annual Progress Report', 2009.

Annex 4

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT

Region	Province	District / City	Village
North	Balkh	Balkh	Center
			Alquchi
		Mazar-e-Sharif	Center
			Center
	Kunduz	Khan Abad	Dahana Deh Waran
			Musa Zai
		Kunduz City	Hazrath Sultan, Hichkly Uzbakia, Kanami Khord
			Chilan Mazar
	Badakhshan	Argo	Shatak
			Chatraq, Naw Abad Shahmiri
		Faizabad	Parna Kham, Layaba
			Qazi Abdul Aziz
East	Kabul	Farza	Center
		Deh Sabz	Tara Khel
		Bagrami	Center
		Qarabagh	Center
			Paitawa
	Nangarhar	Kama	Kakal Bajawri
			Mirza Kheil 1-3
		Jalalabad	Anar Bagh
			Salam Poor
	Paktia	Sayyid Karam	Koz Sejenk
			Kander Khil
		Gardez	Dogh Abad
			Bala da
West	Herat	Karrukh	Majghandak 1 & 5, Haji Saeed Ahmad, Tahiriha Ab Rahman
			Qala-i-Bala
		Herat	Center
			Jalawardi
	Badghis	Ab Kamari	Qaltak
			Aghak, Chashma Ghaibee, Dahanzaw, Laghari
		Qala-e-Nau	Houzi Khodai, Kalan
			Charbagh 1 & 2

Region	Province	District / City	Village
South	Kandahar	Daman	Tarnak
			Morghankecha
		Arghandab	Baba Sahib
	Helmand	Garm Ser	Darwishan
			Meyanjasti
		Lashkargah	Dawlat Khan Koch
			Karti Lagan
			Tor Tang

UNDP

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.