

**Final Evaluation Report
The Afghanistan Anti-Corruption,
Transparency, Integrity and Openness
(ACTION) Project**

Date submitted: June 26, 2023
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PROJECT PROFILE

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project/outcome title	The Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION)	
Atlas ID	00120040	
Corporate outcome and output	Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development	
Country	Afghanistan	
Region	Asia	
Date project document signed	01 July 2019	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	01 July 2019	31 December 2024
Project budget	US\$ 7,025,000	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	US\$ 6,075,000	
Funding source	Denmark	
Implementing party	UNDP/ACTION team (Direct Implementation Modality)	
Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	01 July 2019	31 December 2022
Evaluators	Olivera Puric	
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Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	30.12.2022.	30.06.2023.

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Lastly, I would like to thank all of the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation, including representatives from the civil society organizations. Their openness and willingness to share information were critical in providing a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact and effectiveness.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACTION Project	The Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness Project
AGO	Afghanistan Attorney General's Office
ACJC	Anticorruption Justice Center
ACC	Anticorruption Commission
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFA	De Facto Authorities
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PWD	Person With Disability
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation is an independent external evaluation of the Afghanistan Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness Project (ACTION Project) in line with UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation¹. The evaluation was commissioned by the project and covers the period 1 July 2019 – 31 December 2022.

The overall scope of the Evaluation is to assess results gained to date and to identify recommendations and lessons learnt for future programming. The evaluation was based on data available at the time of evaluation, including project documents and other relevant reports, as well as extensive stakeholder consultations, conducted over a period of two months. The primary audience for the evaluation is the project and the UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan, the donor – Royal Kingdom of Denmark, representatives of the Project Board and other development partners. The secondary audience for the evaluation are other stakeholders, including CSOs.

The methodology used a mixed-methods approach but was essentially qualitative. It comprised an analysis of all relevant project documentation shared by the project, and data collected through virtual meetings and focus group discussions with a total of 77 stakeholders and beneficiaries. Participants included project team members, monitoring and evaluation officers, civil society representatives, community volunteers, media, and former government and donor representatives. Apart from interviews with the project team members themselves, all other interviews were conducted independently from the project team. A total of nine women (one representative of civil society organizations and three community representatives) and 68 men were consulted. The evaluation adhered to international best practices and standards in evaluation, including the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations. It was conducted in an ethical and legal manner, considering the well-being of those involved in and affected by the evaluation. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with professional ethics and standards to minimize risks to evaluation participants, including the principle of ‘do no harm’, while a protocol was in place to ensure that the clearly defined informed consent of all evaluation participants was obtained (see Annex VII for the informed consent protocol). All stakeholders were informed that the evaluation was being conducted independently and that their participation in the evaluation was entirely voluntary as well as being confidential and anonymous.

Due to the context with the political and security situation in Afghanistan, the evaluator was faced with complex challenges in meeting all government and donor representatives but did manage to cover these aspects to the extent possible as well. In addition, the evaluator expanded the desk research process to endeavour to capture better the government and donor perspectives. Community sentiments were captured through interviews with various civil society organizations working with diverse vulnerable groups as well as with a representative sample of community volunteers. Therefore, the primary data collection process was comprehensive, covering all categories of stakeholders as well as direct beneficiaries, despite the numerous challenges in reaching out to all of them. This was achieved with extensive support from the Country Office and in particular, M&E officers. Based on the achievements to date, the Evaluation assessed the project using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria on (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability and cross-cutting issues including gender equality. It is important to note that the criteria were not applied mechanically, but rather deeply contextualized – in order to support a

¹ As documented by the Ethics Guidelines for Evaluation Pledge, found in Annex VI

high quality and useful evaluation. Such an approach also follows the OECD guidelines for evaluation criteria².

Overall, given the extremely challenging context, the project punched above its weight in terms of its size and scope with the results it has achieved and the tools and best practices developed, which have the potential for scaling up and/or replication, even in the current operational context with the De Facto Authority (DFA). This includes the model for the low value grants scheme, along with the capacity building program for CSOs, especially having in mind the current brain drain in the country, and the monitoring and evaluation application, which was recognised as a successful model by a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and global level. The project's partners, without exception, highly regarded the level of expertise, cultural sensitivity, responsiveness and commitment of the project team. Given the successful results of the project, the recommendation of the evaluation is to pursue further efforts, especially taking into consideration the human-development-peace (HDP) nexus building on the project's data collection and risk management skills and abilities.

The ACTION Project was implemented in an extremely challenging context, particularly given the political and security situation in Afghanistan. Despite these challenges, the project was able to achieve a number of its objectives, including improving the technical and operational capacities of the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre (ACJC), providing support to various types of issues through low-value grants, experimenting with different anticorruption tools, and adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19. The project's theory of change was developed based on the work under an Initiation Plan, which preceded the ACTION Project, contributing to a well contextualized and relevant project. Anticorruption programming requires long-term dedication and is very susceptible to external factors, as seen in the case of Afghanistan. It should be noted, however, that the ACTION Project needed to depart from the envisaged Theory of Change, following the rapid political changes in mid-2021 and, in agreement with the donor, focused its work only on the demand side of the equation.

Regarding the overall impact of the project, it can be challenging to directly contribute project measures with a decrease in corruption perception and incidence presented in the background section of the Evaluation Report, particularly given the sensitive nature of the issue of fighting corruption and the relatively short time span and scope of the project. However, there is a line-up of anecdotal evidence provided in the stakeholder interviews as well as in each project report, which testifies to smaller-scale impacts of the project on actual issues and cases. Despite the challenges, the project has been praised for its optimal team structure and high performance, adjusting to the changed circumstances efficiently and bearing results, in particular related to outputs 2 and 3. The country needs all the support it can get at this critical moment, and the international community must continue to prioritize efforts to promote good governance and accountability in Afghanistan, alongside humanitarian efforts. The high relevance of the project in Afghanistan cannot be overstated, and the project's approach through the grant scheme for CSOs can be scaled for this and other areas going forward. It is important that UNDP does not abandon civil society during the current operation realities with the DFA. Going forward maintaining the trust and building the capacities of civil society will be crucial for rebuilding a democratic Afghanistan at such time when this allows.

This evaluation report provides a set of 15 findings, two best practices, six challenges, eight conclusions, eight recommendations and ten lessons learned. A detailed overview of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as two case studies on best practices are elaborated in the Report.

² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluation-criteria-flyer-2020.pdf>

In terms of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria that the Evaluation was asked to assess - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability – the Evaluation used an evaluation rating scale of (1) – (4), with 1 being unsuccessful, 2 being moderately successful, 3 being successful and 4 being very successful. The rating scale is further detailed under section 2.5 of the report. It is noted that the project has scored highly.

Evaluation Ranking:

Relevance – 4/4 – Very successful

The relevance of the ACTION project in Afghanistan cannot be overstated. Corruption has been a long-standing challenge in the country both pre and post the August 2021 political transition. Its initial alignment with the country's policies and strategies, as well as the UNDP's Strategic Plan and CPD, makes it a critical tool in achieving SDG 16.5 and underscores UNDP's commitment to supporting Afghanistan's development agenda.

Effectiveness – 4/4 – Very successful

It is important to note that the ACTION Project was implemented in a challenging context, particularly given the political and security situation in Afghanistan. Despite this, the project was able to achieve a number of its objectives, including improving the technical and operational capacities of the ACJC, providing support to various types of issues through low-value grants, experimenting with different anticorruption tools, and adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19. Additionally, the project addressed a critical lack of data in an area of high importance to the country, contributing to better delivery of health services, as well as their transparency and accountability. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all envisaged activities were implemented due to the challenging context. Nevertheless, the project was overall effective in achieving its objectives and making progress towards the goal of reducing corruption in Afghanistan.

Efficiency – 4/4 – Very successful

Overall, it can be concluded that the project maintained a pace of delivery as much as it could, with almost all impediments being external, at such magnitude, which could not have been predicted at the project design phase and taken into account when planning. The external impediments include COVID19 which started several months into the project implementation and a rapid political transformation, which happened just as the project managed to accelerate. However, with an optimal team structure of high performance, the project has adjusted to the changed circumstances efficiently and is bearing results related to outputs 2 and 3. The approach implemented by the project through the grant scheme can be replicated and upscaled for this and other areas going forward.

Sustainability – 3/4 – Successful

Elements of sustainability were embedded in planning phases, but largely due to external circumstances, affected the sustainability of project results. While it is hard to directly link the project results to some improvements in the overall perception and incidence of corruption, there is anecdotal evidence of impact at smaller scales extending also beyond the scope of the project and thus testifying to the fact that some of the methods employed by the project, could be scaled onto other areas. Ownership of the low value grants scheme is assessed as being high and the sustainability of both this and the M&E app, which can be expanded and replicated into other sectors, is likely to continue beyond the lifespan of the project.

Overall – 15/16 – Very Successful

The ACTION Project in Afghanistan had a high relevance in a challenging context, demonstrated effectiveness through improved capacities and engagement in diverse approaches, while external factors impacted the sustainability of its results, emphasizing the need for long-term dedication in anticorruption programming.

Legend

- Very successful (4)
- Successful (3)
- Moderately successful (2)
- Unsuccessful (1)
-

For a detailed explanation of the evaluation ranking scale, please see section 2.5 below.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

UNDP has been engaged in supporting the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in combatting corruption since January 2018 through a Project Initiation Plan – “Afghanistan Development Plan for a Nation-Wide Anticorruption Project”. The Initiation Plan aimed at informing the planning and strategic objective of a more inclusive multi-year, anticorruption project through establishing the evidence base, partnerships and related implementation strategies and modalities to ensure that the broader project will be demand based and impactful.

Following the Initiation Plan and based on its results, the Afghanistan Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION) Project was launched in August 2019 with a budget of USD\$ 7,025,000 from the Royal Danish Embassy and UNDP’s TRAC and other resources. The Project was originally envisaged to end on 31 December 2020 but was extended through a project revision until December 2021, following the conclusions of a Project Board meeting on 3rd December 2020. The project was subsequently revised and extended until 31 December 2024.

The main objective of the ACTION project is continued joint effort to support both institutional (supply) and citizen engagement (demand) sides to increase public trust in and transparency of Afghan security and justice institutions. On the government institutions’ side, under the overall guidance from the Afghanistan Attorney General’s Office (AGO), the project focused its support to the flagship initiative of the government to combat corruption, namely the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC) and newly established Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) by enhancing their logistical and technical capacity to address high-level corruption cases. On the demand side, the project is working with civil society organizations and media to improve public awareness on anti-corruption and how to hold service provider accountable for better service delivery.

The Project operates under the Corporate Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development in Direct Implementation Modality and started off initially with three outputs. In July 2021 two additional outputs were added as follows:

Output 1: The Anti-Corruption Justice Center Improved Technical and Operational Capacities to Effectively Adjudicate Corruption Cases

Output 2: Non-State Actors and Community Groups, including women and youth, can better promote Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the Security and Justice Sectors.

Output 3: COVID-19 response’s Transparency and Accountability is strengthened through citizen monitoring

Additional Output 4: The AGO has improved internal integrity, more efficient processes, and is better able to serve the public

Additional Output 5: The ACC is strengthened to provide more effective oversight of justice and security institutions for increased prevention of corruption and enhanced service provision.

Due to the political changes in the country since August 2021 and the takeover of the country by the De-Facto Authority (DFA), as per the instructions by the United Nations, the ACTION project ceased activities under output 1, 4 and 5 which are relevant to the government institutions.

The ACTION project continued the activities under output 2 and output 3 on the demand side engaging with civil society organizations, media, academia, and the private sector.

No activities under outputs 4 and 5 were initiated since the approval of the revised project document in August 2021.

1.2. Context


Forty years of war, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty and the COVID-19 pandemic are a reality for people in Afghanistan.

In 2020 The COVID19 crisis imposed a heavy burden on the economy, public finances, and private sector investment. While favourable weather conditions supported the continued growth of agricultural production and improvements in rural livelihoods, the urban services and industry sectors were hit hard by lockdown measures and trade disruptions. Restoration of confidence had been hampered, however, by challenging political and security conditions, and uncertainties regarding future international support. At the Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, held in November 2020, the international community committed to continued civilian grant support. But overall pledges fell substantially below previous levels, and a large share of pledged support was made conditional on government achieving progress with peace talks, protection of human rights, and fighting corruption.³

AT THE START OF 2021, 18.4 million people (nearly half the population) required humanitarian assistance to survive, while tens of millions required social assistance to weather the negative effects of the pandemic.

Food insecurity soared and malnutrition, particularly among women and children, was rife.

Starting the year as one of the worst humanitarian crises globally, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan deteriorated sharply in 2021 due to severe drought, increased conflict dynamics and the abrupt suspension of international development funding following the 15 August takeover of the country by the Taliban. The conflict, coupled with political and social upheaval and economic collapse, pushed millions more people into dire circumstances. By the end of the year, the 2022



“WE REPORTED LATE LAST YEAR THAT AN ESTIMATED 97 PERCENT OF AFGHANS COULD BE LIVING IN POVERTY BY MID-2022, AND REGRETTABLY, THAT NUMBER IS BEING REACHED FASTER THAN ANTICIPATED,” STEINER SAID. “AND WITH COMMODITIES PRICING SKYROCKETING GLOBALLY, WE KNOW THAT PEOPLE HERE CANNOT AFFORD TO MEET THEIR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS LIKE FOOD, HEALTHCARE, AND EDUCATION. HOWEVER, I HAVE WITNESSED THE DETERMINATION OF AFGHANS TO GET BACK ON THEIR FEET AND WORK FOR SOCIAL STABILITY.”

UNDP ADMINISTRATOR ACHIM STEINER MADE THE COMMENTS DURING A TWO-DAY TRIP IN MARCH 2022 TO THE COUNTRY WHERE HE MET WITH WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS, ACADEMICS, CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES, PRIVATE SECTOR, AND DECISION MAKERS. HE ALSO FLAGGED THE URGENT NEED FOR ACTION TO PREVENT SPIRALLING POVERTY AND ECONOMIC INSTABILITY.

<https://afghanistan.un.org/en/176250-millions-afghan-lives-and-livelihoods-danger-without-support-says-un-development-programme>

³ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35363/Afghanistan-Development-Update-Setting-Course-to-Recovery.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

Humanitarian Needs Overview identified 24.4 million people in need, a 33 per cent increase in one year.⁴

Nearly 23 million people are food insecure, many of them severely so, and more than 2 million children are suffering from malnutrition. In June 2022, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck the central region of Afghanistan, killing over 1,000 people and pushing already vulnerable communities to the brink. The needs across Afghanistan remain vast. Rates of food insecurity, poverty and debt have soared since the Taliban returned to power, even if the roots of these problems existed long before 15 August 2021 following decades of neglect and underdevelopment in key public services and infrastructure.⁵

The August 2021 transition resulted in a paradigm shift in the country's aid-driven economy. The political uncertainty and fear resulted in a confidence crisis causing an exodus of highly skilled people and the closure of businesses and economic activities. The sudden stop of international aid and the confidence crisis culminated in three inter-related simultaneous shocks.

In 2022, poverty worsened, leading to a humanitarian crisis. Many lost their livelihoods, and households struggled to afford food and accumulated debts. The underfunded and understaffed health system struggled with a surge in COVID-19 and measles infections. The crisis was compounded by natural disasters, including drought, earthquakes, and floods. The earthquakes damaged homes and left many people in need of humanitarian aid. The floods destroyed homes, businesses, crops, farmland, and irrigation systems, impacting livelihoods in nine provinces. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that Afghanistan is ill-prepared for climate change.⁶

It is important to note that the de facto authorities implemented a series of rules that severely restricted the rights of women and girls, leading to their exclusion from numerous aspects of public life and hindering their access to justice. These regulations included: the prohibition of girls from receiving secondary education in September 2021, the prohibition of women from appearing in films and television dramas in November 2021, the ban on women traveling long distances without a male guardian in December 2021, the requirement for women to wear the Islamic hijab in May 2022, the ban on women using parks, gyms, and public baths in November 2022, the barring of female students from higher education in December 2022, and the suspension of all schools and private programs for girls beyond sixth grade in December 2022. In December 2022, the de facto authorities also issued a ban on Afghan women working for NGOs, which resulted in numerous national and international NGOs stopping or significantly reducing their operations since female workers play a crucial role in providing aid⁷.

RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN 2022—ADJUSTING TO THE NEW REALITIES
While some key challenges stemming from the crisis persist, there are some positive signs that the economy is adjusting to a low-level equilibrium. While inflation remains high, some other indicators have improved: (i) exports have increased; (ii) exchange rate volatility has lessened; and (iii) domestic revenue collection is relatively healthy, (iv) some improvement in living conditions has been observed amid large-scale deprivation and food insecurity; and (v) private businesses are adjusting to the new operating environment.

Improved security and reduced corruption are two positives highlighted by surveyed firms. Most

⁴ <https://afghanistan.un.org/en/187099-afghanistan-humanitarian-fund-annual-report-2021>

⁵ Adapted from: <https://afghanistan.un.org/en/194977-one-year-taliban-takeover-we-cant-turn-our-backs-afghanistans-future>

⁶ Adapted from the UN Afghanistan Results Report 2022

⁷ Ibid.

businesses reported that the security environment had improved since November 2021. A higher proportion of men-owned firms cited improvements, as compared to women-owned firms. More than a quarter of women-owned firms reported experiencing a deterioration in the security environment for their businesses in recent months. On the other hand, firms reported significantly reduced corruption compared to pre-August 2021. The incidence of unofficial payments and bribes dropped significantly after August 2021, as reported by World Bank survey respondents. Fewer than 10 percent of surveyed firms reported having made unofficial payments since August 2021, compared to 82 percent before that.⁸

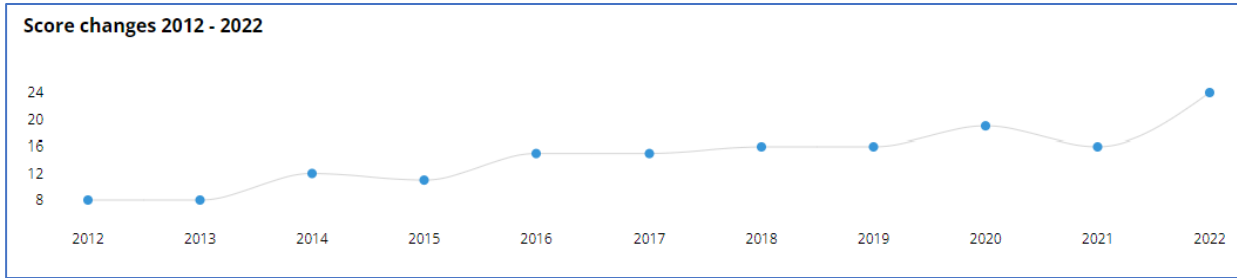
AFGHANISTAN

Score
24/100

Rank **Score change**
150/180 **↑ +8 since 2021**

The last Transparency International Corruption Perception Index was released for 2022⁹, ranking Afghanistan 150th out of 180 surveyed countries, with a score of 24 on a scale where 100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt. Similar to the recorded by the findings of the incidence-based improvements survey conducted by the World Bank, the results of the 2022 Corruption Perception Index also note a considerable improvement in perceptions of corruption. Although still being overall a very low score, there was a steep

improvement compared to previous years as may be seen on the graph below.



Transparency International Corruption Perception Index

In closing of the context section, the evaluator offers a quote from key informant interviews:
“Patience and persistence and long-term perspective are needed for the development of Afghanistan.”

2. Evaluation objective, purpose and scope.

2.1. Objective

The overall objectives of the present independent evaluation are twofold: 1) to provide a comprehensive independent assessment of ACTION project performance, implementation strategies and to document the success and draw out lessons for deepening impact and; 2) to provide (forward-looking and actionable) recommendations to inform the realignments in scope

⁸ Source: Afghanistan PSRS, Round 2 (May–June 2022), World Bank. Taken from: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/d7d49962c0c44fd6bb9ba3bfe1b6de1f-0310062022/original/Afghanistan-Development-Update-October-2022.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/afg>

and approach in line with the project's desired outcome as well as future designing of UNDP's work on anti-corruption, transparency, integrity and openness area in Afghanistan.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as to:

- Assess project performance and progress against the expected outputs, targets including indicators presented in the RRF and contribution to expected outcome.
- Review and document the success and draw out lessons for deepening impact
- Assess the effectiveness of the project's engagement with UNDP ACTION project implementing partners including civil society organizations (CSOs).
- Identify challenges and the effectiveness of the strategic approaches that project adopted for addressing those challenges.
- Ascertain the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project interventions.
- Outline recommendations, including potential realignments in scope and approach in line with the project's desired outcome
- Provide forward looking recommendations to inform the future designing of UNDP's work on Anti-corruption area.
- Report on the achievements of the ACTION project plus success stories on the project, which will be published on UNDP website.
- Highlight project's overall accountability within the corporate framework, e.g., contribution to higher level results, such as Strategic Plan, CPD etc.

2.2. The Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation assessed the ACTION project's progress against the Project Document and its amendments, targets stipulated in the Result and Resources Framework and the achieved results from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2022 as well as proposed forward looking and actionable programmatic recommendations. The evaluation was based on a desk review of project related documents and in-depth virtual interviews and surveys as outlined in the methodology section. The evaluation also documented achievements, good practices, success stories, lessons learned or transferable examples. Based on the achievements to date, the evaluation assessed the project using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria on (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability and cross-cutting issues including gender equality. It is important to note that the criteria were not applied mechanically, but rather deeply contextualized – in order to support a high quality and useful evaluation. Such an approach also follows the OECD guidelines for evaluation criteria¹⁰.

The evaluation's geographical coverage includes all of the project's targeted provinces in Afghanistan.

2.3. The Project's Theory of Change

The project's theory of change was developed based on the work under an Initiation Plan, which preceded the ACTION Project. The Initiation Plan portrayed the need for a holistic approach in tackling the complex issue of fighting corruption and drew its strategy through a HRBA approach. As noted in the Project Document – UNDP will work with both duty bearers (supply) and rights

¹⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluation-criteria-flyer-2020.pdf>

holders (demand) to create the space for both state and non-state actors to address corruption. Efforts of the Government should be met by efforts of citizens and vice-versa.

The Project Document further outlines its theory of change as follows:

If the Anti-Corruption Justice Center is supported to effectively and systematically prosecute high level corruption cases;

And if communities are enabled to demand more transparency and accountability;

Then the culture of impunity will be mitigated and the public trust in and transparency of institutions will increase.

The Project Document notes that the longer-term impact of these initiatives converges towards a greater peace, prosperity and sustainability for Afghanistan. Trust is key to legitimacy and the legitimacy of the State is essential for a sustainable peace. Further, with reduced corruption, financial loss will be reduced along with the obstacles to private investment, collection of revenue and overall socio-economic development. Finally, empowered communities proactively holding Governments to account will lead to sustainable anticorruption changes, independently of political landscape changes and pressure from the international community.

It should be noted, however, that the ACTION Project needed to depart from the envisaged Theory of Change, following the rapid political changes in mid 2021 and, in agreement with the donor, focused its work only on the demand side of the equation.

There is no visualization of the theory of change included in the project document.

While the Evaluation is criteria-based and is not a theory-based evaluation, the consultant also reviewed the project's theory of change as part of the analytical process.

2.4. Evaluation criteria and questions

The Evaluation was conducted in line with UNEG's Evaluation Guidelines and Norms and Standards for Evaluation, the revised UNDP Evaluation Guidelines¹¹ as well the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria - (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability. The evaluation also considers any impact that the project has had to date, as well as assessing the potential future impact of the project interventions.

As per the ToR, the Evaluation was asked to consider a number of key questions shaped around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The ToR and key evaluation questions are provided in Annex I.

2.5. Evaluability Analysis and Evaluation Ranking Scale

The Evaluation evaluated the project and its outputs against the evaluation criteria as well as against its context, theory of change and organisational performance.

¹¹ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/index.shtml>

The Evaluation used a rating scale to rank each evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, as described below.

- Very successful (4)
- Successful (3)
- Moderately successful (2)
- Unsuccessful (1)

Scoring of Project Performance:

Rating	Performance description
4 Very successful (Always/almost always)	Performance is clearly very strong in relation to the evaluation question/criterion. Weaknesses are not significant and have been managed effectively.
3 Successful (Mostly, with some exceptions)	Performance is reasonably strong on most aspects of the evaluation question/criterion. No significant gaps or weaknesses, or less significant gaps or weaknesses have mostly been managed effectively.
2 Moderately successful (Sometimes, with many exceptions)	Performance is inconsistent in relation to the question/criterion. There are some serious weaknesses. Meets minimum expectations/requirements as far as can be determined.
1 Unsuccessful (Never or occasionally with clear weaknesses)	Performance is unacceptably weak in relation to the evaluation question/criterion. Does not meet minimum expectations/requirements.

2.6. Cross-cutting issues

As stipulated in the ToR, gender and social inclusion and the human rights based approach aspects were integrated into the evaluation methodology and incorporated into the evaluation matrix. In addition to being participatory and inclusive, the Evaluation’s approach was based on the principles of gender equality. All data gathered was disaggregated to the largest extent possible and efforts were made for positive sampling in terms of ensuring a 50 per cent gender balance during the focus groups with project beneficiaries, as well as minority and other vulnerable group representation where possible. Specific gender and human rights considerations are detailed below.

2.6.1. Diversity and Inclusion

The evaluation ensured a two-pronged approach towards diversity and inclusion, including the extent to which the design, implementation, and results of the project have incorporated gender equality perspectives and rights-based approach.

The first ensured that the evaluation is gender responsive, and efforts were made to promote:

- **Gender and Social Inclusion** throughout the evaluation scope of analysis and the evaluation criteria. It ensured that questions are designed to be gender responsive and that GSI related data was collected at all stages of the evaluation, as available;
- **A gender responsive methodology** ensures appropriate methods and tools that reflect gender sensitivity. It promotes the employment of a mixed methods approach and the collection of disaggregated data. It also guarantees that a wide range of data sources and processes are employed in order to promote diversity, inclusion and representation of all relevant groups in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender and HR analysis:** The evaluation analysed the effects of the intervention on human rights and GSI and ensured that findings include data triangulated from a wide range of social groups and where possible disaggregate data.

The second is to ascertain the extent to which the ACTION project and its results are gender responsive. This entailed a detailed examination of the following:

- The overall design of the ACTION project and the extent to which it ensured that needs of women and other vulnerable groups were considered.
- The implementation of the ACTION project and the extent that it ensured gender sensitivity and HRBA in its activities and the promotion of gender equality and HR both from a project management perspective as well as performance.

Specific guiding questions include:

1. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects? How can the project further broaden in a future phase its contribution to enhancing diversity and inclusion?
2. To what extent have local communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups benefited from the project?

In addition, the methodology used in the evaluation, including data collection and analysis methods is human rights and gender-sensitive to the greatest extent possible, with evaluation data and findings disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, etc. – with a focus on people with disabilities.

3. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation was guided by the basic methodology as set out in the ToR, in line with the UNEG and OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, and keeping in mind the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. As required by the ToR, the evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project.

The evaluation was multi-faceted and the methodological approach used mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methods, as the best vehicle for meeting the evaluation's needs. The consultant ensured that the evaluation was conducted through a participatory and consultative process, which included all relevant national and regional stakeholders and the project beneficiaries.

To this end, a total of 77 stakeholders and beneficiaries were consulted during the course of the evaluation in interview meetings and three focus group discussions (community members organized in Kabul, Herat and Nangarhar). Participants included the project and programme team, UNDP senior management, representatives of the donor (Royal Danish Embassy), national counterparts where possible¹², civil society organizations, community volunteers and media. Apart from interviews with the project team members themselves, all other interviews were conducted independently from the project team, i.e. without the presence of project team members. A representative sample (in terms of geographical scope) of community members participated in key informant interviews facilitated by UNDP M&E officers, while they also facilitated the organization of three focus group discussions with community volunteers, led by the evaluator. A total of 9 women and 68 men were consulted. A full list of stakeholders and community members who were consulted is provided in Annex II, including the organisation, institution or community that they represented. The evaluator followed an informed consent protocol in data collection, further presented under Annex VII.

The methodological approach was synthesised into an Evaluation Matrix (see Annex III), which guided the Evaluation and provided an analytical framework for conducting the evaluation. The evaluation matrix sets out the relevant evaluation criteria, key questions and sub-questions, data sources, data collection methods/tools, indicators and methods for data analysis. The evaluation matrix was divided into each of the 4 evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Within the effectiveness criteria, each of the project's outputs are individually scrutinised and analysed – please see below under Chapter 4. The evaluation matrix also contains the additional evaluation criteria as stipulated in the ToR – diversity and inclusion, principled and management and monitoring.

The evaluation's principal guide was the project document for the ACTION project. While it is usual to rely heavily on the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) containing the project's logframe and M&E framework, which should contain indicators, targets and "means of verification" (i.e. data and documents) for the project's outputs, due to data gaps and frequent changes in the project's results framework, logframe and M&E Framework, the Evaluation had to look beyond the RRF in order to assess and measure results. These shortcomings are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The consultant identified a cross-section of data sources in order to optimise data collection and ensure triangulation. A large focus of the evaluation was on obtaining qualitative data through

¹² Due to the context with the political and security situation in Afghanistan, the evaluator was faced with challenges in meeting all government and donor representatives but did manage to cover these aspects to the extent possible as well.

interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries, as per the consultation list at Annex II.

The consultant conducted as many interviews as possible given the complexities of conducting the evaluation remotely using virtual tools, in order to ensure the integrity and the comprehensiveness of the evaluation. Wherever possible data gathered, both qualitatively and quantitatively was triangulated, through cross verification from two or more sources. For interviews, this was done through posing a similar set of questions to multiple interviewees. For the document review it was accomplished through crosschecking data and information from multiple sources to increase the credibility and validity of the material. Draft Informant Guides are provided at Annex IV, which provide an indication and outline as to the set of questions that were asked of each group of stakeholders. Additional questions are provided in the Evaluation Matrix.

The evaluation was conducted in a non-linear, sequential methodology consisting of three main phases – desk research, document review and Inception Report; virtual data collection, analysis and validation; and drafting, revision and finalisation of the report.

3.1. Data analysis

3.1.1. Analytical methods

In order to analysis the collected data, the following analytical methods were applied:

- Political economy analysis;
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- Data synthesis;
- Triangulation; and
- Verification and validation.

Political Economy Analysis

A political economy analysis helped the Evaluation to understand who seeks to gain and lose from the project’s interventions, as well as to identify who has vested interests and the social and cultural norms that need to be taken into account.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

Most of the primary data collection methods (interviews and FGDs) collected qualitative data. These were analysed using a code structure, which was aligned to the key evaluation questions, sub-questions and indicators. The qualitative data from the primary data collection methods was cross-referenced with other sources such as documents. Due to the unavailability of additional government representatives due to the complex political transition, the desk review was extended with the use of additional resources to capture closer the government perspective. Greater reliance was placed on reviewing and assessing the project documentation, which not captures both donor and government perspectives. The quantitative data produced descriptive analysis (rather than more complex regressions), based on third party surveys such as the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, or the PRSP Report for Afghanistan as well as numerical data provided in progress reports, especially that related to attainment of progress against indicators.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the process of using multiple data sources, data collection methods, and/or theories to validate research findings. The Evaluation used more than one approach (data collection method) to address the evaluation questions in order to reduce the risk of bias and increase the chances of detecting errors or anomalies. The Evaluation applied three approaches to triangulation:

methods triangulation (checking the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods); interrogating data where diverging results arise; and analyst triangulation (discussion and validation of findings, allowing for a consistent approach to interpretive analysis).

Data Synthesis

The process of bringing all the evidence together to synthesize the data and formulate findings and conclusions took place in two ways. The first was the process of articulating the key findings and cross-checking the strength of the evidence for each. Based on this, the conclusions were then developed and cross-checked for their relevance to the findings.

Verification and Validation

The above steps incorporate verification and validation of evidence during the data collection and data analysis processes. In addition, the Evaluation presented its preliminary findings and recommendations at an evaluation de-brief held with the project team and the draft report was shared widely amongst the project team and other key stakeholders, allowing for review and comments. These processes provided an opportunity to share key findings, offer mutual challenges, and discuss the feasibility of and receptiveness to draft recommendations. It also provided an important opportunity to foster buy-in to the evaluation process particularly for the stakeholders who will have responsibility for implementing recommendations.

3.2. Sampling Methods for Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection

The geographical scope of the evaluation was agreed upon with the Country Office in discussion of the Inception Report. With support from the Country Office, the Evaluation ensured that all relevant stakeholders were included in the data gathering process, as well as M&E officers

The Evaluation used a purposive sampling approach. The Evaluation consulted with the project team to develop and refine a list of potential key informants to participate in the interviews and FGDs. This included efforts to also ensure female participants, as well as efforts to ensure that all geographical locations where the project is implemented were represented.

The sampling approach was purposive due to the scale of the evaluation, but criteria considered the following contextual and operational factors as appropriate:

- Geographically proportional;
- Gender of participants;
- Sensitivity to the inclusion of diversity of participants;
- A balance of different levels and types of engagement with the project; and
- Socio-economic diversity.

3.3. Methodological Limitations and Attribution of Results

3.3.1. Deviations from the proposed Methodology

Following the announcement of the ToR for the present evaluation and selection of an evaluator, the UNDP CO began discussions with the donor to close the present project and start anew, given the vast changes in the institutional context. Following these discussions, an agreement was reached with the UNDP CO to conduct the evaluation from the aspect of a final evaluation, rather than it being mid-term. Such a change mostly affects the Evaluation in terms of its conclusions and recommendations, not having any impact on the overall evaluation methodology. However, with regards to the methodology, it is important to emphasize two things, not related to the type of

evaluation. The first is the initially envisaged online survey. It was decided with the project team that conducting the survey would not add additional value, since the focus groups and interviews provided in-depth insights. In addition, given the security situation in the country, the evaluation was conducted remotely in its entirety, with online interviews and focus group discussions. The organization of three focus group discussions was facilitated by UNDP M&E officers.

3.3.2. Challenges and Limitations of the Evaluation

There were several challenges and limitations confronting the evaluation. The first relates to the challenges of conducting the evaluation remotely using virtual tools. While this is generally a satisfactory substitution for data gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic and when security circumstances demand so, it does not allow for building up a rapport with participants, for more informal communication which often takes place before and after formal meetings, or for conducting site visits. Stakeholders are often more reluctant to speak openly and freely into a screen, which acts as a barrier between the evaluator and the participant. In order to mitigate this, the Evaluation tried to “warm-up” the participants at the beginning of each interview or FGD with some general questions, and also assured all participants that their responses were confidential and anonymous.

Another challenge, which is frequently faced during evaluations relates to biases. Each bias and the corresponding mitigation efforts are described below.

- *Recall bias*: The ACTION Project has conducted many activities to date and it is quite possible that key informants may not accurately remember particular specific ACTION project intervention activities. A similar problem is that participants in multiple UN activities may have blended their experiences into a composite memory or response and, subsequently, did not distinguish between them as separate activities in their responses. The consultant mitigated this bias primarily through a semi-structured interview protocol that called for questioning about specific activities; through gentle reminders and nudging about the activities of the ACTION project. Triangulation of data also mitigated this bias.
- *Response bias*: Informants may have given the consultant positive remarks about the project because they would like to stay involved with the intervention in the future and they think that a negative evaluation could mean the end of project opportunities. The Evaluation adopted two main strategies for mitigating this bias. First, it reiterated for each informant the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity and then explained the evaluation’s independence from both UNDP and the project. Second, as with recall bias, questions designed to elicit specific examples helped to identify response bias.
- *Selection bias*: Beneficiaries provided by UNDP and its partners could mean that the consultant hears only from people who had positive experiences. As with the other forms of bias, multiple sources of data and questions eliciting specific examples help to mitigate the risk of this bias.

Finally, are limitations of available data and information. In order to track progress towards the outcomes and outputs, the Evaluation required data, information and statistics from the project. It is frequently challenging to obtain data and what exists is often not disaggregated. To mitigate this, the Evaluation endeavoured to collect as much data – both qualitative and quantitative - as possible during the data collection phase and from the documents made available by UNDP. However, challenges with the project’s RRF and M&E framework, coupled with the evolving circumstances on the ground during project implementation, limited the quantitative data that was available to the Evaluation.

3.3.3. Attribution of Results

In the complex development context in Afghanistan, it is difficult for the Evaluation to attribute the observed results solely to the project. This is partly because of the number of stakeholders involved, partly because of other exogenous factors, and partly because of the complex nature of the project itself. For this reason, the Evaluation adopted a contribution approach, which does not firmly establish causality but rather seeks to achieve a plausible association by analysing the project's ToC and results framework, documenting the project's successes and value added, applying the "before and after" criterion, i.e. what exists now that did not exist before and what has changed since the start of the project, and through considering the counterfactual – what would have happened without the ACTION project.

4. Analysis and Findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the Evaluation grouped around each of the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues and based on the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Each of the key evaluation questions is answered and the analysis and findings are also informed by the guiding questions provided in the ToR. The guiding questions are extensive and are not included here but are provided at Annex I.

4.1. Relevance

Finding 1: The ACTION project represents a highly relevant initiative in the given context of Afghanistan. In particular the project was informed by and tailored to the needs of its beneficiaries. The ACTION Project was designed in alignment with Afghanistan’s national policies and strategies at the time of its design, as well as with the UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document, in addition contributing to the attainment of SDG 16.5.

The ACTION Project is an anticorruption initiative in Afghanistan that aims to strengthen the country's governance and reduce corruption in both the public and private sectors. This project was designed in alignment with Afghanistan's national policies and strategies, as well as with the UNDP Strategic Plan and Outcome 2 of the Country Programme Document (CPD). Specifically, the project contributes to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.5, which calls for the reduction of corruption and bribery in all forms. This was underscored during the local project appraisal commission meeting, as noted in the diagram below, recorded in the LPAC Minutes for the ACTION Project:



The relevance of the ACTION project in Afghanistan cannot be overstated. Corruption has been a long-standing challenge in the country, and it can be reasonably argued that it has had severe implications for the nation's stability, economic development, and political governance. Corruption

also exacerbates poverty and inequality, as it often favours the wealthy and well-connected over the poor and marginalized.

The fight against corruption in Afghanistan is critical to the country's future. The key informant interviews conducted for the ACTION Project confirm the urgent need for anticorruption efforts in Afghanistan. They highlight the pervasiveness of corruption in the country and the challenges of addressing it. The interviews also reveal the detrimental effects of corruption on the daily lives of Afghans, such as the need to pay bribes for basic services like healthcare and the frustration and disillusionment that such practices engender.

Given these challenges, the ACTION Project is a crucial initiative that can help to promote good governance and accountability in Afghanistan. By working with both the demand and supply sides of the equation, the project aimed to create a more transparent and accountable environment in which corruption is less likely to thrive. This can help to improve the delivery of public services, create a more level playing field for businesses, and promote greater trust in institutions. Prior to August 2021, the project worked intensively on capacity building of relevant authorities. How relevant this work was is testified by the mere fact that, according to a training need assessment conducted for ACJC in 2020, 90% of ACJC staff did not receive any training after joining their jobs. In a short period of time, the ACTION Project managed to organize a series of trainings to compensate for this.

As evidenced by a key informant during interviews:

“Project activities were calibrated to the local context.”

In summary, the ACTION Project is an important initiative that can help to combat corruption in Afghanistan and promote sustainable development, albeit in a conflict sensitive environment. The country needs all the support it can get at this critical moment, and the international community must continue to prioritize efforts to promote good governance and accountability in Afghanistan, alongside peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts.

Finding 2: Through its ability to adapt to the changing and very fluid circumstances in Afghanistan, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the rapid and drastic political transformation in the country, the project was able to continually maintain its high level of relevance. This is true testament to the project's flexibility, adaptive management and commitment to its goals.

The August 2021 political changes in Afghanistan had a significant impact on the operating environment for the ACTION Project, as it impacted the project implementation - particularly output 1 activities in the ACJC, and implementation of most of the planned activities was halted as per the instruction received from the donor of the project, as well as those of the UN. In response to these changes, the project was realigned to focus solely on the demand side of the corruption equation, working with civil society and media to promote greater accountability and transparency.

While this departure from the original Theory of Change of the project was significant, the ACTION Project adapted to the new circumstances and continued to work towards its goals as best it could. By focusing on the demand side, the project aimed to empower citizens to hold public officials accountable, promote transparency in decision-making, and increase public trust in institutions.

In addition to this, the project also added a third output that focused on oversight over the COVID19 response and gathering of information on needs on the ground. This adaptation demonstrated the project's relevance in responding to the most pressing needs of the Afghan people and contributed to the COVID19 response in the country.

Overall, the ability of the ACTION Project to realign and adapt to the changing circumstances in Afghanistan is a testament to the project's flexibility and commitment to its goals. While the project may have departed from its original Theory of Change, it remained focused on its overall mission of promoting good governance and combating corruption in Afghanistan. This is critical for the country's sustainable development.

As evidenced by a key informant during interviews:

“If there is no flexibility in implementation, there is no learning.”

Finding 3: The project integrated a gender perspective into both the design and implementation of the project, which allowed it to tailor its activities in line with the gendered impacts of corruption. Prior to the 2021 political changes, the project had specific actions targeting female staff of the ACJC. The efforts of integrating a gender perspective were further maximised following the political transition in 2021, keeping in mind cultural sensitivities, through women participation in grant projects implemented at both the provincial and district level and empowering the country’s most vulnerable populations. Further obstacles arose, however, by the very end of the period under evaluation with escalation of measures against the participation of women.

An anticorruption project like the ACTION Project is especially relevant in a country like Afghanistan, where corruption has long been a major obstacle to development and has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable populations, including women and girls.

Corruption often exacerbates existing gender inequalities, as it can restrict women's access to essential services, including healthcare, one of the focuses of the project.

The ACTION Project recognized the importance of addressing gender equality in the context of anticorruption efforts in Afghanistan. In the period prior to the rapid political transformation in 2021, the project specifically targeted female staff of the ACJC in capacity building efforts. However, circumstances deteriorated soon after as described under the background context section of the Report.

The project's activities include working with civil society organizations and media to raise awareness about the gendered impacts of corruption. The project also seeks to strengthen the capacity of women-led organizations to monitor and report on corruption and promote accountability in their communities. Women participated in grant projects implemented by different CSOs at provincial and district levels and were specifically trained on anticorruption and access to information law.

In sum, the ACTION Project's focus on addressing gender equality in the context of anticorruption efforts in Afghanistan is crucial for promoting sustainable development and empowering the country's most vulnerable populations. Further details on addressing gender equality are given

under the section on diversity and inclusion.

4.2. Effectiveness

In order to assess the effectiveness of the project to date, the Evaluation reviewed the project’s technical as well as operational approaches, the quality of results and any preliminary indications of their impact, alignment with national priorities and the level of response to the needs of the stakeholders. This was done by assessing the results achieved, the partnerships established as well as issues of capacity. In order to answer the key evaluation questions, the analysis of the effectiveness of the project has been broken down into each of the three output areas.

Due to the political changes in the country in August 2021, as per the instructions by the United Nations, the ACTION project did not continue work on activities under output 1, 4 and 5 which are relevant to the government institutions. It continued with activities under output 2 and output 3 on the demand side engaging with civil society organizations, media, academia, and the private sector. Outputs four and five have only been hereby, acknowledged, however, they have not been assessed, since, according to the information stated in the ToR of the Evaluation, no activities have been initiated yet after the approval of the revised project document in August 2021.

Output 1: The Anti-Corruption Justice Center Improved Technical and Operational Capacities to Effectively Adjudicate Corruption Cases

Finding 4: Having started with logistic and equipment support the project successfully elevated its assistance to institutional and capacity development, with a holistic approach towards systemic capacity development. Efforts to develop more refined technical and sustainable approaches to address corruption challenges were prevented by the political changes in Afghanistan. Despite this, through the ACTION project’s support, the technical and operational capacities of the ACJC were improved.

Output 1 of the ACTION Project involved the implementation of capacity-building activities for the Afghanistan Criminal Justice Center (ACJC). To do this, the project conducted a comprehensive training needs assessment and developed 28 training modules. From 2020 to 2021, a total of 110 ACJC judges, prosecutors, and technical staff were trained, including 15 female participants. The training programmes were a mix of higher-level senior leadership trainings, through technical skills for the ACJC staff, such as investigative interviewing and basic computer skills. Given that at baseline, 90% of ACJC staff had not undergone any training during onboarding, the set of training modules were very important for the functioning of the ACJC. It is important to note that the project conducted pre- and post-training assessments to assess their effectiveness. In 2021, the participants scored an average 35% increase in their knowledge on the subject matters. Overall, throughout the project implementation period, a total of 253 including 28 female Judges,

Munira Baharaki, Chief Appeal Court Judge said: “A good work environment brings safety to employees’ physical and mental capabilities in performing their daily routine. The kindergarten facility will assist women in the ACJC to work in a calm environment, making sure they are near to their children while working, and this initiative will further encourage women to work in the ACJC.”
Excerpt from the 2020 Annual Progress Report

Prosecutors, and administrative staff were trained on leadership development, investigative interview and functional training.

In addition to training, the project also provided resource support to the ACJC to improve its working environment to better perform their role as the government’s flagship institution in fighting corruption. This support included the provision of logistical and equipment resources, such as a new office space, security cameras, kindergarten equipment, printers, clinic items, and sim cards to enhance their efficiency and productivity at work. The team managed to provide basically all items prior to the closure of this output.

Overall, the ACTION Project began by providing logistical and equipment support, but quickly transitioned to a more comprehensive approach, focusing on institutional and capacity development. With a holistic perspective on systemic capacity development, the project aimed to refine technical and sustainable approaches to address corruption challenges in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the changed political situation in the country prevented these efforts from reaching their full potential. Nevertheless, despite the challenges faced, the ACTION Project was successful in improving the technical and operational capacities of the Afghan Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC). This was achieved through the provision of training and mentoring, as well as the provision of resources such as equipment and software to enhance the ACJC's investigative and prosecutorial capabilities. While the project was not able to achieve all of its goals due to the difficult political environment, it made significant contributions towards strengthening the ACJC's capacity to fight corruption in Afghanistan.

Output 1 was initially designed with six indicators, five of which were either fully met or exceeded, which is an impressive result, given all the unforeseen challenges the team came across, which could not have been factored in at project design stage (e.g., the COVID19 pandemic). One of the indicators (1.6) had not been achieved due to an assumption that was not met by the national partner (set up of a dedicated in-house learning and training unit). Indicators 1.7-1.10 were added prior to the political transformation in the country in 2021. Three out of the four were partially met and one not met before activities under this output ceased, as per instructions by the donor and the UN.

Delivery under output 1 had been increasing. A slower start was marked by external circumstances, as testified in the 2019 APR:

In November 2019, there was a mortal incident to UNDP staff that led to extremely high security measures which forbid UNDP staff’s physical movement until late December 2019. The implementation of ACTION Project’s activities, therefore, was unavoidably delay. Apart from the security challenges, the project received the financial resources in early September 2019.

2020 was the first year under COVID19, which resulted in a lower delivery rate against the projected AWP.

Annual delivery rates as per APRs:
2019 – 14% against the AWP
2020 – 59% against the AWP
2021 – 84% against the AWP

Output 2 Non-State Actors and Community Groups, including women and youth, can better promote Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the Security and Justice Sectors.

Finding 5: The project adopted a whole of society approach to allow for more meaningful participation across society, which included a broad range of stakeholders from civil society organisations, local communities and media although the initially planned engagement with academia and the private sector had to be put on hold after August 2021. **This allowed the project to successfully extend support to various types of issues through low value grants including beyond anticorruption. This approach proved to be highly effective and was recognised and used as a successful model within the Country Office. This is evidenced by the fact that the ACTION project delivered over \$300m on behalf of other projects using this model.**

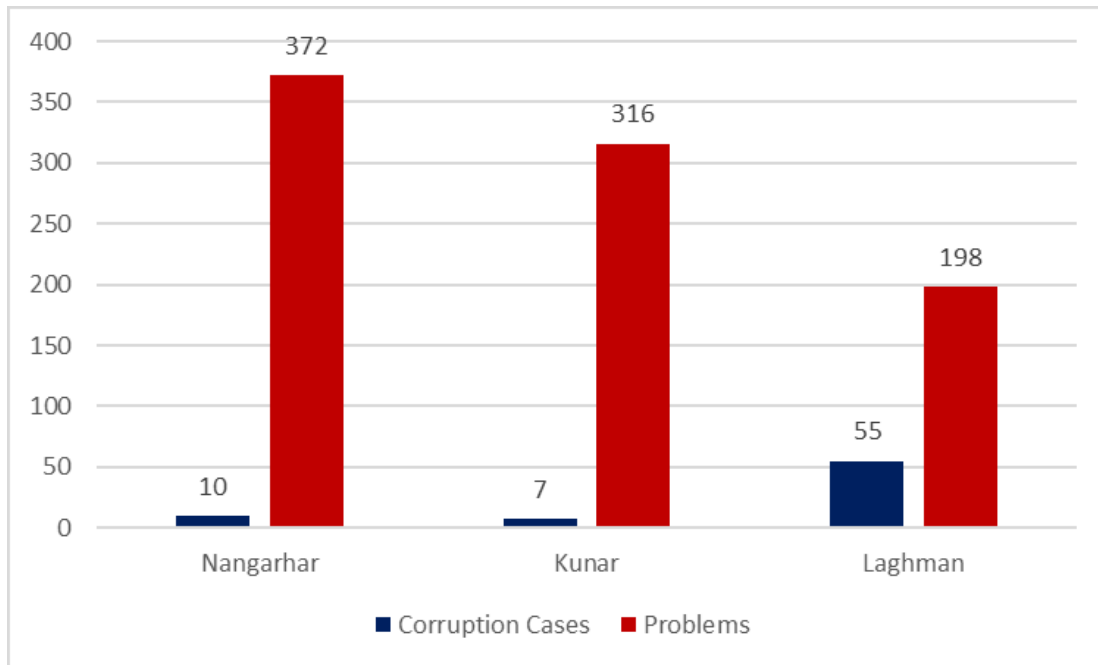
The low-value grants given to CSOs helped train and empower community members to voice their concerns and seek solutions. The project's impact went beyond only its anticorruption scope, demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach for other potential areas. Addressing a broader range of issues allowed community members to access corruption-related issues more easily, building trust and necessary networks. This approach was effective because it allowed the project to build relationships and access within communities, which ultimately allowed for greater impact on anticorruption efforts. In contrast, focusing solely on anticorruption could have resulted in a lack of trust and accessibility. By addressing a broader range of issues, the project was able to engage communities and gain their support, making it easier to address corruption-related issues in the long run. Nevertheless, the evaluator learned that the ACTION Project supported the delivery of other projects being implemented by UNDP Afghanistan in a total value of over USD 300 million, which testifies to the value of the mechanism.

The success of these activities is evidenced through the number of community members who were trained with support of the project:

- **10,950 (3,254 female)** community members trained on anti – corruption, access to information law, monitoring of health facilities, social audit and investigative journalism.
- **60** Social accountability and transparency committees at community level
- **84** investigative reports produced by Pajhwok Afghan News which uncovered corruption, fraud, and abuse of power in **16** provinces.

As one participant in a focus group discussion explained:

“The Project increased the outreach to citizens and successfully engaged citizens in social monitoring and activism.”



Number of Corruption Cases and Problems Resolved during 2021, taken from the 2021 APR

Finding 6: Through its grant mechanism, the ACTION Project was able to engage in diverse approaches and experiment with innovative, successful anticorruption tools and techniques. This approach created and strengthened ownership, raised awareness and strengthened collaboration among partners. In 2021 the donor extended the project, which evidenced the donor’s recognition of the project’s successes and results.

The ACTION Project adopted a multifaceted approach to combat corruption, which was facilitated through the project's grant mechanism. This allowed the project to experiment with a variety of anticorruption tools and techniques, such as peer-to-peer trainings, social audits, investigative journalism, awareness raising, social and behaviour change communications, community score cards, establishment of community-based anticorruption networks, and community dialogues.

The grant mechanism enabled the project to engage in diverse approaches and work with different stakeholders to implement these tools. This approach helped to create a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries and allowed them to tailor the anticorruption measures to their unique contexts. For example, the project facilitated the establishment of community-based anticorruption networks, which encouraged collaboration and coordination among community members to prevent and report corruption incidents. This approach was particularly effective in remote and rural areas where the community networks helped to increase the reach and effectiveness of anticorruption efforts.

As noted during focus group discussions:

“The greatest contribution of the Programme is that all of community members were engaged in the project implementation ...it underlined the togetherness within the community.”

Additionally, the project's focus on social and behaviour change communications (SBCC) was instrumental in raising awareness about corruption and building public demand for accountability. Through SBCC, the project was able to reach out to a wider audience and engage with them through various communication channels, such as mass media and community meetings. This

helped to create a culture of transparency and accountability and contributed to the overall success of the project.

As witnessed in a focus group discussion:

“We need more communication and public awareness support - especially for remote areas with no internet access.”

In conclusion, the grant mechanism adopted by the ACTION Project was an effective means of engaging with diverse stakeholders and experimenting with different anticorruption tools and approaches. This approach allowed the project to build a culture of transparency and accountability, which contributed to combating corruption. A series of success stories, annexed to each progress report, testify to this.

Finding 7: The evaluation of the ACTION Project revealed that the project's interventions had a significant impact on the final beneficiaries, the people in the communities who were in real need of assistance. It was observed that the project went beyond mere trainings and workshops and actually influenced the daily lives of the beneficiaries.

The evaluation of the ACTION Project yielded compelling evidence demonstrating the profound impact of the project's interventions on the final beneficiaries, specifically the individuals within the communities who were most in need of assistance. The evaluation revealed that the project's influence extended far beyond the confines of mere trainings and workshops, and instead made a tangible difference in the daily lives of the beneficiaries.

As witnessed during a focus group discussion:

“Prior to the training we thought that many things are allowed – this in line with cultural norms in our society - after the training we have better understanding and knowledge of what corruptive practices are and what are practical implications for the communities.”

“Before the training we believed that corruption is only bribes and only possible within government - now we know there are many forms and at different levels, even with civil society.”

Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it became evident that the project's interventions had a direct and meaningful impact on the beneficiaries' lives. The project successfully addressed critical issues that affected their well-being, livelihoods, and overall quality of life. This finding showcased the effectiveness of the project in not just imparting knowledge and skills, but also in creating real, lasting changes within the communities.

The project's interventions were designed to be context-specific and responsive to the needs and challenges faced by the beneficiaries. By engaging with the local communities and understanding their unique circumstances, the project team was able to implement targeted initiatives that directly addressed the pressing issues faced by the beneficiaries. These initiatives ranged from improving access to basic services and infrastructure, to promoting social cohesion, and strengthening service monitoring mechanisms.

The transformative effects of the project were evident in the testimonials and stories shared by the beneficiaries themselves. They reported experiencing positive changes in their daily lives as a

result of the project's interventions. For instance, individuals expressed improved access to essential services, such as healthcare, education, and clean water, which directly contributed to their overall well-being. Beneficiaries also highlighted enhanced social harmony within their communities, as the project fostered inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, giving them a voice in shaping their own development initiatives.

Output 2 was initially designed with five indicators, adding another two in November 2020 through Revision 3 of the Project Document and three more in September 2021 through Revision 4 of the Project Document. Three targets were fully met, four were partially met and the last three that were added were not met to date.

Delivery under output 2 had started off low for 2019 but picked up pace from 2020. In November 2019, there was a mortal incident to UNDP staff that led to extremely high security measures which forbid UNDP staff's physical movement until late December 2019. The implementation of ACTION Project's activities, therefore, was unavoidably delayed. Apart from the security challenges, the project received the financial resources in early September 2019.

2020 was the first year under COVID19, however, this did not have an impact on this output. 2021 was marked by vast political changes in the country, but output 2 came out as a success story despite these challenges. A slight slowdown was recorded in 2022, however.

Annual delivery rates as per APRs:
2019 – 17% against the AWP
2020 – 96% against the AWP
2021 – 103% against the AWP
2022 – 77% against the AWP

Output 3: COVID-19 response's Transparency and Accountability is strengthened through citizen monitoring

Finding 8: Adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19 in the context of the ACTION Project was evidence of the project's continuous adaptability and relevance. This allowed the project to support the country in its efforts to strengthen its health system and respond to the pandemic.

Output 3 was added with the second revision to the Project in May 2020 in order to introduce COVID specific measures. One of the key findings of Output 3 was that the ACTION project demonstrated its adaptability and relevance by adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19. This was evidence of the project's ability to pivot and respond to emerging needs and challenges in a timely manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on health systems and health outcomes globally, and it has highlighted the importance of having robust and responsive health systems. By adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19, the ACTION project was able to support the country in its efforts to strengthen its health systems and respond to the pandemic.

Moreover, this finding also speaks to the project's relevance. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected and unprecedented challenge that required a coordinated global response. By adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19, the ACTION project was able to demonstrate its relevance and importance in the global health landscape.

Finding 9: One of the key successes of the project was the development of a mobile monitoring application to collect COVID-19 response real-time data through citizen monitoring. Through the application, the ACTION Project addressed the lack of data in an area of utmost importance to the country, contributing to not only better delivery of health services, but also to their transparency and better accountability. The potentials of the tool for functioning as a third party monitor were recognised by a broad group of stakeholders including national level institutions and UNDP at the national, regional and global levels. This is evidenced by the tool's expansion into other sectors such as nutrition, food security, health more broadly and education, as well as the success of the project in mobilising additional resources, for example, through global funds, to support the expansion of the platform, prior to the political changes in August 2021.

Output 3 of the UNDP ACTION project aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in the COVID-19 response through citizen monitoring. The project focuses on real-time monitoring of health centres' resources, community-based monitoring of the health sector, and social audits of public fund disbursement and public procurement related to COVID-19 response. The project also developed a mobile monitoring application to collect real-time data on health facilities' oxygen supplies, protective equipment, antipyretics reserves, and selective admission of patients with COVID-19 symptoms on a monthly basis. The data collected through this application was intended to help health facilities make more informed, evidence-based decisions. The project conducted a baseline survey across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, and the data collected was entered into the M&E COVID-19 app. Six waves of surveys were conducted, and the results were uploaded to the website, which populated graphs to enable monitoring and identification of additional support required.

Overall, with the support of the project:

- **202** health facilities were monitored in 5 provinces.
- **1500** health facilities were surveyed in 34 provinces.
- Covid – 19 real – time monitoring application launched and Visited by **2612** visitors in one month.
- **88** health shuras established, **1659** problems identified and discussed with **114** health shuras, and **688** problems resolved.

This illustrates the impact that the project had, in particular at the community level.

As evidenced during a focus group discussion:

“Only we could find solutions for our problems – we need to proactively search for solutions at community level supported by international partners.”

It was envisaged that the Anti-Corruption Commission manages the application in the future, functioning as the third-party monitor of health, education, and judiciary services to help improve accountability and transparency of service delivery.

Overall, with this approach, it can be argued that the ACTION Project played an important role in addressing the lack of data in the country and contributed to better delivery of health services, increased transparency, and improved accountability in the health sector.

Output 3 was initially designed with seven indicators, adding another two in September 2021 through Revision 4 of the Project Document. 2 targets were exceeded or fully met, 7 were partially met and none were not met to date.

Delivery under output 3 was nominally high only in 2021, as previous commitments were not disbursed in the previous year and were taken over into the next, without budget adjustments. The quarterly progress report for 2022 notes the lack of funding to implement some of the foreseen activities, however, overall delivery was finally low against the annual projected budget.

Annual delivery rates as per APRs:
2020 – 32% against the AWP
2021 – 1,016% against the AWP
2022 – 46% against the AWP

4.3. Efficiency

Finding 10: The ACTION Project has successfully demonstrated its ability to overcome external obstacles towards achieving its objectives (COVID-19 and political changes). While the project was initially designed to work on both the supply and demand side, it was able to pivot its efforts to the demand side in line with the operational realities post August 2021. This re-focusing was enabled by the fact that the project had already developed a strong grassroots presence at community, district and provincial level, which allowed it to smoothly continue implementation. While other projects needed more time to re-focus, the ACTION project persisted and found its way efficiently.

Despite facing a number of external impediments, the ACTION Project was able to maintain a consistent pace of delivery throughout its implementation. The majority of these obstacles were unforeseeable and therefore could not have been accounted for during the project design phase. Two major external factors that had a significant impact on the project were the COVID-19 pandemic, which began several months into the project implementation, and the rapid political transformation that occurred just as the project was accelerating.

Amidst these challenges, the project was able to adapt and refocus its efforts on the demand side of the corruption equation, working closely with civil society and media to promote transparency and accountability in Afghanistan. As a result, the project has made considerable progress towards achieving its outputs, notably Outputs 2 and 3.

The grant scheme implemented by the project has been particularly effective in promoting transparency and accountability, and this approach can be scaled up for other thematic areas going forward. By providing funding to civil society organizations and media outlets, the project has enabled them to play a more active role in monitoring corruption and promoting accountability in their communities.

The Project Board met once in its full composition at the end of 2020. After the rapid political transformation in 2021, UNDP communicated bilaterally with the donor and there were no Project Board meetings in the original composition.

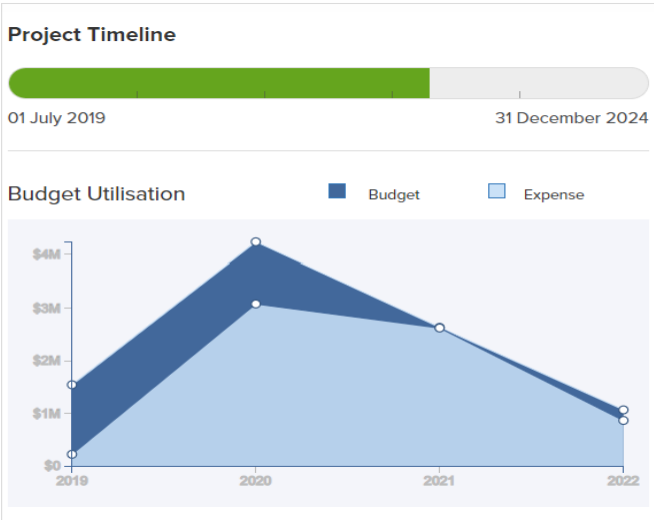
Overall, the ACTION Project has demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing circumstances and overcome external obstacles toward achieving its objectives. Despite facing significant challenges, it is important to note that the project persisted and found its ways.

Finding 11: Largely due to external shocks, the delivery rates were not as high as projected in the first half of the period under evaluation. However, the project was able to realign itself in the second half of the implementation period, as also evidenced by the internal Dim Audit undertaken in 2021, which came back with no findings. The project would likely require addition funding if it is to sustain engagement until 2024.

The Evaluation finds that the project team has put in place the necessary processes and mechanisms to ensure the project implementation. However, largely due to external shocks, the delivery rates were not as high as projected in the first half of the period under evaluation. In November 2019, a tragic incident involving UNDP staff resulted in the implementation of extremely strict security measures that prevented physical movement for UNDP personnel until late December 2019. As a

result, the implementation of the ACTION Project's activities was unavoidably delayed. Apart from the security challenges, the project also received the financial resources only in early September 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020, movements of UNDP staff were restricted with imposed work-from-home modality. This has resulted in implementation delays to a certain extent of planned project activities, particularly with regards to the trainings for the ACJC. The ACTION project has adopted the use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing as an alternative for movement restrictions and to ensure business continuity. Due to the rapid political transformation in the country, that culminated on 15 August 2021, the ACTION project changed its strategy and began focusing on activities that can be implemented through CSOs, media, academia, and the private sector. The political change impacted the project implementation particularly activities under Output 1 in the ACJC, and implementation of most of the planned activities was halted as per the instruction received from the donor of the project.¹³

As may be seen on the graph below, the project planning readjusted in the second half of the period under evaluation, bringing the figures for projected budget and expenditures closer together.



Taken from UNDP’s Transparency Portal¹⁴

According to the 2019 APR, the total expenditure was: US\$ 150,770 which represents 14% utilization of the annual budget.
 According to the 2020 APR, the total expenditure was: US\$ 3,079,414 representing 73% utilization of the annual budget.
 According to the 2021 APR, the total expenditure was: US\$ 2,623,975 representing 100% utilization of the annual budget.
 According to the 2022 quarterly progress reports, the total expenditure was: US\$ 871,413, representing 81% utilization of the annual budget.

¹³ As noted in annual progress reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021.
¹⁴ <https://open.undp.org/projects/00120040> accessed on 19.2.2023.

Annual expenditures per outputs are presented below, according to data from UNDP’s Transparency Portal¹⁵:

Output 1:

Year	Expense
2019	\$151,084
2020	\$1.20M
2021	\$1.03M
2022	-\$1,219

Output 2:

Year	Expense
2019	\$78,837
2020	\$1.76M
2021	\$1.43M
2022	\$834,242

Output 3:

Year	Expense
2020	\$123,775
2021	\$164,639
2022	\$44,072

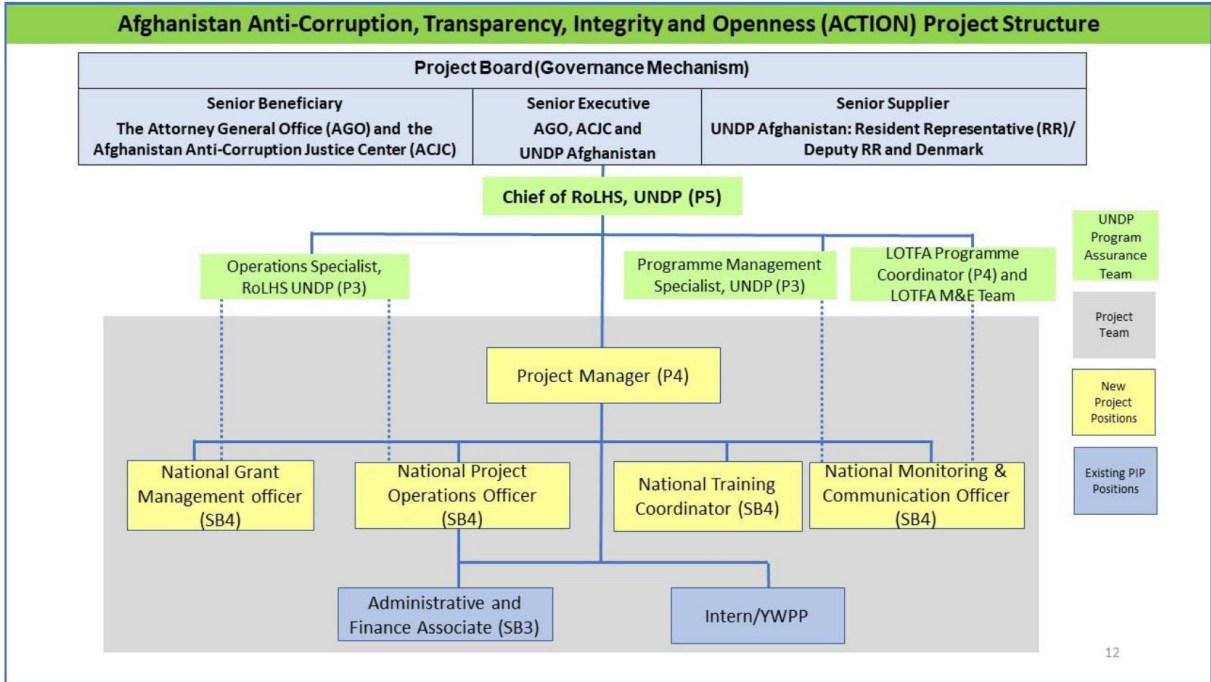
The total project budget amounts to US\$ 7,025,000. By the time of the Evaluation, a total of US\$ 6,815,430 was spent, with a remaining balance of approximately two hundred thousand. The project would likely require additional funding if it were to sustain engagement until the end of 2024. The largest sum of resources – two thirds of the overall budget - was allocated and disbursed under Output 2, which commenced with the beginning of the project implementation and remained fully operational the entire period under evaluation, testifying to its relevance and efficiency. Output 1 followed, with over 2 million USD of delivery, but was suspended after August 2021. Output 3, designed also as a response to the COVID19 crisis, began in the second year of implementation and delivered about 5% of the overall budget.

A DIM audit has been conducted in 2021, resulting in an unmodified opinion, with no findings and recommendations.

¹⁵ <https://open.undp.org/projects/00120040> accessed on 12.05.2023.

Finding 12: Efficiency was facilitated through an optimal project team structure, as recognised by excellent stakeholder feedback on its performance. In particular the project team were valued for their continuous and tailor-made efforts throughout the project cycle, as well as their regular communication, commitment and expertise. This contributed to a culture of establishing and nurturing various community-based networks, which were empowered through the project.

The ACTION Project team, which was comprised of seven staff members, including a Project Manager, National Grant Management Officer, National Project Operations Officer, National Training Coordinator, National Monitoring and Communications Officer, Administrative and Finance Associate, and an Intern, is highly praised for its great work in implementing the project. The structure of the team seems optimal for a project of this size, setup and sensitivity and the roles were fit even despite significant changes of context and operational environment (e.g. while there were no more trainings at one point for authorities, trainings continued for CSOs, media and grantees overall). The figure that follows presents the composition of the project team:



The UNDP Country Office's ability to secure appropriate interim arrangements to ensure continued implementation until all new posts were filled is also commended. Such was the case with extending the engagement of the acting project manager for the Initiation Plan, to perform the role of the ACTION Project Manager, until this post was filled. This enabled a smooth project start up and actual delivery of first results, despite also challenging security situations the team faced in the very beginning. Further challenges were brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the team delivered a number of training modules using virtual and face-to-face modalities, and also adopted the use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing to ensure business continuity.

Moreover, the project team is highly regarded for its excellent cooperation and coordination, regularly holding meetings for follow-up and providing methodology and guidance for project implementation to grantees. The team is known for being responsive, helping grantees track project progress, and addressing issues with authorities at district and provincial levels. This proved to be of significant importance in establishing and nurturing various community-based networks, being one of the most important outcomes of this initiative. Stakeholders perceive UNDP as a reliable

partner that is flexible, cooperative, good in coordination, and delivering on time. Overall, the project team's dedication and effectiveness have helped the ACTION Project overcome various obstacles and continue making progress towards its goals. In conclusion, as noted by two grants recipients:

“The team was cooperative at each and every step of implementation – they guided us step by step.”

“The project team helped us to track the project progress and address the issues with authorities at district and provincial level.”

4.4. Sustainability and Impact

Finding 13: Anecdotal evidence testifies to the impact of the project results extending beyond the scope of the project, although external factors have affected the sustainability potential of the project results. In particular the two best practice models – the low value grants scheme and the M&E application – will extend beyond the lifespan of the project being further expanded and tailored to different projects and sectors. Sustainability prospects are assessed as high in terms of ownership, particularly at the community level, through civil society engagement. This is a remarkable achievement for a project of this size and scope.

Sustainability and impact are usually hard to witness during or at the very end of a project's lifetime, however, the Evaluation sought to put on record some of the first findings.

A focus group participant noted that:

“The project responded to immediate needs but with a view to long term perspectives.”

Such a statement was further supported in another focus group discussion:

“The Committee established during the ACTION project implementation is still active and even acknowledged and supported by local authorities ... I think this is because our monitoring is vital for communities ... we identified for example different prices for the same food item, lack of drinking water in one school.”

The sustainability and impact of the ACTION Project results can be viewed through different lenses. Firstly, regarding sustainability of results, the project design included elements aimed at ensuring long-term impacts, such as the establishment of an in-house learning centre at the ACJC. Unfortunately, due to rapidly changing circumstances on the ground, such as security challenges and political instability, these sustainability measures could not be fully realized under the given socio-political setting. Another examples of such an instance is the logistics support provided to authorities, which was designed to outlive the project duration. However, it remains unclear whether this equipment and premises are still in use for the intended purpose. Due to challenges in conducting the Evaluation, the evaluator was not able to assess this point.

The project did rely on community-based structures in the implementation of measures driven through the grant mechanism, which contributed greatly to the establishment of local ownership. The sustainability of the project depends on the extent to which investments that are made in the outcomes are capable of enduring and perpetuating beyond the timeframe of the project. This in large part depends on the nature of the partnerships and the level of ownership of the project's

results. However, what needs to be emphasized is the fact that the project combined issuance of low-value grants with capacity building programs, thus incentivizing training on ethics, integrity and anticorruption mechanisms overall – not only improving the design and delivery of the grants, but contributing to knowledge that remains sustainable. Such an approach contributes to sustainability of the institutional and governance framework – not related in this case to government capacities, but rather to community based structures at local level.

In terms of financial sustainability the project perhaps has further to go. There is clearly a need for anticorruption measures in the country and already discussions are on-going with the existing donor for the development of a new project, following the ACTION Project’s results to date. While a new project would not de-facto strengthen sustainability, it would allow for the further institutionalisation and consolidation of the project results.

Regarding the overall impact of the project, it is important to note that it can be challenging to directly associate project measures with a decrease in corruption perception and incidence presented in the background section of the Evaluation Report, particularly given the sensitive nature of the issue of fighting corruption and the relatively short time span and scope of the project. However, there is a line-up of anecdotal evidence in each project report, which testifies to smaller-scale impacts of the project on actual issues and cases. For instance, the project successfully supported the ACJC in processing corruption cases and delivered training to over 100 judges, prosecutors, and technical staff. Additionally, the project implemented measures to improve the working environment for the ACJC, including providing logistical and equipment support. It would be important to assess the current impact of these measures, given the political changes that occurred.

It should also be noted that the project had a series of unintended results, not necessarily linked to the issue of fighting corruption in the country, but rather issues related to access to basic services. This goes to show that such an approach as employed by the ACTION Project, could be utilized as an approach in solving a number of other issues facing Afghanistan today. The series of community dialogues, for example, apart from raising awareness on instances of corruption, also improved community members knowledge and strengthened their skill to effectively monitor delivery of essential public services and strongly advocate for more improved delivery of public services, humanitarian, and development support to their respective

The Qarabagh district Basic Health Centre in Afghanistan was not providing sufficient medicines to patients who relied on its services, forcing them to buy the remainder from private pharmacies. The health centre lacked a proper inventory mechanism and had no custodian to manage the distribution of medicines effectively. Community health shura members took action and started monitoring the centre's services, identifying the lack of accountability and noticed that HBC personnel were taking medicines for personal purposes. They prepared their observations and recommendations and shared them with local authorities, leading to the establishment of a clear inventory mechanism and a pharmacy custodian with specific responsibilities. These changes significantly improved the overall delivery of health services, and now the centre offers almost 80% of medicines prescribed by relevant doctors. Patients, such as Semagul, have noticed a significant improvement in the overall delivery of health services at the Qarabagh BHC.



Community score card of health facilities, May 2022, Qarabagh - Afghanistan

communities, as noted in the QPR 2 for 2022.



Another example is the mobile monitoring application (as shown in the picture to the left) designed to collect real-time data on the health facilities, on their oxygen supplies, protection equipment and antipyretics reserves, on their selective admission of patients having COVID-19 symptoms on a monthly basis from the targeted 1,300 health facilities. In addition to the monitoring of health

facilities, the ACTION Project, through this application, will contribute to the ABADIE program by conducting the real-time monitoring of essential services in collaboration with national and local CSOs in target areas to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery for Afghan people at these critical moments. The new M&E app developed by ACTION project has been expanded to cover additional thematic areas (education and food security). While the application developed under the ACTION Project will extend its use through further UNDP interventions, the impact it will render will likely go beyond only the anticorruption sphere.

While it is difficult to gauge the full extent of the project's impact, the anecdotal evidence suggests that it has made progress in combatting corruption in Afghanistan. It is important to continue building on the project's successes and implementing measures that will ensure long-term sustainability and impact.

As noted by a focus group participant:

“For the transformational change we need a long-term commitment and foresight, the quick fixes and short cuts would not bring change.”

It is noted by the Evaluation that the project has not conducted any impact assessments of the activities of the project, for example awareness raising activities, small grants, etc.

4.5. Diversity and inclusion

Finding 14: The project has adopted effective approaches and strategies for integrating gender and social inclusion into the project’s activities, outputs and outcomes, as well as into the structure of the project itself, despite the extremely challenging environment it operates in.

The ACTION Project has made a conscious effort to integrate diversity and inclusion into its activities, outputs, and outcomes. The project has effectively adopted gender and social inclusion strategies, which have been integrated into the project's structure. However, the project's initial target of having a 50/50 proportion of female and male participants at the ACJC trainings was later changed, as it was deemed unrealistic for the context. One of the measures the Project Team employed in order to encourage greater participation of women in the project, was to organize

separate trainings for men and women – a measure highly relevant for the context prior to the rapid political transformation in 2021 and even more so, following new oppressive measures for women’s participation.

It's essential to highlight the setbacks to women's rights in Afghanistan. As noted in a blog by UNDP,¹⁶ women in Afghanistan have limited access to education, employment, and health services, and they are also subjected to gender-based violence. This makes projects, like the ACTION Project, which can move things on the ground in communities, affecting daily lives, even more relevant and needed.

The grant-funded programs of the ACTION Project have introduced various gender-specific measures, such as the introduction of a woman doctor at a remote health centre as presented the textbox below and addressing issues for maternity patients following a public health survey in a province of Afghanistan, just to name a few. These and other measures have contributed to advancing issues of diversity and inclusion, particularly in relation to access to health services, which is crucial for promoting gender equality and social inclusion in Afghanistan.

Extract from the ACTION Project Q1 2021 Progress Report: Community-based monitoring ensures availability of a women doctor at a remote health center in eastern Kunar Province

A health center in the Nurgal District of Kunar Province (about 200 km east of Kabul) neither had a midwife nor a female doctor to provide services for women and children. Their absence was especially difficult when patients visited the health center for assistance in childbirth. Since the area is also under the control of the armed groups, access and attention to service delivery by the government officials is very limited to this health facility at the center of Nurgal District—40 km from the center of Kunar province.

Mr. Haji Gul Nabi, a resident of the district told Mr. Rohullah, a community volunteer, that one of his family members visited the health center at mid-night for childbirth assistance. He continued, “When we were there, we found out that there is no female doctor or midwife, and this made the situation even more difficult for us.”

Rohullah shared the issue with the health shura (council) of the health center. The members of the council stated that they had also raised the issue with officials over the previous year, but no action was taken to address the issue. Rohullah then shared the issue with UNDP/ACTION project grantee’s and it was added to the agenda of the monthly meeting of the Sectorial Monitoring Group of Kunar province. The officials took action, announced the positions and the recruitment has now been completed. Both a midwife and a female doctor are now working at the health center since beginning of 2021.

Mr. Ashna, a resident of the district, stated, “I believe this regular community monitoring and advocating for the issues in the relevant meetings of the health officials is very effective and we are happy to see that a female doctor and a midwife are now working at the health center.”

4.6. Principled 1

Has the project applied the Social and Environmental Screening checklist of UNDP?

According to the Quality Assurance Report for the design and appraisal phase of the project, attached as Annex 1 to the Project Document, a Social and Environmental Screening Procedure has been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks, but no further analysis was undertaken.

¹⁶ <https://www.undp.org/blog/we-do-exist>

4.7. Management and Monitoring

Finding 15: The ACTION Project team was highly effective and dedicated, despite facing challenges such as security situations and the COVID-19 pandemic, and the project's optimal team structure enabled its successful implementation. More detailed documentation of changes and progress against indicators could have better captured project results.

The ACTION Project team, which consisted of seven staff members, including a Project Manager, National Grant Management Officer, National Project Operations Officer, National Training Coordinator, National Monitoring and Communications Officer, Administrative and Finance Associate, and an Intern, is highly praised for its excellent work in implementing the project. The team structure seems optimal for a project of this size, setup, and sensitivity, and the roles were fit even despite significant changes of context and operational environment.

The UNDP Country Office's ability to secure appropriate interim arrangements to ensure continued implementation until all new posts were filled is also commended. This means that the UNDP was able to make interim arrangements to ensure the project could continue operating smoothly until new staff were hired.

The project team delivered a number of training modules using virtual and face-to-face modalities, and also adopted the use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing to ensure business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team is also known for being responsive and helping grantees track project progress and addressing issues with authorities at district and provincial levels.

However, the evaluator found it a bit hard to track progress against some of the indicators, especially with regards to output 3, and recommends that better documentation of changes should be employed for the continuation of the project or possibly new initiatives, to make it easier to track progress against the project's indicators.

The evaluation also commends the pre and post-test forms used to measure the effectiveness of trainings, which helped to evaluate the impact of the training activities.

Lastly, the project is also commended for capturing human interest stories, which helped to provide real-life examples of the impact of the project on people's lives.

4.8. CHALLENGES

There are a number of challenges that the project has faced during its implementation. Some of these have been overcome, while others are longer-term challenges that the project has had to develop specific strategies to counter.

Challenge 1 – Security challenges

The project operated in a fragile and conflict-affected environment, which posed significant security risks for project staff and beneficiaries. This made it difficult to carry out certain activities, particularly in areas with a high level of violence and insecurity. In November 2019, there was a mortal incident to UNDP staff that led to extremely high security measures which forbid UNDP staff's physical movement until late December 2019. The implementation of ACTION Project's activities, therefore, was unavoidably delayed at the very beginning. Security challenges persisted

and the project team could cover only select provinces at times, among the rest, due to this reason. Access to direct beneficiaries was and is difficult – and the fact that UNDP manages to sustain this line of communication is admirable.

Challenge 2 - Cultural and gender norms

The project also faced challenges related to deeply entrenched cultural and gender norms that can perpetuate corruption and inhibit efforts to promote transparency and accountability. For example, women in some communities were not allowed to attend certain training sessions or participate in decision-making processes, while the situation further deteriorated in the more recent past with increasing restrictions on the rights of women and girls, culminating in the ban on Afghan women working for NGOs.¹⁷

Statement by the UNDP Administrator on Taliban Ban on Afghan Women Working with United Nations¹⁸:

“UNDP joins the Secretary-General and other United Nations (UN) agencies in calling on the Taliban de facto authorities to immediately revoke the decision banning Afghan women from working for the UN and reverse all measures restricting women’s and girls’ rights.

Afghanistan is on the brink of economic collapse, exacerbated with the takeover in August 2021. The effects of the pandemic, followed by an extraordinary 20.7 percent contraction of the economy, and an unusually severe drought, have resulted in the loss of food, livelihoods and access to basic services. Only the continued provision of international aid and basic services to millions of Afghans have prevented a full collapse. Continued international assistance remains critical.

A sustainable recovery from the deepening crisis requires the full participation of Afghan women in the economy and society.”

Challenge 3 - Limited resources

Like many development projects, the ACTION Project faced resource constraints that limited the scope and scale of its activities. Based on learnings during project implementation, the project could have expanded easily its scope onto new partners and communities, however, it was hindered by the lack of resources.

Challenge 4 – Political instability

The rapid political transformations that occurred in the country during the implementation of the project led to challenges in maintaining continuity in project activities and goals, especially having in mind the disconnect of Afghanistan from inter-governmental processes, the non-recognition of the de facto authorities by the international community and general lack of funding for development projects in the country¹⁹. These transformations were sudden and occurred during the

¹⁷ UN Afghanistan Results Report 2022

¹⁸ <https://www.undp.org/speeches/statement-undp-administrator-taliban-ban-afghan-women-working-united-nations>

¹⁹ Adapted from the UN Afghanistan Results Report 2022

lifespan of the project, making it difficult for the project team to adapt to the changing environment. In addition, the donor provided instructions that impacted the project's direction, causing changes to its design and implementation. These challenges highlight the importance of being flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, and the need for effective communication and coordination with donors and other stakeholders.

Challenge 5 – COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the implementation of the ACTION Project, resulting in various implications. The first challenge was the inability of international companies and consultants to travel to Kabul to conduct the planned trainings for ACJC staff. Moreover, due to the lack of confidence to maintain the quality and confidentiality of online training, ACJC was reluctant to receive training remotely. Additionally, the 10 planned trainings, each with 25-30 modules and 15-25 participants, faced difficulties due to interrupted electricity supply and internet connection from participants' homes, which made it challenging to organize the trainings remotely. Although some trainings were delivered in one place, the number of participants had to be reduced to maintain social distancing, increasing the number of trainings and delivery time as per the instruction of the Ministry of Public Health. The monitoring of activities implemented by CSOs was also difficult due to physical spot checks not being possible, and ACTION project staff had to spend more time ensuring that the planned activities were well implemented and maintained certain quality. Finally, ACTION project staff were not allowed to visit government institutions and CSO offices, making it challenging to discuss and persuade them to reach a consensus on the implementation of any planned activities virtually.

Challenge 6 – Limited data

Afghanistan faces significant challenges in collecting, analysing, and disseminating reliable and accurate data, which can greatly affect the monitoring and evaluation of development projects like the ACTION Project. The country's fragile security situation, inadequate institutional capacity, and weak governance structures contribute to the limited availability of data. It is often difficult to source different categories of partners, especially those pertaining to different institutions, given the political changes that occurred in August 2021, limiting institutional knowledge. Moreover, in the absence of reliable data, it can be challenging to identify the most vulnerable and marginalized groups who are in need of assistance and support. This may result in the unequal distribution of project benefits, with some groups being left behind. To overcome these challenges, the ACTION Project explored innovative ways of data collection and analysis, such as using technology-based solutions, partnering with local organizations and communities, and leveraging existing data sources.

5. Conclusions and general assessment against evaluation criteria

5.1. Conclusions

The conclusions can be grouped into three main categories: factors that contributed to the success of the project, partnerships underlying the project and long-term visioning needed for tackling the issue at stake. The overview of conclusions is followed by two examples of best practice that distinguish this project, in the opinion of the evaluator.

Success factors:

- **The success of the project evolves around three major axis – capacity building, community building and ownership building²⁰.**

The success of the ACTION Project can be attributed to three major axis - capacity building, community building, and ownership building. Firstly, capacity building was achieved through engaging community leaders from the design phase to implementation. This ensured that the project standards of transparency and accountability were maintained throughout. The involvement of community leaders in the capacity-building process also ensured that the knowledge and skills gained could be transferred to other community members.

Secondly, community building was achieved by bringing together various communities and facilitating discussions to understand their needs and priorities. This participatory planning approach ensured that community members had a sense of ownership over the project, which in turn led to increased participation and commitment.

Lastly, ownership building was achieved by increasing the willingness of community members to participate in projects such as the ACTION Project. Communities were also invested in the project, which led to increased accountability and transparency. The success of the project was dependent on the collective ownership and responsibility of community members, which in turn led to sustainable outcomes.

Overall, the ACTION Project integrated these three axes, which ensured that the project was community-driven, sustainable, and had a lasting impact.

- **Innovation was highly contextualized with adaptation of the project approach under the COVID-19 pandemic and adding of Output 3²¹.**

Innovation was not a goal in itself, but rather a means to carefully address the evolving needs of the COVID-19 environment. As a result, the project became significantly more relevant, with Output 3 playing a crucial role in enhancing citizen monitoring of the COVID-19 response. The project's adaptability and responsiveness allowed it to effectively address the new challenges posed by the pandemic and ensure that the COVID-19 response remained transparent and accountable.

- **The ACTION Project was designed against a human rights based approach working with both rights holders and duty bearers until external circumstances mandated a change in approach²².**

The ACTION Project was initially designed with a human rights-based approach that aimed to

²⁰ Based on Findings 1, 4, 5 and 13

²¹ Based on Findings 2, 8, 9 and 13

²² Based on Findings 1, 2, 5 and 14

work with both rights holders and duty bearers in order to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance. This approach recognized that it was not enough to simply focus on one group, but that both rights holders (such as citizens and civil society organizations) and duty bearers (such as government officials and institutions) needed to be engaged in order to bring about meaningful change.

However, external circumstances eventually led to a change in approach. Specifically, the rapid political transformations in the country and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges that the project had to adapt to. In response, the project began to focus more heavily on citizen monitoring as a way to strengthen transparency and accountability in the government's response to the pandemic.

Overall, the project's ability to adapt to changing circumstances while remaining true to its core values highlights the importance of flexibility and innovation in the field of international development.

“For the first time, I learned and discussed the linkages between Anti-Corruption and Human rights. The material was very interesting, and the discussions were truly inspiring. I particularly enjoyed the visual illustrations, which made the content easily understandable”. said Horia Ghafari from Integrity Watch Afghanistan as reported under the 2021 APR.

- **The interventions of the ACTION Project were truly transformative for local community members²³.**

The project's actions led to tangible improvements in the lives of the beneficiaries, addressing critical issues that affected their well-being and livelihoods. It went beyond the realms of theoretical trainings and workshops, effectively addressing the real-life challenges faced by the communities. By actively engaging with the beneficiaries, understanding their needs, and implementing targeted initiatives, the project brought about positive and lasting changes in their daily lives. The experiences and testimonials shared by the beneficiaries stand as a testament to the project's ability to create tangible and meaningful improvements within the communities it served.

For instance, a specific example highlights the transformative nature of the project. In a village, there was a bakery that was found to be providing incorrect quantities or weights of bread to the public. Upon learning about this issue, the project team visited the bakery owner and engaged in a constructive dialogue regarding the problem. Through these meetings and discussions, the bakery owner acknowledged the concern and made necessary changes, ultimately ensuring that the public received the right quantity and weight of bread. This example exemplifies how the project's interventions were able to identify and rectify real-life challenges, leading to positive outcomes for the community members.

Partnerships:

- **UNDP has been recognized as a trusted and reliable partner with the ACTION Project team distinguished for their high level of expertise and responsiveness²⁴.**

UNDP has established a strong reputation as a trusted and reliable partner in development work,

²³ Based on Findings 1, 5 and 7

²⁴ Based on Findings 12 and 15

with the ACTION Project team specifically recognized as being very knowledgeable and responsive. Through their collaborative efforts with local partners and stakeholders, the team has been able to effectively implement the project's activities and achieve its objectives. The team's commitment to ensuring that the needs and priorities of local communities are taken into account has been a key factor in their success. This has been reflected in the positive feedback received from project beneficiaries and stakeholders, who have praised the team's professionalism, dedication, and willingness to listen and respond to their feedback. If one would need to distinguish several strong points of such an approach, they would be:

- Ability to listen, capture needs and design a tailor-made approach
- Build trust by delivering as planned, which contributes to extension of partnerships

By building strong partnerships and engaging with local communities, the UNDP and ACTION Project team have been able to achieve meaningful results.

- **The project proactively sought to maximise its potential through successfully attracting additional partners and funds²⁵.**

The ACTION Project was successful in proactively seeking to maximize its potential by attracting additional partners and funds. This was exemplified by the Royal Danish Embassy's decision to increase funding to the project through the second revision in May 2020. The additional funding allowed the project to expand its activities and to develop new initiatives aimed at improving anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the project team was proactive in seeking various opportunities to expand on partnerships and funding options, in order to enhance the project's impact. Furthermore, the project team actively sought various opportunities to expand its partnerships and funding options, including engagement with the UNDP Seoul Policy Center, Singapore Global Centre for Technology, Innovation and Sustainable Development, and the Anticorruption Global Fund. Through these efforts, the project was seeking to leverage additional resources and expertise to enhance the impact of its activities.

The proactive approach taken by the ACTION Project in seeking out new partners and funding opportunities is a testament to the team's commitment to achieving its objectives and maximizing its impact. The willingness to engage with external partners and stakeholders also reflects a broader understanding that effective anti-corruption work requires collaboration and cooperation from a wide range of actors, both domestically and internationally. This approach will be critical going forward, building on achievements and expanding impact in Afghanistan.

Need for long-term visioning:

- **The project fits well along the HDP nexus, as per UNDP's Crisis Offer²⁶.**

The project fits well along the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, as per UNDP's Crisis Offer. This means that the project is well-aligned with UNDP's approach to addressing crises and conflicts through integrated efforts that encompass humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions. UNDP's Crisis Offer is designed to provide a comprehensive response to crises and conflicts, with a focus on addressing the underlying causes of these issues and promoting sustainable development in crisis-affected areas.

²⁵ Based on Findings 1, 2, 5 and 13

²⁶ Based on Findings 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 13

By integrating the principles of the HDP nexus into its next programming phases, the initiative can leverage resources and expertise from across UNDP's various thematic areas, including crisis prevention and recovery, governance, social and economic development, and environmental sustainability. This can help to strengthen the project's impact and contribute to the overall goal of building resilient communities that are able to withstand shocks and crises.

On the other hand, corruption can have a devastating impact on peace efforts and stability. It undermines the legitimacy of governments and institutions, erodes trust between citizens and their leaders, and creates fertile ground for extremism and violence. In conflict and post-conflict situations, corruption can exacerbate tensions and fuel conflict by perpetuating inequalities, injustice, and grievances among different groups. Therefore, fighting corruption can be seen not only as a moral imperative but also as a development strategy that contributes to peacebuilding and stability. By promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity in public institutions and services, anticorruption efforts can help build trust between governments and citizens, reduce the risk of conflict, and foster sustainable development. The HDP nexus can provide a valuable framework for integrating anticorruption measures into peacebuilding and development programs, recognizing that the three pillars of human development, peace, and governance are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

As noted during an interview:

“Humanitarian assistance is just a temporary solution – it would not help development of Afghanistan.”

- **Impact in terms of transformational institutional change requires long term programming and implementation²⁷.**

According to its Theory of Change, the ACTION Project was designed with the aim of supporting the ACJC to effectively and systematically prosecute high level corruption cases and to support communities in demanding more transparency and accountability. The project was on the right track towards achieving the first objective through its activities under Output 1. However, due to the rapid political transformation in the country, Output 1 was suspended by the donor just as it was just beginning to shift its focus from administrative and logistical support to more substantive activities such as the establishment of a roster of expert witnesses and introduction of more advanced anticorruption trainings.

The suspension of Output 1 was a setback for the project, as it had the potential to bring about significant institutional change by strengthening the justice sector's ability to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. Despite this setback, the project did achieve success in capacity building, community building, and ownership building. Engaging community leaders throughout the design and implementation of the project helped to establish standards of transparency and accountability, while bringing communities together helped to understand their needs and priorities through participatory planning.

Overall, the project had a positive impact on the community's willingness to participate in this type of project, and communities were invested in its success. However, the lack of sufficient time and the suspension of Output 1 prevented the project from achieving its full potential for institutional change, which may be taken into consideration going forward.

²⁷ Based on Findings 4, 5 and 13

Examples of Best Practice:

Best Practice I

The ACTION Project in Afghanistan developed a **mobile monitoring application** to collect real-time data on health facilities, oxygen supplies, protective equipment, and antipyretics reserves. The app was used to monitor 1,300 health facilities on a monthly basis and was expanded to cover additional thematic areas.

The app was further designed to contribute to the UNDP ADABEI programme by conducting real-time monitoring of essential services in collaboration with national and local CSOs. The app allowed for effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery for Afghan people at these critical moments.

The use of the M&E app in the ACTION Project is considered a best practice as it provided a streamlined approach to data collection and monitoring, improving the quality of data and ensuring its timeliness. The app allowed for more informed decision-making and supported evidence-based programming. The app was scalable and flexible, allowing for expansion to cover additional thematic areas and different dashboards to visualize the data collected through local enumerators.

Overall, the M&E app developed by the ACTION Project is a best practice in data collection and monitoring for development programming in Afghanistan, and has the potential to be adapted and applied in other contexts.

Best Practice II

The ACTION Project in Afghanistan implemented a **low-value grants mechanism** to empower community members to voice their concerns and seek solutions. The mechanism funded CSOs to conduct capacity building trainings, awareness campaigns, and community-based monitoring to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability. However, the impact of the mechanism went beyond anticorruption as it addressed a broader range of issues, allowing community members to access corruption-related issues more easily, building trust and necessary networks.

By engaging communities and gaining their support through addressing broader issues, the project was able to make greater impact on anticorruption efforts in the long run. The mechanism funded CSOs to conduct social audits, establish social accountability networks, conduct sector meetings, involve journalists to investigate and report corruption, and establish project oversight committees. In total, the mechanism supported the delivery of other projects (ALED II and ABADEI) being implemented by UNDP Afghanistan in a total value of over USD 300 million, testifying to its value and potential for supporting internal cohesion.

In addition to the low-value grants mechanism, the ACTION Project in Afghanistan had a strong capacity building component for civil society organizations (CSOs). The project provided training on corruption as an issue, various anticorruption tools, and developing good proposals, project management and administration. The capacity building also included peer-to-peer training conducted by larger CSOs to build the capacity of smaller grassroots organizations.

This approach of linking capacity building with the issuance of low-value grants is commendable. By building the capacity of local organizations, they can become more effective in addressing community needs and achieving project goals. Moreover, the approach helps to promote local ownership of projects and fosters the development of local solutions to local problems.

Through the capacity building component of the mechanism, CSOs were able to enhance their skills and knowledge in anticorruption efforts. They were able to learn how to conduct social audits, establish social accountability networks, conduct sector meetings, involve journalists to investigate and report corruption, and other valuable skills. These skills are essential in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance – and add an element of sustainability to the grant actions, leaving the implementers with lasting knowledge.

Furthermore, the peer-to-peer training conducted by larger CSOs to build the capacity of smaller grassroots organizations was an effective way of spreading knowledge and skills. This approach helps to ensure that knowledge and skills are shared and spread beyond the organizations directly involved in the mechanism. It also helps to promote collaboration and cooperation among CSOs, which can lead to the development of stronger civil society networks. Such capacity building programs can have wider impact, beyond only strengthening civil society networks – given the context of acute brain drain in Afghanistan. The programmes can build skills on one hand, but also provide a prospective for people to stay and contribute to the local community. Ownership of the initiative is high and through capacity building and knowledge sharing the sustainability of results is more secure.

Through the low-value grants mechanism and adjacent capacity building program, the ACTION Project was able to build relationships and access within communities, ultimately allowing for greater ownership and greater impact on anticorruption efforts. The mechanism allowed community members to voice their concerns, seek solutions, and access corruption-related issues more easily, promoting transparency and accountability. The mechanism's effectiveness demonstrates the value of addressing a broader range of issues, as it can build trust and accessibility, allowing for greater impact on anticorruption efforts in the long run. By including a set of trainings on ethics, integrity and anticorruption overall in any future low value grants issuance (irrespective of themes), UNDP could mainstream anticorruption onto the field, ensure more sound and effective delivery of grants, while making a lasting impact on the societies on so many levels. This approach also generates a high degree of ownership as well as contributing towards the sustainability of results.

5.2. Summary of Evaluation Criteria and their Ratings

As agreed with UNDP, the Evaluation has ranked the project against the four key evaluation criteria in accordance with the ranking scale agreed in the Inception Report. Below follows a brief summary of the Evaluation assessment of each evaluation criteria, followed by its individual ranking and with a ranking of the overall project provided at the end.

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Assessment	Ranking
Relevance	The relevance of the ACTION project in Afghanistan cannot be overstated. Corruption has been a long-standing challenge in the country both pre and post the August 2021 political transition. Its initial alignment with the country's policies and strategies, as well as the UNDP's Strategic Plan and CPD, makes it a critical tool in achieving SDG 16.5 and underscores UNDP's commitment to supporting Afghanistan's development agenda.	4

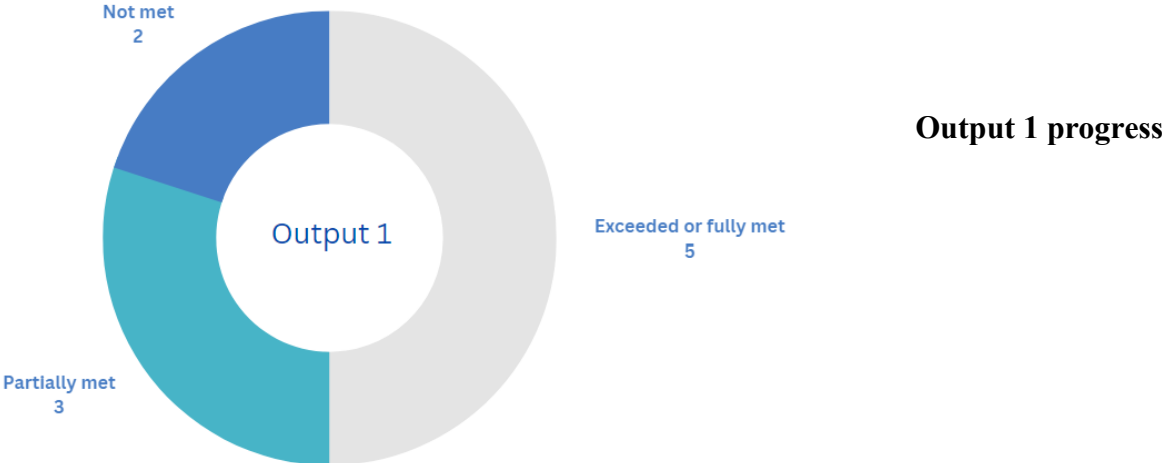
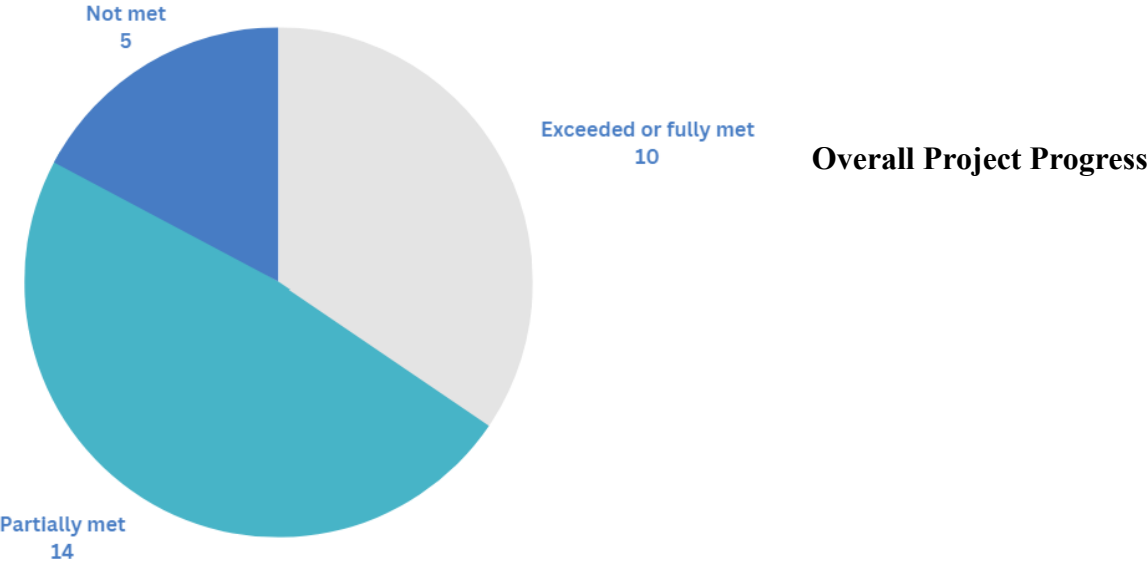
Effectiveness	It is important to note that the ACTION Project was implemented in a challenging context, particularly given the political and security situation in Afghanistan. Despite this, the project was able to achieve a number of its objectives, including improving the technical and operational capacities of the ACJC, providing support to various types of issues through low-value grants, experimenting with different anticorruption tools, and adding a dedicated output focused on the response to COVID-19. Additionally, the project addressed a critical lack of data in an area of high importance to the country, contributing to better delivery of health services, as well as their transparency and accountability. However, it's important to acknowledge that not all envisaged activities were implemented due to the challenging context. Nevertheless, the project was overall effective in achieving its objectives and making progress towards the goal of reducing corruption in Afghanistan.	4
Efficiency	Overall, it can be concluded that the project-maintained a pace of delivery as much as it could, with almost all impediments being external, at such magnitude, which could not have been predicted at the project design phase and taken into account when planning. The external impediments include COVID19 which started several months into the project implementation and a rapid political transformation, which happened just as the project managed to accelerate. However, with an optimal team structure of high performance, the project has adjusted to the changed circumstances efficiently and is baring results related to outputs 2 and 3. The approach implemented by the project through the grant scheme can be replicated and scaled for this and other areas going forward.	4
Sustainability	Elements of sustainability were embedded in planning phases, but largely due to external circumstances, affected the sustainability of project results. While it is hard to directly link the project results to some improvements in the overall perception and incidence of corruption, there is anecdotal evidence of impact at smaller scales extending also beyond the scope of the project and thus testifying to the fact that some of the methods employed by the project, could be scaled onto other areas. Ownership of the low value grants scheme is assessed as being high and the sustainability of both this and the M&E app, which can be expanded and replicated into other sectors, is likely to continue beyond the lifespan of the project.	3
Overall	The ACTION Project in Afghanistan had a high relevance in a challenging context, demonstrated effectiveness through improved capacities and engagement in diverse approaches, while external factors impacted the sustainability of its results, emphasizing the need for long-term dedication in anticorruption programming.	15/16

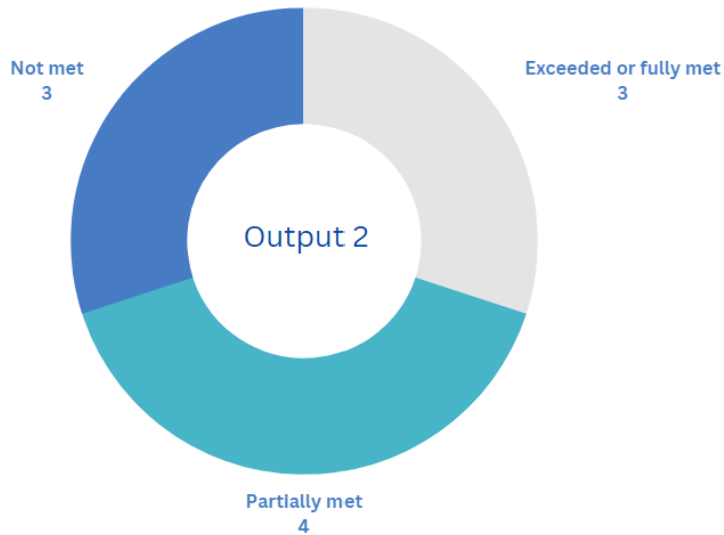
Legend:

- 1 – Unsuccessful
- 2 – Partially successful
- 3 – Successful
- 4 – Very successful

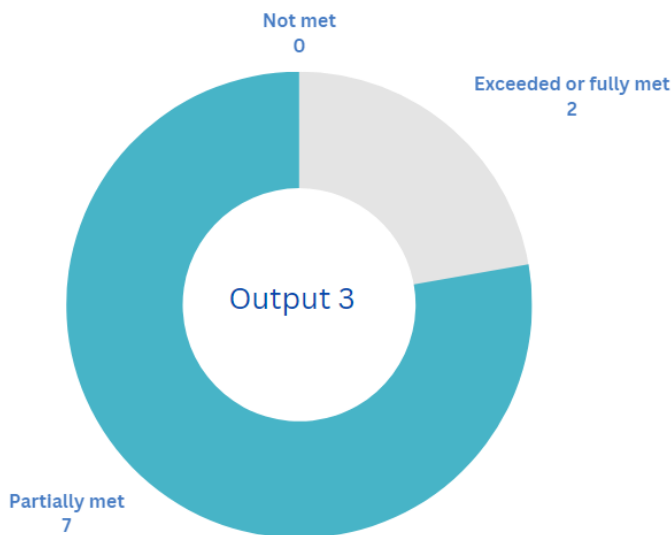
5.3. Summary of output progress and activity level progress

A graphical summary of the overall project progress and output level progress against indicators is provided below.





Output 2 progress



Output 3 progress

6. Recommendations

Overall, the evaluation report provides a set of forward-looking, actionable recommendations for the ACTION Project, including the need for a new programming phase with a careful mix of quick wins and longer implementation periods. The report also recommends exploring areas for scaling the anticorruption programming, looking into examples of good practice from comparable contexts, supporting women-led civil society organizations, expanding work around social accountability, institutionalizing learning alongside monitoring and evaluation, and extending the excellent practice with the small grants' mechanism horizontally to other areas of UNDP's work.

Each recommendation is linked to the relevant finding and conclusion upon which it is based and provides an indication as to the timescale to address the recommendation.

Recommendation 1

Building on the results and lessons learned from this phase the eventual new programmatic cycle could be centred around strengthening transparency and accountability for community resilience, which could be possibly a more attractive value proposition for both donors and partners rather than emphasizing anticorruption programming *per se*²⁸.

Based on the success of the low-value grants mechanism implemented by the ACTION Project in Afghanistan, there is a clear opportunity for further programming that goes beyond narrow anticorruption measures and instead focuses on transparency, accountability, social accountability, social monitoring, and community-based actions. To capitalize on this opportunity, future work could prioritize capacity building, community engagement, empowerment of citizens, and social monitoring – basically supporting further capacity building of CSOs at grassroots level, based on already built trust – and not abandoning the people.

Capacity building should remain a central component of any programming aimed at promoting transparency and accountability. Specifically, efforts should focus on building the capacity of civil society organizations and community-based organizations to monitor and report on public service delivery and promote social accountability. Peer-to-peer training conducted by larger CSOs to build the capacity of small grassroots organizations should also be considered.

Programming should prioritize community engagement by building relationships and trust with local communities. This can be achieved through participatory approaches that empower citizens to take ownership of development initiatives and become active participants in the decision-making process.

Programming should focus on empowering citizens to play a more active role in holding government officials accountable for their actions. Social monitoring mechanisms that provide communities with the tools and resources to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public services should also be incorporated. Social monitoring can help identify areas where services are lacking or need improvement, leading to greater transparency and accountability.

A new programming phase should build on the strengths of the current project, focused on a 360-degree approach and incorporating a mix of short-term solutions and longer-term strategies for sustainable change. This would enable the project to continue addressing corruption in a comprehensive and effective way while also aligning with two out of the three broader development goals of the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (protecting livelihoods and strengthening systems), and fitting well under the corporate HDP nexus.

Shifting the paradigm from an exclusive focus on anticorruption programming to one that prioritizes transparency and accountability may be essential in the context of Afghanistan's operational realities. By focusing on both hardware and software, the project can address the immediate needs of the community while also establishing long-term solutions for preventing corruption and promoting sustainable development.

Building on the good basis created under the ACTION Project, the team would be ready to introduce more advanced capacity building tools and themes. This would enable the project to

²⁸ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION project and UNDP, midterm priority, based on findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 14, challenges 1, 4 and 5, and conclusions 3 and 6

continue addressing corruption in a comprehensive and effective way, while also aligning with the broader development goals of the HDP nexus.

The approach of focusing on transparency, accountability, social accountability, community-based actions, and empowering citizens could make a significant contribution towards achieving the targets outlined in the UNDP Afghanistan Transitional Country Program Results and Monitoring Framework 2022-2023. By providing technical and financial support to CSOs and communities, the number of people accessing basic services can increase, and the number of essential services monitored through a "Real-Time Monitoring" system can also increase. This can lead to better service delivery and improved access to essential services, which is critical for Afghanistan's development.

Furthermore, by promoting community participation and involving them in decision-making processes, the number of grievances received through UNDP established community grievance/feedback handling platforms can increase. This can help improve service delivery and ensure that the needs of communities are being met. Ultimately, a focus on transparency and accountability can help build public trust and enhance the legitimacy of government institutions, which is vital for the success of development efforts in Afghanistan.

“There is considerable scope for UNDP to show leadership in facilitating and promoting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus agenda. UNDP should prioritize its support to conflict prevention, further develop its prevention offer with a focus on facilitating long-term structural change, and be a champion for generational transformation in conflict-affected countries.”

-Oscar A. Garcia, Director of the Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP
Excerpt from the Foreword to Evaluation of UNDP Support To Conflict-Affected Countries
(<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/conflict.shtml>)

Recommendation 2

The project should continue to elevate and promote its data collection, M&E and risk management potentials to feed in to both the country office programming as well as programming by other UN Agencies. The excellent practice with the low value grants mechanism for monitoring of provision of services and usage of the M&E application could be further extended horizontally to other areas of UNDP and UN Agency’s work²⁹.

The recommendation suggests that the low value grants mechanism used by the ACTION Project to monitor the provision of services and usage of the application can serve as an excellent practice for other areas of UNDP's work. This mechanism allowed the project to engage communities and civil society organizations in monitoring the delivery of services and the use of funds, thereby promoting transparency and accountability. The recommendation is to extend this practice horizontally to other UNDP projects, particularly those that involve community engagement and participatory approaches.

By adopting this practice, UNDP projects can increase their effectiveness and improve the sustainability of their interventions. It can also help to build trust between communities, civil society organizations, and the government by providing a platform for engagement and dialogue.

²⁹ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, mid-long term priority, based on findings 1, 4, 5 and 13, challenges 5 and 6 and conclusion 1

Furthermore, the small grants mechanism can serve as a tool for empowering communities and local actors to take ownership of development initiatives and hold duty bearers accountable. It is an excellent mechanism to work through a bottom-up approach, especially in the given circumstances, balancing with UNDP's usual emphasis on cooperation with national partners, through a top-down approach.

To institutionalize this practice, UNDP can develop guidelines and standard operating procedures that outline the process for implementing small grants mechanisms. The guidelines should include information on how to design and manage the grant program, how to select grantees, and how to monitor and evaluate the results of the program. Additionally, UNDP can provide training and capacity building to its staff and partners to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the program effectively. Finally, if UNDP could include as a regular practice, training on ethics, integrity and anticorruption overall, into capacity building programs linked with issuance of any low value grants, it would basically mainstream anticorruption onto the field, while simultaneously contributing to more sound delivery of required grant actions.

Further, it is important to note that the ACTION Project could further elevate and promote its data collection, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and risk management potential. Specifically, the project should utilize the mobile monitoring application, which is designed to collect real-time data on health facilities, oxygen supplies, protection equipment, and antipyretics reserves on a monthly basis from 1,300 targeted health facilities. Through this application, the ACTION Project can contribute to the ADABEI programme by conducting real-time monitoring of essential services in collaboration with national and local civil society organizations (CSOs) in target areas and creating different dashboards to visualize the data collected through the local enumerators, in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery for Afghan people during critical moments.

In addition to monitoring health facilities, the evaluator has been informed that the M&E app was expanded to cover additional thematic areas, namely, education and food security. This mere fact shows the potential of the app under the given context. Furthermore, the M&E app should be promoted to other UN agencies to maximize its potential impact and be integrated into broader UN programming. With this recommendation, the ACTION Project can help contribute to the broader UN goals, as well as provide valuable data and insights to improve programming in Afghanistan and beyond.

In conclusion, the recommendation to extend the small grants mechanism horizontally to other areas of UNDP's work, alongside the broader use of the M&E application, can lead to improved community engagement, transparency, and accountability, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

As noted by a focus group participant:

“Partnership with civil society organizations gives UNDP eyes and ears on the ground.”

Recommendation 3

The project should consolidate its partnership base by continuing to follow the whole of society approach. This includes working with civil society organisations, investigative journalists and media as in the first phase but expanding to include academia and the private

sector, as originally envisaged³⁰.

The ACTION Project has been successful in implementing various anti-corruption measures to promote accountability and transparency in Afghanistan both on the supply and demand sides. While working with local communities, civil society and media through grant schemes has proven as a successful model, the project team could consider other areas for further programming. It is recommended that the project team consider working further with investigative journalists. Placing journalists in NGOs, outside the commercial sphere of media, would provide them with more freedom to investigate stories without being subject to the pressures of commercial interests. This could help uncover corrupt practices in various sectors of society, including the government and private sector.

As noted during a focus group interview:

“We need trained investigative journalists on the ground.”

Another area for consideration is exploring the ‘follow the money’ principle. This would involve tracing the flow of funds to identify potential corruption or financial mismanagement. Working on public procurement, external audit, and similar issues can also help in this regard, as these are areas that are particularly susceptible to corruption.

The sectoral approach employed by the project, which focused on the health system, can be extended onto other sectors, such as education, environmental protection, delivery of humanitarian assistance or the public construction industry, for example. Most of the same methods could be employed as with the health sector. Once circumstances allow, the team may want to explore the introduction of integrity plans for institutions (or also referred to as anticorruption action plans in some parts of the world), as a prevention tool and through them achieve a whole of government approach.

It is also recommended that the project team works with the business community to develop compliance standards. By doing so, businesses can be encouraged to adopt more transparent and accountable practices. This could help promote ethical behaviour and reduce the likelihood of corrupt practices within the private sector. By engaging with the private sector, the project can also help to create an enabling environment for them to do business.

The ACTION Project team should consider engaging with academia to develop a curriculum for better transparency and accountability in communities, for example through providing support for opening anticorruption clinics as law schools. By providing such support, the project can contribute to the development of a new generation of professionals with knowledge and skills to tackle corruption in Afghanistan.

Provided sufficient political will, the ACTION Project could also consider conducting perception and incidence-based surveys with a general overview but also focusing in on certain sectors – especially those of greatest concern to ordinary people. While such surveys can be useful as a monitoring tool, they can be even more useful as a means for advocacy and positioning the organization. However, the evaluator believes that it is of paramount importance to announce the results of the survey in cooperation with representatives of authorities. Such an approach requires

³⁰ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, short-midterm priority, based on findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 13 and conclusions 1, 3 and 5

additional careful handling, but pays off longer term as it maintains relations and may even open doors for additional measures. In the context of Afghanistan, perhaps this could be done with local authorities.

Overall, by implementing these measures, the ACTION Project can further strengthen its efforts to combat corruption in Afghanistan and promote greater transparency and accountability in various sectors of society. Naturally, a prerequisite would be political will at various levels and ideally, the possibility to cover all provinces in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 4

Going forward, UNDP may want to look into examples of good practice from comparable contexts in South and South East Asia. Opportunities for South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange should be identified and included from the design stage³¹.

UNDP Afghanistan could rely on UNDP's global and regional expertise and look into examples of good practice that could potentially be adapted to the Afghanistan context in the region. Examples range from Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) with its authorities and practices, to the Access to Information (a2i) Programme in Bangladesh with a range of online tools that helped increase transparency and accountability in government services in Bangladesh and have been recognized as successful examples of anti-corruption measures in lower income countries. UNDP may also want to explore the introduction of the Corruption Risk Assessment tool initially developed by the Korean Anticorruption Commission as well as the related Corruption Prevention Units or similarly, organizational anticorruption plans or anticorruption action plans as they are known in the Asia-Pacific region. While it may be tempting to look at examples of countries with low levels of corruption – they may not always offer good examples of innovative measures for the simple fact that they may not need them and hence, don't have them.

Recommendation 5

Gender equality should continue to be a primary focus going forward within the context of the operational realities. UNDP should continue using opportunities to support in its programming women-led civil society organizations that focus on resilience building, rights, empowerment, education, and protection, and seek to facilitate a dialogue on the female participation ban in that context³².

The recommendation suggests that UNDP should continue supporting women-led civil society organizations in their further programming efforts. By supporting such organizations, UNDP can help strengthen the role of women in promoting transparency and accountability, while also addressing gender inequalities and promoting women's empowerment. Women-led civil society organizations can be important partners for UNDP in implementing its anti-corruption initiatives, as they are often well positioned to identify and address the unique challenges faced by women

³¹ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, short-midterm priority, based on findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 13 and conclusions 1 and 3

³² Recommendation targeted at ACTION, short-mid-term priority, based on findings 1, 2, 5, 12, 14 and 15, challenge 2 and conclusions 2 and 6

and marginalized groups in accessing justice and participating in governance processes. Through this approach, UNDP can be placed in a position to facilitate a dialogue on the rights of women, especially since the mid-August 2021 political transformation of the country and in the context of dramatic poverty trends.

Such a recommendation is also in line with the analysis of the CPD outputs performed upon extension of the CPD in November 2021, which notes:

‘Output 9 (Implementation of international commitments impacting women) will refocus on supporting women and girls’ access to healthcare, justice, education and social services through civil society engagement.’³³

Perhaps the following statement from a focus group discussion testifies best to the importance of this recommendation:

“UNDP must continue supporting women ... if not we will be left alone.”

Recommendation 6

Expanding on recommendation 1, a potential area going forward, which is assessed as having a high likelihood of success is around the concept of accountability mechanisms, in particular strengthening transparency and accountability for community resilience. This would allow UNDP and the project to remain present on the ground, with the people, through civic engagement, based on already built trust, with a view to complement traditional accountability mechanisms³⁴.

It is recommended that UNDP frames potentially the continuation of its anticorruption programming under the framework of social accountability, given the current context for which this concept seems very suitable and the work already done under this theme and based on achieved results in establishing community-based accountability networks that have proven relevant, effective and efficient in terms of service delivery at the community level. Social accountability refers to an approach aimed at fostering accountability through civic engagement. In this approach, ordinary citizens and civil society organizations play a central role in promoting accountability towards their communities.

As noted during interviews:

“The only way forward is engagement, UNDP should stay engaged at ground level this is the way to help building resilient communities that could hold service providers accountable”

In the context of the public sector, social accountability encompasses various actions and mechanisms that can be used by citizens, communities, independent media, and civil society organizations to hold public officials and public servants accountable. Examples of these

³³ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-11/undp_cpd_2022-signed_by_rc_extension_of_the_current_undp_country_programme.pdf

³⁴ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, mid-long-term priority, based on findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 13 and 14, challenge 2 and conclusions 4 and 6

mechanisms include participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring of public service delivery, investigative journalism, public commissions, and citizen advisory boards. Social accountability mechanisms are designed to complement traditional accountability mechanisms, such as political checks and balances, accounting and auditing systems, administrative rules, and legal procedures. Studies have shown that social accountability mechanisms can contribute to improved governance, increased development effectiveness, and empowerment. The key success factors for social accountability mechanisms include access to and effective use of information, the capacity of civil society and the state, and synergy between the two. To be effective and sustainable over the long term, social accountability mechanisms need to be institutionalized and linked to existing governance structures and service delivery systems.³⁵

As noted by a key informant during interviews:

“The project recognised that the reforms are often a result of the external pressure, but internal pressure is key for paradigm change and ownership.”

Recommendation 7

While the ACTION Project has been both proactive and successful in resource mobilization, going forward, the project should develop an integrated and comprehensive resource mobilization strategy that involves prospective partners and donors, based on a well-articulated plan of engagement with clear targets to diversify the funding base. The financing strategy could focus on preservation and strengthening of existing partnerships, developing financial and non-financial partnerships with emerging donors, identifying possibilities for funding from UNDP vertical funds and exploring the possibility of securing UNDP core funds³⁶.

The evaluator found that the ACTION Project showed agility in resource mobilization and flexibility in repurposing funds to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has allowed the project to sustain and increase the influx of resources to a certain extent even during these challenging financial times. However, a new programmatic phase would require the project to develop a new integrated and comprehensive resource and partnership mobilization strategy that involves prospective partners and donors.

In the changed political, financial and development landscape in Afghanistan, the project may want to develop a long-term resource mobilization strategy based on a well-articulated plan of engagement with partners, with clear targets to diversify the funding base and pursue it more forcefully.

³⁵ Forster,Reiner; Malena,Carmen; Singh,Janamejay.

Social accountability: an introduction to the concept and emerging practice (English). Social development papers ; no. 76 Washington, D.C. : World Bank

Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/327691468779445304/Social-accountability-an-introduction-to-the-concept-and-emerging-practice>

³⁶ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, long-term priority, based on findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 13 and conclusions 1 and 3

Considering the comparative advantages of the UNDP and the ACTION Project itself — including its implementation capacity, track record of working with diverse stakeholders, convening power and neutrality — the financing strategy could be based around the following pillars:

- Preservation and further strengthening of the partnership with existing donors and IFIs (potentially through the Afghanistan Coordination Group established in May 2022 to coordinate non-humanitarian assistance from international partners and to provide a platform for strategic dialogue on programs, policy and context).
- Develop further partnerships - both financial and non-financial with emerging donors through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
- Identify more systematically possibilities for funding from UNDP vertical funds, regional hub and policy centres
- Explore the possibility for securing UNDP core funds, through the assignment of functions and/or role that the successor to the ACTION Project could perform for UNDP, that will underpin the project's operational capacity and provide a clear message to donors and the partner community on UN/DP's potential to identify needs and secure transparent aid provision mechanisms (e.g. through social monitoring of services provided by development and humanitarian aid, or through support to initiatives targeting civil society organizations)

By pursuing these strategies, UNDP can develop a more sustainable financing model.

Recommendation 8:

Building upon the finding that the ACTION Project's interventions had a transformative impact on the local community members, it is crucial to recognize the value of adaptive management and continue employing such practices in future projects³⁷.

Adaptive management refers to the process of continually learning from experiences, adjusting strategies, and incorporating feedback to improve project outcomes. The success of the ACTION Project can be attributed, in part, to its adaptive management approach, which allowed for a responsive and context-specific implementation.

Based on this, it is recommended that future UNDP projects, regardless of focus topic, prioritize adaptive management as a guiding principle. This entails establishing mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning throughout the project lifecycle. Regular engagement with beneficiaries and stakeholders should be facilitated to obtain their feedback, understand emerging needs, and ensure that project interventions remain relevant and effective.

Additionally, the project team should continue to gather data and evidence of impact to support evidence-based decision-making. Monitoring and evaluation systems should be designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative information, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the project's outcomes and their significance to the beneficiaries.

³⁷ Recommendation targeted at the ACTION Project and UNDP, long-term priority, based on findings 1, 5 and 7, and conclusion 8

To foster adaptive management, it is important to promote a culture of learning and knowledge sharing within the project team. Encouraging open dialogue, reflection, and critical analysis of experiences will facilitate the identification of successful practices and areas for improvement. Lessons learned should be documented and shared across the organization and with other stakeholders to inform future programming.

Furthermore, collaboration and partnerships should be nurtured to enhance adaptive management practices. Engaging with local communities, civil society organizations, government institutions, and other relevant stakeholders will not only broaden the knowledge base but also foster ownership and sustainability of project interventions.

Continuing the adaptive management practices demonstrated by the ACTION Project will enable future projects to effectively respond to the evolving needs and challenges faced by the beneficiaries. By embracing a flexible and learning-oriented approach, projects can maximize their impact and ensure that interventions remain relevant, efficient, and transformative. Adaptive management is an essential component of successful development initiatives and should be integrated into the project design, implementation, and evaluation processes.

7. Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1

More integrated programming leads to designing deeper and more far-reaching interventions across sectors

The lessons learned from the ACTION Project in the context of Afghanistan highlights the importance of integrated programming in designing comprehensive interventions that have a deep and extensive impact across various sectors. By consciously fostering cross-thematic synergies, these interventions successfully consolidate programs and strengthen their human rights orientation. As a result, multidimensional solutions can be applied, potentially leading to improved livelihoods, empowered citizens, and enhanced service provision. The utilization of elements and best practices from the ACTION Project in other portfolios underscored the effectiveness of this approach in Afghanistan and highlighted the potential for replicating such integrated programming models in future initiatives.

Lesson learned 2

Capacity building programs require careful examination of externalities

The ACTION Project in Afghanistan has highlighted important lessons regarding system-level capacity development. It is crucial to carefully examine the external factors, including the contextual dynamics with De-facto Authorities, to ensure the effective uptake of such programs. To optimize results, it is necessary to tailor capacity-building efforts at a system level by integrating cross-sectoral programming and considering the associated externalities. At the onset of these efforts, developing a detailed theory of change with precise definitions of causal linkages becomes essential. This helps in consolidating the desired outcomes and identifying strategies to achieve them. Additionally, establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system based on the theory of change allows for a clear understanding of the pathways of change. Systematically

collecting lessons and best practices not only improves advocacy but also enhances the adoption of reform interventions. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights into UNDP's actual contribution to these efforts, enabling better assessment and further improvement of its interventions.

Lesson learned 3

Localisation and tailor-made approaches to project activities are key to success

In the context of the ACTION Project in Afghanistan, it has been evident that localisation and tailor-made approaches to project activities are crucial for achieving success. The project has achieved significant successes by localising its approaches, particularly in identifying barriers and solutions through grassroots organizations and targeting directly communities. By customizing capacity building programs to cater to the specific needs of the communities, the project has ensured a high level of effectiveness and positive outcomes. These lessons emphasize the importance of adapting interventions to the local context and designing targeted initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by the beneficiaries.

As noted during a focus group discussion:

“All future planning needs to include community representatives from the beginning - this is the only way to ensure accountability for the Programme implementation.”

Lesson learned 4

Anti-corruption efforts must take a holistic, systemic and sustained approach in order to effectively address corruption.

The project demonstrated that systemic corruption requires a systemic response. This means that it is not enough to simply train officials on anti-corruption measures, or to conduct one-off investigations into corruption cases. Rather, a holistic approach is needed that includes strengthening legal frameworks, building the capacity of oversight institutions, promoting transparency and accountability, and engaging civil society in anti-corruption efforts.

The project also showed that addressing corruption requires sustained efforts over an extended period of time. Corruption is deeply entrenched in many societies and changing entrenched practices and attitudes requires a long-term approach. The suspension of Output 1 by the donor after the rapid political transformation in the country, just as it started adding activities that were less administrative and logistical support and more on the substantive side, is an example of how political instability and lack of sustained support can derail anti-corruption efforts.

Lesson learned 5

Dedicating sufficient time and resources to cultivating and nurturing partnerships at the right level can strengthen ownership, contribute to the attainment of project results, and help ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

The project has successfully developed a partnership architecture that has contributed to the attainment of project results. Calibrating this further meant deploying its national officers to pay regular visits to the ACJC and have regular telephone calls with them to coordinate in logistic support together with the vendors. Similarly, the project invested efforts in ensuring small grants

were well guided and delivered, despite challenging circumstances in the country.

Lesson learned 6

Mainstreaming a human rights based approach, which combines top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment is critically important in the realisation of project results when the enabling environment allows.

Combining top-down and bottom-up approaches is crucial for the achievement of sustainable project results. As the project broadens its partnership base and provides innovative and sustainable solutions, it is important for it not to lose focus on its main beneficiaries – vulnerable and marginalised groups. This is important in and of itself, but also allows initiatives to be more effective and responsive to identified needs. There are numerous examples of such an approach throughout the project, where local stakeholders were empowered to voice their concerns and with support from the community, managed to instil change even in basic service delivery.

Lesson learned 7

Flexibility, adaptive management and seizing opportunities are key to successfully delivering projects in challenging and fast-moving contexts.

Despite the challenges faced by the project in the project design, due to fast-changing contexts, as well as the additional challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project has been highly successful at the activity level as a result of its ability to be flexible and to respond to opportunities as and when they arose. Taking more risks, in particular with regards to partnerships could lead to more tangible and coherent results.

Lesson learned 8

Partnerships and collaboration are key to success in anticorruption programming.

The ACTION Project was successful in part because of the strong partnerships it developed with various stakeholders, including government agencies (until mid 2021), civil society organizations, and the private sector. These partnerships helped to build trust and promote transparency and accountability, as well as to leverage resources and expertise. The project team worked closely with these partners to identify common goals and develop coordinated strategies for addressing corruption. For example, the project team collaborated with civil society organizations to engage citizens in monitoring and reporting corruption in key areas such as the health system. These partnerships were essential to the success of the project and underscore the importance of collaboration in anticorruption programming more broadly.

Lesson learned 9

Incorporating gender-sensitive approaches into anticorruption programming is important

In the context of Afghanistan, it is imperative for UNDP to carefully examine how social norms and power dynamics influence the lives and prospects of diverse groups of men and women. Understanding these dynamics becomes a fundamental prerequisite for designing interventions that can bring about successful and transformative outcomes. This becomes especially critical within the country, where a higher proportion of women compared to men face poverty and encounter significant barriers that hinder their ability to seize available opportunities. By

acknowledging and addressing these challenges, UNDP can play a pivotal role in empowering women and enabling them to overcome societal constraints, thereby fostering inclusive development in Afghanistan.

The project recognized that corruption affects women and men differently and that women are often more vulnerable to its negative effects. Therefore, the project took steps to ensure that gender considerations were integrated throughout the project, such as setting targets for the participation of women in trainings and working with women-led civil society organizations. This approach was not only important in a context such as Afghanistan, but also contributed to more effective and better targeted anticorruption measures. The project showed that gender-sensitive approaches can strengthen the impact and sustainability of anticorruption programming, especially when applied to sectors where women can be most vulnerable, such as the health sector.

Lesson learned 10

Innovation can be a powerful tool for achieving project goals, particularly when it is carefully contextualized and adapted to meet the needs of the situation at hand

Overall, the lesson learned from the ACTION project is that innovation should be seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. By carefully tailoring innovative approaches to the specific needs and context of the project, and by prioritizing flexibility and responsiveness, it is possible to achieve meaningful and sustainable results, even in the face of unexpected challenges.

Output 3 of the ACTION project aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in the COVID-19 response through citizen monitoring. The project's approach to innovation was highly contextualized, with a focus on adapting to the COVID-19 environment and needs. Innovation was not seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a means to adapt and improve the project's relevance in response to the pandemic. As a result, the project was able to add Output 3 to its activities and adapt its approach, demonstrating a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the changing context. The emphasis on citizen monitoring in Output 3 was particularly relevant, as it provided a means for citizens to hold public officials and public servants accountable for their actions during the pandemic. Overall, the project's careful approach to innovation and adaptation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic helped to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

8. Report annexes

Annex I Terms of Reference including key evaluation questions

Services/Work Description:	The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of ACTION Project
Project/Programme Title:	The Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity, and Openness (ACTION)
Consultancy Title:	International Evaluation Expert (Consultant)
Duty Station:	Home-based with one mission to Afghanistan.
Duration:	29 December 2022 – 27 February 2023 (up to 25 working days)
Expected start date:	29 December 2022

Background and context

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Afghanistan Country Office's Peace Pillar with financial contributions from the Royal Danish Embassy in Afghanistan commenced the Afghanistan Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION) Project on 07 August 2019 with the current end date on 31 December 2024 to allow more time to complete the planned activities.

ACTION project was a continued joint effort to support both institutional (supply) and civilian engagement (demand) sides to increase public trust in and transparency of Afghan security and justice institutions. On the government institutions' side, under the overall guidance from the Afghanistan Attorney General's Office (AGO), the project focused its support to the flagship initiative of the government to combat corruption, namely the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC) and newly established Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) by enhancing their logistical and technical capacity to address high-level corruption cases. On the demand side, the project is working with civil society organizations and media to improve public awareness on anti-corruption and how to hold service provider accountable for better service delivery. The project started with three outputs and in July 2021, two additional outputs were added as mentioned below:

Output 1: The Anti-Corruption Justice Center Improved Technical and Operational Capacities to Effectively Adjudicate Corruption Cases

Output 2: Non-State Actors and Community Groups, including women and youth, can better promote Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the Security and Justice Sectors.

Output 3: COVID-19 response's Transparency and Accountability is strengthened through citizen monitoring

Output 4: The AGO has improved internal integrity, more efficient processes, and is better able to serve the public

New Output 5: The ACC is strengthened to provide more effective oversight of justice and security institutions for increased prevention of corruption and enhanced service provision.

The Royal Danish Embassy supported the initial three outputs, and the rest were funded by UNDP's TRAC and other resources.

Under Output 1, ACTION project implemented the capacity building activities for ACJC by delivering 28 training modules identified through a comprehensive training needs assessment. During 2020 and 2021, 110 ACJC judges, prosecutors and technical staff including 15 females were trained. For enabling better working environment for ACJC, the ACTION project also provided resource support to the ACJC. The items of logistics and equipment support to ACJC have been delivered which included new office space, security cameras, kindergarten with equipment, printers, clinic items, sim cards for improved their efficiency and work productivity.

Under output 2, supporting the demand side (civic engagement) ACTION project successfully implemented 27 small grants projects (22 projects Denmark fund and 5 projects UNDP TRAC fund) to build trust between the Afghan community and the state through mobilizing local community on how to fight corruption, conducting community based monitoring of health facilities, social audit of service delivery, reporting corruption cases by media and establishing community based volunteer network to represent community in identifying and resolving corruption cases through active coordination with local and provincial authorities. Through these grants,

communities have been mobilized and awareness have been generated on anti-corruption activities by providing information on access to information law. Under investigative journalism 22 local journalists were trained and they produced 55 investigative reports on different corruption cases.

Under Output 3, The project is working in 34 Provinces across 1500 (Primary Health Center) PHCs to monitor the health services through community members related to the support provided by government and other donors to address COVID-19. ACTION M&E COVID-19 app has been developed to create a dashboard by feeding all these data live collected through the partners.

No activity under output 4&5 have been initiated yet after the approval of the revised project document in August 2021.

Due to the recent political changes in the country (the government takeover by the Taliban) and because there are no government partners available anymore to support like the ACJC, the Attorney General’s Office (AGO), as per the instructions by United Nations, the ACTION project will not continue work on activities under output 1, 4 and 5 which are relevant to the government institutions. Out of the above three outputs, the Royal Danish Embassy in Afghanistan supported output 1.

ACTION project will continue the activities under output 2 and output 3 on the demand side engaging with civil society organizations, media, academia, and the private sector.

The Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION) project has been implemented since July 2019. It was originally envisaged to end on 31 December 2020 but was extended through a project revision until December 2021. The project was subsequently revised and extended until 31 December 2024.

Basic Project information can also be included in table format as follows:

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project/outcome title	The Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION)	
Atlas ID	00120040	
Corporate outcome and output	Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development	
Country	Afghanistan	
Region	Asia	
Date project document signed	01 July 2019	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	01 July 2019	31 December 2024
Project budget	US\$ 7,025,000	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	US\$ 6,075,000	
Funding source	Denmark	
Implementing party²	UNDP/ACTION team (Direct Implementation Modality)	

Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

The Purpose and Objectives of the Midterm Evaluation

The Midterm Evaluation (MTE) aims to inform UNDP Afghanistan and its partners of lessons learned, results achieved and areas for improvements. The MTR will draw out progress toward project deliverables, identify gaps in programming, and any course correction required for the future programming. Furthermore, the findings of MTR will inform the future designing of UNDP’s work. The MTR will be able to produce valuable lessons and experiences, providing useful findings to the other relevant projects and various initiatives organized by UNDP Afghanistan as well as Country Offices (COs) globally. Also, MTR will be able to produce a report on the

achievements of the ACTION project plus success stories on the project, which will be published on UNDP website. Responding to the Theory of Change (ToC) as described in the project document, the agreed results, and resources framework (RRF) and the approved workplans, the MTR should look at the relevance of the project, quality of the project design, effectiveness, and efficiency of the implementation to date, sustainability of the overall project results, impact of intervention made to date, and forward-looking directions for future. To meet these ends, MTR will serve to:

- assess project performance and progress against the expected outputs, targets including indicators presented in the RRF and contribution to expected outcome.
- review and document the success and draw out lessons for deepening impact
- assess the effectiveness of the project’s engagement with UNDP ACTION project implementing partners including civil society organizations (CSOs).
- identify challenges and the effectiveness of the strategic approaches that project adopted for addressing those challenges.
- ascertain the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project interventions.
- outline recommendations, including potential realignments in scope and approach in line with the project’s desired outcome
- provide forward looking recommendations to inform the future designing of UNDP’s work on Anti-corruption area.
- report on the achievements of the ACTION project plus success stories on the project, which will be published on UNDP website.
- highlight project’s overall accountability within the corporate framework, e.g., contribution to higher level results, such as Strategic Plan, CPD etc.

The Scope of the MTR

The MTR is expected to assess the ACTION project progress against the Project Document, targets stipulated in the RRF and the achieved results from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2022 and propose recommendation which will inform and help improving the coming implementation of the project and designing any future projects. The MTR will be based on a desk review of project related documents and in-depth virtual interviews and surveys as outlined in the methodology section. The MTR will also intend to document achievements, good practices, success stories, lessons learned or transferable examples. Based on the achievements to the date, the MTR will provide forward looking programmatic recommendations for the project’s next months, using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria on (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability and cross-cutting issues including gender equality.

The MTR’s geographical coverage includes the project’s targeted provinces of Afghanistan. Will be provided to the consultants during the implementation stage.

Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

In responding to the MTR purpose and objectives, the MTR criteria and guiding questions can be outline below: Table 2 - Criteria and Guiding Questions

Criteria	Guiding Questions
Relevance	<p>Relevance of the project: review the progress against project outputs and contribution to outcome level results as defined in the project’s ToC whether assumptions and risks remain valid. Identify any other intended or unintended, positive, or negative, results using following guiding questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent was the project in line with the regional development priorities and UNDP strategic Plan. 2. To what extent does the project contribute to the ToC for the relevant regional programme outcomes? 3. To what extent were the project activities in line with the national development priorities and country development programme’s outputs and outcomes? 4. To what extent the overall design and approaches of the project were relevant? 5. To what extent, the inputs and strategies identified were realistic, appropriate, and adequate to achieve the results?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. To what extent did the project achieve its overall outputs? Are the project's contributions to outcomes clear? 7. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment? 8. To assess whether the results achieved had a differentiated impact on women and other vulnerable groups? 9. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to COVID-19 pandemic as well as other political, legal, economic, institutional changes in the country?
Effectiveness	<p>Effectiveness of implementation approaches: review project's technical as well as operational approaches, the regionality and deliverables, quality of results and their impact, alignment with national priorities and responding to the needs of the CSOs; covering the results achieved, the partnerships established, as well as issues of capacity using following guiding questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent the project activities were delivered effectively in terms of quality, quantity, and timing? 2. How effective were the strategies used in the implementation of the project? 3. To what extent the project was effective in enhancing the capacity of CSOs? 4. What are the key internal and external factors (success & failure factors) that have contributed, affected, or impeded the achievements, and how UNDP and the partners have managed these factors? 5. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? 6. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome? 7. To what extent have UNDP partners been involved in project implementation? To what extent are project management and implementation participatory? 8. To what extent the project is align to the corporate context such as contribution to SDGs, UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document etc. 9. How will the evaluation fit within the context of other ongoing and previous evaluations and the evaluation cycle? What synergies have been created?
Efficiency	<p>Efficiency of the project management structure and the added value of the project's regional approach: review planning, management, monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms for the delivery of the project interventions and the added value of the regionality of the project set up in the context of fiscal reform at national and subnational level using following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent is the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? 2. Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? 3. Was the process of achieving results efficient? Were the resources effectively utilized? 4. Did the project activities overlap, and duplicate other similar interventions funded nationally, and/or by other donors? 5. To what extent did the project produce synergies within UNDP and with other development partners and play complementary roles each other? 6. How does the project align with other regional and national level initiatives/activities on Anti-corruption? How efficiently are national and regional activities connected and complement each other?

Sustainability	<p>Sustainability of the project results and risks along with opportunities related to future interventions: review and assess if the current project setup has plans for future resource mobilization, synergy, long term partnership and / or considering institutionalization of the project impact for continued support after the project end using following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent did the project bring momentum in the country for implementation of the Anti-corruption? 2. What is the likelihood of the continuation and sustainability of national level dialogues engaging various UNDP implementing partners and strengthening national and regional partnership architectures, made up of UN system, CSOs, and private sector actors working on Anti-corruption? 3. How were capacities of a various set of ACTION implementing partners strengthened at the national level through regional peer-learning and other training programs? 4. Describe key factors that will require attention to improve the prospects of sustainability of Project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach? 5. To what extent do UNDP implementing partners support the project's long-term objectives? 6. To what extent will financial and economic resources as well as political wills be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project? 7. Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
Diversity and inclusion	<p>Sustainability and effectiveness of diversity and inclusion approach: review the project's approaches and strategies in integrating gender and social inclusion (GSI) in the countries, using following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects? How can the project further broaden in a future phase its contribution to enhancing diversity and inclusion? 2. To what extent have local communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups benefited from the project, anti-corruption?
Principled	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the project applied Social and Environmental Screening checklist of UNDP?
Management and Monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the project monitored the results of progress against indicators? 2. Has the project established a strong M&E standard?

Methodology

The TOR may **suggest** an overall approach and method for conducting the evaluation, as well as data sources and tools that will likely yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions within the limits of resources. However, final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations among the UNDP ACTION project team the evaluators about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data.

Methodological approaches may include some or all of the following:

- Evaluation should employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments.
- **Document review of all relevant documentation.** This would include a review of inter alia
 - Project document (contribution agreement).

- Theory of change and results framework.
 - Programme and project quality assurance reports.
 - Annual workplans.
 - Activity designs.
 - Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
 - Results-oriented monitoring report.
 - Highlights of project board meetings.
 - Technical/financial monitoring reports.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with key representatives of key civil society organizations, and implementing partners:
 - **Development of evaluation questions** around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and designed for different UNDP ACTION project implementing partners to be interviewed.
 - Key informant and focus group discussions with men and women, beneficiaries of UNDP ACTION project implementing partners.
 - All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
 - **Surveys and questionnaires** including participants in development programmes, surveys and questionnaires involving UNDP ACTION project implementing partners at strategic and programmatic levels.
 - **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
 - The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries.
 - **Other methods** such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
 - **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods.
 - Ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use; the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.

As part of the requirement, evaluation must include an assessment of the extent to which the design, implementation, and results of the project have incorporated gender equality perspective and rights-based approach. The evaluators will make sure Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation during the inception phase. In addition, the methodology used in the evaluation, including data collection and analysis methods should be human rights and gender-sensitive to the greatest extent possible, with evaluation data and findings disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, etc. – with a focus on people with disabilities. Detailed analysis on disaggregated data will be undertaken as part of final evaluation from which findings are consolidated to make recommendations and identify lessons learned for enhanced gender responsive and rights-based approach of the project. These evaluation approach and methodology should consider different types of groups in the project intervention – women, youth, vulnerable groups etc.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP and the evaluators.

Evaluation products (deliverables)

The terms of reference should clearly outline the outputs UNDP expects from the evaluation team as well as a detailed timeline and schedule for completion evaluation products. Where relevant, the TOR should also detail the length of specific products (pages). These products could include:

- **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit in the case of international evaluators.
- **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.

- **Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).** The ACTION project team should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.
- **Evaluation report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
- Final evaluation report, reflecting the achievements and success stories of the project.
- Presentations to NDP ACTION project team

Expected Deliverables and Descriptions

#	Deliverables	Description	Due date												
1	ACTION project MTR Inception report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables, building on what has been provisionally proposed in this ToR. • It should be prepared by the MTR consultant/s before going into the full-fledged MTR exercise. • It should detail the reviewing approach, proposed format, and table of content of the MTR report. • It must also outline reviewers' understanding of what is being reviewed and why, showing how each area of inquiry will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. This information should be provided through the preparation of the MTR Matrix. • The inception report should provide UNDP and the MTR consultant/s with an opportunity to verify that they share the same understanding about the assignment, the same understanding of the ToC and clarify any misunderstandings at the outset. • The MTR Inception report should include MTR Evaluation Matrix. The matrix should include key evaluation criteria, indicators, question, and sub-questions to capture and assess them. • Inception report must include a sample evaluation matrix as below: <table border="1" data-bbox="459 1249 1249 1451"> <thead> <tr> <th>Relevant evaluation criteria</th> <th>Key questions</th> <th>Specific sub-questions</th> <th>Data Sources</th> <th>Data Collection methods/tools</th> <th>Indicators/success standard</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The workplan should provide clear timeline of how each MTR steps will be undertaken. The consultant is required to provide clear interview and/or focus group discussion scheduled online as this will required coordination support from the ACTION project team at Kabul. The ACTION project MTR methodology should provide a specific assessment framework, covering both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, with a detailed list of required UNDP ACTION project implementing partners who need to be interviewed in the MTR process. A simple UNDP ACTION project implementing partners analysis for conducting interviews and evaluations can be conducted. The draft methodology can be adjusted later once the MTR consultants have completed the desk review of the project related documents. The final MTR approach and methodology can be presented as a part of the Inception Report.</p>	Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data Sources	Data Collection methods/tools	Indicators/success standard							8 days after the contract signed
Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data Sources	Data Collection methods/tools	Indicators/success standard										

#	Deliverables	Description	Due date
2	MTR evaluation briefing	After completion of data collection or before sharing the draft report, the evaluator should present preliminary debriefing and findings to UNDP and MTR reference group.	10 days after the contract signed
3	Draft MTR report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mid-term Review (MTR) assigned ACTION project team will review the draft Mid-Term Review (MTR) report to ensure that it meets the required quality standards and covers all agreed components and contents of the MTR. Detailed comments and feedback on the draft report will be provided to the MTR consultant/s, and discussions may be held to provide clarifications as necessary. Evaluator should submit a comprehensive draft report consisting of major findings and recommendations for future course of action. 	30 days after the contract signed
4	Final MTR report with achievements and success stories of ACTION project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final MTR report will be produced by the MTR Consultant based on feedback received on the draft report. The evaluator should include two rounds of feedback from UNDP. The final report will be shared with UNDP assigned ACTION team. The final draft report should be submitted within the given timeline with enough detail and quality. 	50 days after the contract signed
5	Audit Trail Form	<p>The comments and changes by the consultant/s in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator in form of audit trail to show they have addressed comments.</p> <p>This document can be submitted as an Annex to the final evaluation report.</p>	60 days after the contract signed

Payment Modality:

Payment to the individual contractor will be made based on the actual number of days worked, deliverables accepted and upon certification of satisfactory completion by the manager.

payment Instalments:

Deliverables/ Outputs		Estimated Working Days	% Of total contract amount
1st Instalment	Upon satisfactory completion of the MTR inception report (including final methodology, data collection tools and questions, proposed data collection schedules, evaluation matrix, evaluation briefing etc.)	4 working days	30%
2nd Instalment	Upon satisfactory completion of desk review, interviews and analysis and submission of MTR draft report including debrief on draft findings and recommendation to the management	16 working days	40%
3rd Instalment	Upon satisfactory submission of MTR Final Draft 3 and completion of final presentation.	5 working days	30%
Total		60 days (25 working days)	100%

* The total duration of the task should not exceed 25 working days.

* A buffer of 5 days is given for both consultants for unforeseen circumstances.

Consultant must send a financial proposal based on per-diem. The total amount quoted shall be all-inclusive and include all costs components required to perform the deliverables identified in the TOR, including professional fee, living allowance and any other applicable cost to be incurred by the consultant in completing the

assignment. The contract price will be fixed output-based price regardless of extension of the herein specified duration. Payments will be done upon completion of the deliverables/outputs and as per the above percentages. It is important to note that multiple iterations of the report may be required for the satisfactory completion of the report.

In general, UNDP shall not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket. Should the consultant wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.

In the event of unforeseeable travel not anticipated in this TOR, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon between the respective business unit and the Individual Consultant prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

Travel costs shall be reimbursed at actual but not exceeding the quotation from UNDP approved travel agent.

Evaluation team composition and required competencies

Evaluation team composition

The MTR requires international consultant to complete the MTR. The MTR is estimated to commence on 29 December 2022 and will need to be completed before 27 February 2023 at the latest.

Required competencies

For international consultant:

Academic Qualifications:

- A minimum of a master's degree or equivalent in law, political science, development studies, history, or other relevant social science.

Years of experience:

- At least 7 years of professional experience in the provision of policy, analytical, and technical advisory support for international development organization.
- At least 5 years of proven experience in development, risk assessment, and/or evaluation of programmes or projects in Anti-Corruption, democratic governance, rule of law, and/or development.
- Experience in the result-based management, evaluation methodologies and programme/project monitoring approaches with development partners
- The project mid-term review/evaluation experience with UNDP is highly desired.
- Sound understanding of the UN system and of UNDP's mandate and role.

Language:

- Excellent knowledge, both oral and written, of English with presentational capacities is required

Competencies:

Functional Competencies:

- Ability to work independently.
- Ability to perform tasks in a timely manner and produce quality final product.
- Strong interpersonal, communication and diplomacy skills.
- Openness to change and ability to receive and integrate feedback.

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP.

- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism.
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity.

Responsibilities of the MTR consultant/s:

- Review the relevant documents.
- Develop and submit a draft and final inception report
- Conduct evaluation.
- Maintain ethical considerations.
- Develop and submit a draft evaluation report
- Organize meeting/consultation to discuss the draft report
- Incorporate inputs and feedback in draft report
- Submit final report with due consideration of quality and effectiveness
- Organize sharing of final evaluation report
- Evaluator is expected to work within Afghanistan- Kabul working hours, particularly for the interviews.

Implementation arrangements

The ACTION project team will be in touch with the MTR consultant/s and help with the day-to-day coordination for MTR process with ACTION project partners. The details of the implementation arrangement are described in Table 3.

The MTR Consultant/s will be briefed by UNDP ACTION project team upon arrival on the objectives, purpose, and output of the evaluation. An oral debriefing by the MTR Consultant on the proposed work plan and methodology will be done and approved prior to the commencement of the process.

The ACTION MTR will remain fully independent and reports to ACTION project Manager at UNDP Afghanistan. The MTR Consultant/s maintains all the communication through assigned ACTION project team during the implementation of the evaluation. The Evaluation Manager should clear each step of the evaluation. Evaluation report must meet the requirements from the Independent Evaluation Office's guidelines which will be provided as part of the inception meeting.

Contractors will arrange online final presentation with UNDP ACTION team and noted comments from participants which will be incorporated in the final report.

It is understood that it may take multiple rounds of feedback before Evaluation Report is finalized and approved. The final report will be signed off by Evaluation Manager.

Evaluation ethics

The TOR should include an explicit statement that evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'.⁴

Standard text includes:

"This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and partners through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners."

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED# OF DAYS	COMPLETION TIME	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (ACTION Project Manager)	1 day	At the time of contract signing	UNDP or remote	ACTION project team
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing	Via email	ACTION project team
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of CSOs representatives to be interviewed	9 days	Within 10 days of contract signing	Home- based	Evaluation team
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	Within 10 days of contract signing	UNDP	Evaluation team
Comments and approval of inception report	2 days	Within 12 days of contract signing	UNDP	Evaluation team and ACTION team
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
MTR evaluation briefing	1day	Within 13 days of contract signing	In country	ACTION project team to organize with local project partners and, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP ACTION project team	8 days		With field visits In country	
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages)	21 days	Within three weeks of the completion debriefing to UNDP ACTION project team	Home- based	Evaluation team
Draft report submission	1 day			Evaluation team
Consolidated UNDP comments to the draft report	5 days	Within five days of submission of the draft evaluation report	UNDP	Evaluation team
Debriefing with UNDP	7 days	Within 1 week of receipt of comments	Remotely UNDP	Evaluation team and ACTION project team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff	3 days	Within 3 days of final debriefing	Home- based	Evaluation team
Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP ACTION project team(50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	3 days	Within one week of final debriefing	Home- based	Evaluation team
Estimated total days for the evaluation	60			



Application submission process and criteria for selection

Proposal Evaluation Method and Criteria:

The award of the contract shall be made to the individual consultant/s whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- 1) Responsive/compliant/acceptable; and
- 2) Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

Technical Criteria weight 70%

Financial Criteria weight 30%

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 49 points (70% of the total technical points) would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Technical Criteria 70 points

Technical Proposal (30 marks)

- 1) Technical Approach & Methodology (20 marks) – Explain the understanding of the objectives of the assignment, approach to the services, methodology for carrying out the activities and obtaining the expected output, and the degree of detail of such output. The Applicant should also explain the methodologies proposed to adopt and highlight the compatibility of those methodologies with the proposed approach.
- 2) Work Plan (10 marks) – The Applicant should propose the main activities of the assignment, their content and duration, phasing and interrelations, milestones (including interim approvals by the Client), and delivery dates. The proposed work plan should be consistent with the technical approach and methodology, showing understanding of the TOR and ability to translate them into a feasible working plan.

Qualification and Experience (40 marks) [evaluation of CV]:

- General Qualification (15 marks)
- Experience relevant to the assignment (25 marks)

Documents to be included when submitting the proposals:

Interested individual consultant/s must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications in one single PDF document:

- Duly accomplished confirmation of Interest and Submission of Financial Proposal
- Personal CV or P11, indicating all experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and at least three (3) professional references.

Technical Proposal:

- Brief description of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment

A methodology, on how they will approach and complete the assignment and work plan as indicated above.

The consultant/s shall submit a price proposal as below:

- 1) **Daily Fee:** The consultant shall propose a daily fee which should be inclusive of his/her professional fee, local communication cost and insurance (inclusive of medical evacuation). The number of working days for which the daily fee shall be payable under the contract is 21 working days.
- 2) The consultant is NOT allowed to stay in a place of his choice other than the UNDSS approved places. The payment of accommodation shall be made directly by the Project.
- 3) **Travel and Visa:** The consultant shall propose an estimated lump sum for home-Kabul-home travel and Afghanistan visa expenses. The ACTION project will cover the cost of internal travel within Afghanistan.

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

TOR annexes

Annexes can be used to provide additional detail about evaluation background and requirements to facilitate the work of evaluators. Some examples include:

- **Intervention results framework and theory of change.** Provides more detailed information on the intervention being evaluated.
- **Key partners.** A list of key UNDP ACTION project implementing partners and other individuals who should be consulted, together with an indication of their affiliation and relevance for the evaluation and their contact information. This annex can also suggest sites to be visited.
- **Documents to be consulted.** A list of important documents and web pages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report. This should be limited to the critical information that the evaluation team needs. Data sources and documents may include:
 - Relevant national strategy documents,
 - Strategic and other planning documents (e.g., programme and project documents).
 - Monitoring plans and indicators.
 - Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with Governments or partners).
 - Previous evaluations and assessments.
 - UNDP evaluation policy, UNDP norms and standards and other policy documents.
- **Evaluation matrix** (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with UNDP ACTION project implementing partners. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

Sample evaluation matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data-collection methods/tools	Indicators/ success standard	Methods for data analysis

- **Schedule of tasks, milestones and deliverables.** Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.
- **Required format for the evaluation report.** The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports.
- **Code of conduct.** UNDP ACTION project team should request each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the ‘Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the United Nations system’, which may be made available as an attachment to the evaluation report.

Annex II List of stakeholders consulted

No.	Contact / CSO Name(s)	Title	Male	Female
1.	Surayo Buzurukova	Deputy Resident Representative – Programme, Officer in Charge of UNDP CO Afghanistan		x
2.	Bikash Ranjan Dash	Project Manager, <u>Monitoring Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery (NFM) Project</u> UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
3.	Najibullah Yusufi	Monitoring and Communication Officer <u>Monitoring Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery (NFM) Project</u> UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
4.	Waheedullah Gharanai	Component Officer <u>Monitoring Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery (NFM) Project</u> UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
5.	Hamid Etabar	Admin and Finance Officer <u>Monitoring Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery (NFM) Project</u> UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	

6.	Zabihullah Latifi	MIS Officer <u>Monitoring Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery (NFM) Project</u> UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
7.	Abdul Rahman Abed	M&E Officer, UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
8.	Azizullah Azizi	M&E Officer, UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
9.	Wajihullah Sahibzada -	M&E Officer, UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
10.	Hiroko Massey	Trust Fund Manager Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan, UNDP CO Afghanistan		x
11.	Ahmad Sohail Hafezi	Former staff of the Action Project, UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
12.	Nazar Ahmad Shah	Former staff of the Royal Danish Ambassy, UNAMA	x	
13.	Anisha Thapa,	Programme Quality Assurance Specialist, UNDP CO Afghanistan		x
14.	Maria Luisa Isabel Jolongbayan	Development Effectiveness Specialist, UNDP CO Afghanistan		x

15.	Syed Haroon Ahmadi	Programme Analyst (RBM), UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
16.	Hashmatullah Waisy	Programme Associate (RBM), UNDP CO Afghanistan	x	
17.	Hyewon Jung	Partnerships and Communications Advisor		x
18.	Yasumitsu Doken	Programme Specialist	x	
19.	Abdul Hameed Omar	Programme Specialist	x	
20.	Miawand Rohani	Expert, Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC)	x	
21.	Lorenzo Delesgues	Founder and CEO, VOXMAPP	x	
23.	Dr Ramoz	Expert, former Attorney General Office, Afghanistan	x	
24.	Sayed Ikram Afzali	Integrity Watch	x	
25.	EQUALITY for Peace and Development Organization (EPDO)	Representative	x	
26.	Kunar province youth civil society (KPYCS)	Representative	x	
27.	Humanitarian Assistance Empowerment Organization (HAEO)	Representative	x	
28.	Water Aid for Afghanistan (WAFA)	Representative	x	
29.	Health Care and Social Development Organization (HSDO)	Representative	x	
30.	Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST)	Representative	x	

31.	Women Education and Afghanistan Rehabilitation Organization (WEARO)	Representative	x	
32.	Afghan Youth Services Organization (AYSO)	Representative	x	
33.	Afghan Women Association for Rehabilitation & Development (AWARD)	Representative	x	
34.	Peace Care Relief Organization (PCRO)	Representative	x	
35.	AGENDA Gender Equality & National Development Act Organization	Representative	x	
36.	Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Women Education Organization (ARWEO)	Representative		x
37.	Organization for Human Relief (OHR)	Representative	x	
38.	Humanitarian Organization for Advocacy and Development (HOAD)	Representative	x	
39.	Social Capacity Development Welfare Organization (SCWO)	Representative	x	
40.	Organization for Afghan Women Capacity and Knowledge (OAWCK)	Representative	x	
41.	Technical Education and Skill Training Organization (TESTO)	Representative	x	
42	Bjørn Blau	Special Adviser, Royal Kingdom of Denmark		

Interviews with community members

No.	Province	District	Community	Male	Female	No. of persons interviewed
1.	Kunar	Assad Abad	Markazi Shura	X		1
2.	Kunar	Assad Abad	Nawabad Zwanano Shura	X		1
3.	Kunar	Assad Abad	Dand Keley Shura	X		1
4.	Nangarhar	<u>Behsood</u>	<u>Behsood district Anti-corruption administrative reform Shura</u>	X		2
5.	Nooristan	Paroon	Mandi Kelay Shura	X		1
6.	Nooristan	Wama	Shama Keley Shura	X		1

Focus Group Discussion - Kabul

No.	Province	District	Community	Male	Female	No. of participants
1.	Paktia	Ahmad Aba	Khanjar Khil	X		1
2.	Paktia	Ahmad Aba	Salam Khail	X		1
3.	Paktia	Sayed Karam	Tam Hgarak	X		1
4.	Paktia	Sayed Karam	Osman Khil	X		1
5.	Paktia	Ahmad Aba	Osman Khail	X		1
6.	Kabul	Bagrami	Nu Burja	X		1
7.	Kabul	Bagrami	Hasan Khil	X		1
8.	Kabul	Bagrami	Camri	X		3
9.	Kabul	Bagrami	Sahah	X		1
10.	Kabul	Bagrami	Butkhak	X		1
11.	Kabul	Bagrami	Mumzai	X		1
12.	Kabul	Bagrami	Hasan Khail	X		1

13.	Kabul	Bagrami	Shiwaki	X		1
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Focus Group Discussion – Herat

No.	Province	District	Community	Male	Female	No. of participants
1.	Herat	PD#6	Khair Abad	X		1
2.	Herat	PD#5	64 Road		X	1
3.	Herat	PD#4	Baqir Abad		X	1
4.	Herat	Injil	Naw Badam		X	1
5.	Herat	PD#1	Bagh Islami	X		1
6.	Herat	PD#1	Bagh Sarah	X		1

Focus Group Discussion – Nangarhar

No.	Province	District	Community	Male	Female	No. of participants
1.	Nooristan	Wama	Islamabad	X		1
2.	Kunar	Assadabad	Kerala Shura	X		1
3.	Kunar	Assadabad	Nawabad Shura	X		1
4.	Laghman	Qarghaie	Qarghaie anti-corruption Shura	X		1
5.	Nooristan	Paroon	Pashke Kelay	X		1
6.	Nangarhar	Kama	Jalalabad Anti-corruption public awareness Shura	X		1
7.	Kunar	Assadabad	Assadabad Elmi Shura	X		1

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
<p>The relevance of the ACTION project’s design, with a specific focus on its theory of change and how the project outputs realistically and effectively contributed to its overall objective.</p>	<p>*To what extent was the project in line with the regional development priorities and UNDP strategic Plan. *To what extent does the project contribute to the ToC for the relevant regional programme outcomes? *To what extent were the project activities in line with the national development priorities and country development programme’s outputs and outcomes? *To what extent the overall design and approaches of the project were relevant?</p>	<p>* Were any stakeholder inputs/concerns addressed at the project formulation stage? Was a stakeholder analysis conducted as part of the project development phase? *How does the project align with related national strategies? *How does the project address the human development needs of intended beneficiaries? *How does the project fit under the UNDP corporate strategies, programs and plans? *Was the project able to adapt to evolving</p>	<p>*National policy documents including relevant strategies and action plans *UNDP Strategic Documents incl. Strategic Plan and CPD *ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online survey • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>*To what extent, the inputs and strategies identified were realistic, appropriate, and adequate to achieve the results?</p> <p>*To what extent did the project achieve its overall outputs? Are the project's contributions to outcomes clear?</p> <p>*To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?</p> <p>*To assess whether the results achieved had a differentiated impact on women and other vulnerable groups?</p> <p>*To what extent has the project been</p>	<p>needs/changing context?</p> <p>*How well were gender aspects taken into account into project design and concretely and effectively implemented?</p> <p>*What project revisions were made and why?</p> <p>*Was a stakeholder analysis conducted as part of the project development phase?</p>	<p>monitoring reports</p> <p>*Relevant partner reports</p>			<p>evaluation team</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
	appropriately responsive to COVID-19 pandemic as well as other political, legal, economic, institutional changes in the country?					
Effectiveness – The overall effectiveness of the implemented project activities towards the expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To what extent the project activities were delivered effectively in terms of quality, quantity, and timing? * How effective were the strategies used in the implementation of the project? * To what extent the project was effective in enhancing the capacity of CSOs? * What are the key internal and external factors (success & failure factors) that have contributed, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way did the Project come up with the proposed solutions? - What good practices or successful experiences or transferable examples were identified? - What is the level of expertise and acceptance of UNDP work on anticorruption: which added value does UNDP have and what are its comparative 	*National policy documents including relevant strategies and action plans *UNDP Strategic Documents incl. Strategic Plan and CPD *ACTION Project Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online surveys 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>affected, or impeded the achievements, and how UNDP and the partners have managed these factors? * In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? * In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome? * To what extent have</p>	<p>advantages in the sector? - What are the direct and indirect results (at both output and impact level) of the project implementation and their sustainability? -How does the project complement/overlap with other UNDP and UN initiatives?</p>	<p>*ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 		<p>*Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>UNDP partners been involved in project implementation? To what extend are project management and implementation participatory?</p> <p>* To what extent the project is aligned to the corporate context such as contribution to SDGs, UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document etc.</p> <p>* How will the evaluation fit within the context of other ongoing and previous evaluations and the evaluation cycle?</p> <p>What synergies have been created?</p>					

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
Output 1: The Anti-Corruption Justice Center Improved Technical and Operational Capacities to Effectively Adjudicate Corruption Cases	- How many trainings were conducted and in which spheres? - How did the ACTION project team measure the results of the trainings? -What kind of logistics support did the project provide to ACJC? - Overall, what kind of impact did the trainings and logistics support have on the work of the ACJC?	- What are the key achievements under this output? - What are the key challenges? - Is progress on track? - What are the main lessons learned so far? - Has the approach changed during the project implementation period? If so, why?	*ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review and desk research Independent external research and reports Key informant interviews Focus group discussions Online surveys Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 	Output 1 Indicators: 1.1 ACJC training plan existed (y/n) 1.2 Number of trainings conducted to increase ACJC’s staff capacity 1.3 Number of ACJC staff trained (gender disaggregated) 1.4 Trained ACJC staff in average have improved level of skills to perform their functions (skill level: low, mid, high, very high) 1.5 Logistics capacity of ACJC is supported 1.5a % of agreed asset support provided to ACJC 1.5b % of agreed infrastructure support provided to ACJC 1.6 Availability of the comprehensive plan for the ACJC’s in-house learning and training unit	*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
<p>Output 2:</p> <p>Non-State Actors and Community Groups, including women and youth, can better promote Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the Security and Justice Sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a fair and transparent mechanism for small scale grants in place? - How did CSOs benefit from the ACTION Project? - How many CSOs benefitted? Which vulnerable groups are targeted by these CSOs? - What are the results of the capacity building support the project has provided to CSOs? How do you measure these results? - What is the level of understanding of the Access to Information Law? Do training participants use the knowledge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the key achievements under this output? - What are the key challenges? - Is progress on track? - How do you measure results? - What are the main lessons learned so far? - Has the approach changed during the project implementation period? If so, why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 	<p>Output 2 Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Grant Mechanism with gender analysis is in place (y/n) 2.2 Number of non-state actors peer-to-peer knowledge exchange initiatives 2.3 Capacity level of targeted CSOs (including women-led CSO)' improved {scale TBD i.e. low, mid, high as per CD assessment tool} 2.4 Number of trainings conducted for non-state actors 2.5 Number of grant implementation progress and quality assurance reports 2.6: Number of persons trained on access to information law (dis-aggregated by Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
	- What kind of outreach and communications tools did the CSOs implement?				Information officer, Journalist, CSOs). Newly added for 2021 2.7: Number of communication and outreach activities implemented. Newly added for 2021	
Output 3: COVID-19 response's Transparency and Accountability is strengthened through citizen monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of outreach the project has had with regards to the health sector in Afghanistan. - How did the project attract community volunteers and train them? - What were the obstacles the Project faced in recruiting CSOs and volunteers and engaging them in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the key achievements under this output? - What are the key challenges? - Is progress on track? - How do you measure results? - What are the main lessons learned so far? - Has the approach changed during the project implementation period? If so, why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online surveys 	<p>Output 3 indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 # of CSOs engaged 3.2 # of Covid-19 response initiatives monitored by community 3.3 # of health centres whose resources are surveyed 3.4 # of provinces covered through the health centre survey 3.5 Number of CSOs trained in CBM in health 3.6 # of health centres monitored by community 3.7 # of social audits conducted 3.8 # of integrity dialogues conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
	<p>social audits, integrity dialogues and community based monitoring?</p> <p>- What was the willingness of health centres to undergo surveys and change their practices?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 	3.9 # of media conferences on Government response to Covid 19 held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant
<p>Output 4: The AGO has improved internal integrity, more efficient processes, and is better able to serve the public</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the key achievements under this output? - What are the key challenges? - Is progress on track? - How do you measure results? - What are the main lessons learned so far? - Has the approach changed during the project 	<p>*ACTION Project Document</p> <p>*ACTION Progress Reports</p> <p>*ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review and desk research Independent external research and reports Key informant interviews Focus group discussions 	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
		implementation period? If so, why?	*Relevant partner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 		ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant
Output 5 - The ACC is strengthened to provide more effective oversight of justice and security institutions for increased prevention of corruption and enhanced service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the key achievements under this output? - What are the key challenges? - Is progress on track? - How do you measure results? - What are the main lessons learned so far? - Has the approach changed during the project implementation period? If so, why? 	*ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions 		*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
provision.			*Relevant partner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary • 		ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant
Efficiency in delivering outputs The cost efficiency of the implemented project activities towards the expected results	*To what extent is the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? * Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? * Was the process of achieving results efficient? Were the	*Did the project coordinate its activities sufficiently with other initiatives in the field? *Was the project implemented within deadline and cost estimates? *Did UNDP solve any implementation issues promptly? *Were project resources focused on the set of activities	*National policy documents including relevant strategies and action plans *UNDP Strategic Documents incl. Strategic Plan and CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions 	N/A	*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>resources effectively utilized? * Did the project activities overlap, and duplicate other similar interventions funded nationally, and/or by other donors? * To what extent did the project produce synergies within UNDP and with other development partners and play complementary roles each other? * How does the project align with other regional and national level initiatives/activities on anticorruption? How efficiently are national and regional activities connected and</p>	<p>that were expected to provide significant results *Was there any unified synergy between UNDP initiatives that contributed towards reducing costs? *How often has the project board met? *How did UNDP programming overlap, if at all with other initiatives? *To what extent was UNDP able to synergize with other UN agencies? *Is the project fully staffed and are the staffing/management arrangements efficient?</p>	<p>*ACTION Project Document *ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 		<p>ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	complement each other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Are procurements processed in a timely manner? * Are the resources allocated sufficient/too much? *What were the reasons for over or under expenditure within the Project? 				
Sustainability of the outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To what extent did the project bring momentum in the country for implementation of the Anti-corruption? * What is the likelihood of the continuation and sustainability of national level dialogues engaging various UNDP implementing partners and strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Is there an exit strategy for the Project? Does it take into account political, financial, technical and environmental factors? * What issues have emerged during implementation as a threat to sustainability? (if not covered above) *What corrective measures have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *National policy documents including relevant strategies and action plans *UNDP Strategic Documents incl. Strategic Plan and CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document requests • Stakeholder interviews, in particular with UNDP and other bilateral donors and the national institutions included in the project • Independent external 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Qualitative and quantitative data analysis *Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>national and regional partnership architectures, made up of UN system, CSOs, and private sector actors working on anticorruption?</p> <p>* How were capacities of a various set of ACTION implementing partners strengthened at the national level through regional peer-learning and other training programs?</p> <p>* Describe key factors that will require attention to improve the prospects of sustainability of Project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?</p>	<p>adopted?</p> <p>How has UNDP addressed the challenge of building national capacities? (if not covered above)</p> <p>*What is the level of national ownership of the project activities?</p> <p>* To what extent has the project created a shift in attitudinal and cultural behaviour when it comes to anticorruption?</p> <p>*Is it anticipated that the project will secure financing for 100% of the project activities? If not, why not and what was the shortfall?</p> <p>*Does the project provide for the</p>	<p>*ACTION Project Document</p> <p>*ACTION Progress Reports</p> <p>*ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports</p> <p>*Relevant partner reports</p>	<p>research and reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Email, phone and Skype follow-up where necessary 		<p>ACTION Project team</p> <p>*Verification of data with Stakeholders</p> <p>*Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
	<p>* To what extent do UNDP implementing partners support the project's long-term objectives?</p> <p>* To what extent will financial and economic resources as well as political will be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?</p> <p>* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?</p>	<p>handover of any activities?</p> <p>*What are the perceived capacities of the relevant institutions for taking the initiatives forward?</p> <p>* Were initiatives designed to have sustainable results given the identifiable risks?</p>				
Diversity and Inclusion	<p>* To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and</p>	<p>* How many CSOs focusing on women's empowerment, were</p>	<p>*ACTION Project Document</p>	<p>• Document review and desk research</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis
	<p>the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects? How can the project further broaden in a future phase its contribution to enhancing diversity and inclusion?</p> <p>* To what extent have local communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups benefited from the project, anticorruption?</p>	<p>involved in the project?</p> <p>* How has the project adapted to the changing context to ensure equal participation of women in project activities?</p> <p>* Which other vulnerable groups were targeted through the project/CSO partners and how?</p> <p>* Did the project link anticorruption to human rights and if yes, how? What was the effect of such an approach?</p>	<p>*ACTION Progress Reports</p> <p>*ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports</p> <p>*Relevant partner reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 		<p>*Data synthesis</p> <p>*Descriptive statistical analysis</p> <p>*Process tracing</p> <p>*Triangulation</p> <p>*Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team</p> <p>*Verification of data with Stakeholders</p> <p>*Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant</p>
<p>Principled, Management and</p>	<p>* Has the project applied Social and Environmental Screening checklist of</p>	<p>* Was a SESP conducted at the LPAC phase of the project? Were there</p>	<p>*ACTION Project Document</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review and desk research 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>*Qualitative and quantitative data analysis</p>

Annex III – Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Evaluation criteria •	Key Questions •	Specific Sub-Questions •	Data Sources •	Data collection Methods/Tools •	Indicators/ Success Standard •	Methods for Data Analysis •
Monitoring	UNDP? * Has the project monitored the results of progress against indicators? * Has the project established a strong M&E standard?	any findings that informed project design? * Does the project team have dedicated M&E capacity? How often was the achievement of the targets measured against the indicators? Was this documented? Was the Project Board informed regularly of the achievements?	*ACTION Progress Reports *ACTION Quality Assurance report, results orientated monitoring reports *Relevant partner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Online surveys • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary 		*Data synthesis *Descriptive statistical analysis *Process tracing *Triangulation *Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the ACTION Project team *Verification of data with Stakeholders *Fact checking by UNDP comment and feedback to consultant

Annex IV Overview of Effectiveness Per Output

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
1.1 ACJC training plan formulated	2019	No	Yes	Yes	On Track: The training plan was developed in association with the final Training needs assessment.
	2020		Yes	Yes	Fully Achieved: The training plan was developed in 2020.
	2021		N/A	N/A	
	2022		N/A	N/A	

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	Overall				Target fully met
1.2 Number of trainings conducted to increase ACJC's staff capacity	2019	TBC	2	0	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, ACJC's trainings are agreed to start in Q1 of 2020. The project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	0	10	6	Delay: From the planned 10 training, HEAT and B6 driver trainings are completed, and each training consist of three rounds. The English, computer and other basic training will be conducted during 2021.
	2021		10	3	Partially achieved: Three training programmes were conducted on Senior leadership development, investigative interviewing, and functional training during the reporting period. however, due to the collapse of the former government, the activity remains on hold.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target partially met
1.3 Number of ACJC staff trained (gender disaggregated)	2019	0	30 (15 women, 15 men)	0	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, ACJC's trainings are agreed to start in Q1 of 2020. The project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	0	100 (50 women, 50 men)	10 women, 100 men	Exceeding annual target: 110 staff members from ACJC trained during five trainings and eleven modules. The training participants were judges, prosecutors and drivers including women. The project will try to

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
					include more women in next quarter to meet target.
	2021		80 (60 men, 20 women)	143 (130 men, 13 women)	Exceeding annual target. The number of ACJC staff trained is more than the annual target for 2021.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target exceeded
1.4 Trained ACJC staff in average have improved level of skills to perform their functions (Skill level: low (1% to 50%), mid (51% to 75%), high (76% to 90%), very high (91% to 100%))	2019	TBD	TBD	TBD	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, ACJC's trainings are agreed to start in Q1 of 2020. The project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	Low (50%)	Mid (70%)	Mid (72%)	On Track: ACJC staff average knowledge and skill is improved from Low-level to Mid-level during the reporting period.
	2021		High	High (75%)	Fully achieved: ACJC staff average knowledge and skill is improved during the reporting period.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target fully met

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
1.5 Logistics capacity of ACJC is supported 1.5a % of agreed asset support provided to ACJC 1.5b % of agreed infrastructure support provided to ACJC 1.5c % of trial cases supported with translation service as requested	2019	A. 0% b.0% c.0%	A. 10% b.10% c. 0%	A. 14% b.0% c.100%	Partially Achieved: Asset delivery was overachieved (14% deliver against 10% target). However, the infrastructure procurement is delayed due to ACJC's request to revise the specification of the containers. It's expected to be resolved in Q1 of 2020. All cases were supported with simultaneous trial translations.
	2020		A. 100% b. 100% c. 100%	A.70% b.90% c.100%	Delay: Asset delivery is delayed due to effect of COVID 19 in the market and increase in the delivery timeline of suppliers, 70% asset support provided. 90% of the infrastructure is completed included container office, however, the 10% of the Kindergarten infrastructure will be completed in Q-1 2021.
	2021		A. 0% b. 0% c. 0%	A. 5% b. N/A c. N/A	Fully achieved: Kindergarten equipment and clinic items have been delivered to ACJC.
	2022			N/A N/A	
	Overall				Target fully met
1.6 Availability of the comprehensive plan for the ACJC's in-house learning and training unit	2019	No	No	No	On Track: This is planned for Q4 of 2020 right before the end of the project.

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2020	No	No	No	Delay: Delay by ACJC in setting up the unit and taking up this work.
	2021	No		No	Not achieved: ACJC to finalize the set up of the unit and start its function.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target not met
1.7 a): Percentage of progress made in the development of ACJC's internal and external communication strategy, newly added 2021) 1.7 b): Number of ACJC staff trained on internal and external communication strategy. Newly added 2021	2021	a) 0% b) 0	a) 100% b) 30	a) 100% b) 0	Partially achieved: The Contracting company developed the communication strategy during Q-3, 2021. However, the implementation was not continued due to political change in August.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target partially met
1.8 a): Percentage of ACJC human resources standard operating procedure revised. (Newly added 2021)	2021	a) 0% b) 0	a) 100% b) 30	a) 10% b) 0	Partially achieved: The contracting company has conducted several meetings with relevant stakeholders reviewed the existing operating procedures. The actual development of human resources standard operating

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
1.8 b): Number of ACJC staff trained on revised human resource standard operating procedure. (Newly added 2021)					procedure was planned for Q-3, 2021, but due to political change on 15 August 2021, the activity remained on hold.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target partially met
1.9 a): Percentage of progress made in the development of security procedure for ACJC. (Newly added 2021) 1.9 b) Number of ACJC staff mentored on revised security-related policies /operating procedures (gender-disaggregated) (Newly added 2021)	2021	a) 0% b) 0	a) 100% b) 30	a) 20% b) 0	Partially achieved: The contracting company has conducted several meetings with relevant stakeholders also reviewed the existing security procedure at ACJC. The security procedure was planned be developed by the end of Q-3,2021. But due political change on 15 August 2021, the activity remained on hold.
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				
1.10 a): Percentage of Evidential Expert and Expert Evidence Procedural Framework revised. (Newly added 2021) 1.10 b) Number of ACJC staff trained on revised evidential expert and expert evidence procedural framework (gender-disaggregated) (Newly added 2021)	2021	a) 0% b) 0	a) 100% b) 30	a) 0% b) 0	Delayed: Hiring a consultant took longer than the planned time. The consultant conducted several meetings with relevant stakeholders and drafted a list of expert evidence. The framework was planned to be revised by the end of Q-4,2021. But due to political change on 15 August 2021, the activity remained on hold.

Output 1 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2022		N/A	N/A	
	Overall				Target not met

Output 2 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
2.1 Grant Mechanism with gender analysis is in place	2019	No	Yes	Yes	On Track: All CSOs engagement activities are expected to start in Q4 of 2019
	2020		Yes	Yes	On Track: The Grant Mechanism has been put in place.
	2021		N/A	N/A	Fully achieved: The Grant Mechanism has been put in place.
	2022		N/A	N/A	Fully achieved: The Grant Mechanism has been put in place.
	Overall				Target fully met
2.2 Number of non-state actors peer-to-peer knowledge exchange initiatives	2019	0	1	0	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, all CSOs engagement activities will start in Q1 of 2020. The

Output 2 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
					project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	0	8	8	On Track: Each Leading CSO conducted 2 peer-to-peer during the reporting period.
	2021		10	10	On track: Target achieved. Each Leading CSO conducted 2 peer-to-peer training during 2021.
	2022		7+	2	Partially achieved
	Overall				Target partially met
2.3 Capacity level of targeted CSOs (including women-led CSO)' improved {scale TBD i.e. low, mid, high as per CD assessment tool}	2019	TBD	TBD	TBD	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, all CSOs engagement activities will start in Q1 of 2020. The project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	Low (40%)	Mid (60%)	Mid (60%)	On track: Capacity of target CSOs improved according to the target.
	2021		High	High	Fully achieved: Capacity of targeted CSOs improved according to the target, which was identified by pre and post questionnaire.
	2022		High	High	Fully achieved

Output 2 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	Overall				Target fully met
2.4 Number of trainings conducted for non-state actors	2019	0	1	0	Delay: Due to the security sensitivity in Q4 of 2019, all CSOs engagement activities will start in Q1 of 2020. The project will speed up the progress to meet Q1 of 2020 target.
	2020	0	5	8	Target for this indicator is overachieved (Planned 5 Actual 8), during 2020.
	2021		4	4	Fully achieved: Target is achieved. During the reporting year, 4 training program conducted for non – state actors.
	2022		4+	2	Partially achieved.
	Overall				Target fully met
2.5 Number of grant implementation progress and quality assurance reports	2019	7	7	0	Delay: All CSOs engagement activities are expected to start in Q4 of 2019
	2020	7	10	10	On Track: All CSOs implemented planned activities during 2020 and 10 grant implementation (Completion) reports submitted to ACTION project.

Output 2 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2021		74	74	Fully achieved: All CSOs implemented planned activities during 2021 and 74 grant implementation reports submitted to the ACTION project.
	2022		74+	20	Partially achieved.
	Overall				Target partially met
2.6: Number of persons trained on access to information (disaggregated by Public Information Officer, Journalist, CSOs) (Newly added 2021)	2021	0	250	246	Fully achieved: 246 (202 male and 44 female) were trained on access to information law during 2021.
	2022		250+	100	Partially achieved.
	Overall				Target partially met.
2.7: Number of communication and outreach activities implemented. (Newly added 2021)	2021	0	25	0	Partially achieved: SBCC public outreach campaign strategy and implementation plan developed. Due to rapid political transformation on 15 August 2021, communication and outreach activities were not implemented.
	2022		15+	10	Partially achieved.

Output 2 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	Overall				Target partially met.
2.8: SOP for free corruption businesses developed. Newly added for 2022	2022	No	Yes	No	Not achieved.
	Overall				Target not met
2.9: Corruption module for piloting in Afghan universities is developed. Newly added for 2022	2022	No	Yes	No	Not achieved.
	Overall				Target not met
2.10: corruption risk assessment tools adopted to Afghan context developed. Newly added for 2022	2022	No	Yes	No	Not achieved.
	Overall				Target not met

Output 3 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
3.1 as of 2021 Number of CSOs engaged	2021	0	6	6	Fully achieved: During the reporting year, the project was engaged with six civil society organizations.

Output 3 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2022		5+	9	Exceeded Target: The project has established a productive and meaningful engagement with different CSOs.
	Overall				Target exceeded
3.2 as of 2021 Number of Covid-19 response initiatives monitored by community	2021	0	34	80	Exceeded Target: 80 Provincial Health Center specified for COVID-19 Monitored.
	2022		N/A	N/A	Not planned for 2022
	Overall				Target exceeded
3.1 Number of health centers whose resources are surveyed (This indicator became 3.3 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		1500	1500	Fully achieved: 1500 Health facilities have been monitored.
	2022		1500+	0	Not achieved. The initial plan was to onboard an M&E specialized company to undertake monitoring of 1500 health facilities. However, due to funding issues, this activity was not implemented.
	Overall				Target partially met.
3.2 Number of provinces covered through the health centers surveys (This indicator became 3.4 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.

Output 3 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2021		34	34	Fully achieved: 34 provinces through the health center survey
	2022		34	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.
	Overall				Target partially met.
3.3 Number of CSOs trained in CBM on health 3.3.1 Percentage of female trained in CBM (This indicator became 3.5 in the 2021 APR, losing the gender segregation)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		5	5	Fully achieved: 5 COSs trained on CBM in 2021.
	2022		5+	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.
	Overall				Target partially met.
3.4 Number of health centers community-based monitored (This indicator became 3.6 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		75	202	Exceeded target: 202 health facilities monitored by the community members.

Output 3 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	2022		80+	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.
	Overall				Target partially met
3.5 Number of social audits conducted (This indicator became 3.7 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		5	5	Fully achieved: 5 social audits conducted in 2021
	2022		5+	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.
	Overall				Target partially met.
3.6 Number of integrity dialogues conducted 3.6.1. Percentage of female included in the integrity dialogues (This indicator became 3.8 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		10	8	Partially achieved: 8 integrity dialogues conducted in 2021.
	2022		10+	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.

Output 3 - Indicators	Year	Baseline	Annual Target	Actual	Comments
	Overall				Target partially met.
3.7 Number of media conferences on Government response to COVID 19 held (This indicator became 3.9 in the 2021 APR)	2020	0	TBD	TBD	Output 3 will start its implementation in Q1,2021 and its progress will be reported against Q-1 targets.
	2021		5	5	Fully achieved: 5 media conferences on government response to Covid – 19 held in 2021.
	2022		5+	0	Not achieved. The donor discontinued support beyond August 2021.
	Overall				Target partially met.

Annex V Draft informant interview guides

Interview questions for AGO and ACJC as Project Board members (if accessible)

1. What is the policy and legislative framework with regards to anticorruption in Afghanistan?
2. What areas remain unregulated in your opinion?
3. What are the main challenges you see going forward when it comes to fighting corruption in Afghanistan?
4. Was your institution involved in the design of the ACTION Project?
5. How has your institution benefitted from the ACTION Project? Please provide a few examples.
6. In your view what is the long-term impact made by the project activities, regardless of the political changes that took place in 2021?
7. What could have been done better?
8. In which areas do you think the project should focus on in the short-term (1-2 years) and longer term (3+ years and beyond)?
9. Did your institution benefit from any other projects in the same period (2019-2021)? If yes, who implemented them, who funded them, what was their scope of work, were they complementary with the ACTION Project?
10. How would you assess your collaboration with UNDP/ACTION Project team?

Interview questions for UNDP

1. To what extent is implementation matching your vision for the project? Why/why not?
2. Has the project been able to reach all target groups that it had intended to reach?
3. How has the changing political context impacted on the project implementation?
4. How was the project able to adapt to the COVID-19 context?
5. Which aspects of the project, and which of the approaches used were most successful in bringing about change and why? Which approaches did not work and why?
6. In your opinion what are the biggest challenges in implementing the project? What have been the key results to date?
7. How is the partnership and coordination among the UNDP, other UN Agencies, and other projects?
8. Please describe the management arrangements for the project. How many Project Board sessions took place to date?
9. What is the composition (gender, ethnicity, etc.) of project staff and does it reflect the diversity of project stakeholders? When was project staff engaged and for which roles/functions?
10. Did the project face any operational bottlenecks?
11. What avenues did women and vulnerable groups have to provide feedback on the project, or otherwise influence how and what the project was delivering?
12. What are the project's mechanisms for MEL?
13. Have you observed any unintended impact (could be negative as well as positive) of the project?
14. Overall, which were the most important or relevant changes you have noticed as a result of the project?
15. What would you do differently now, if you were to start the ACTION project again?

Interview Questions for the Royal Danish Embassy

1. To what extent was the Royal Danish Embassy involved in the design of the project?
2. Were your views/inputs taken into account?
3. How satisfied are you with the communication procedures and mechanisms with the project and with UNDP? Were you satisfied with the visibility provided to Denmark as a donor to this project?
4. Do you receive narrative and financial reports in a timely manner?
5. How satisfied are you with the results achieved by the project to date?
6. What have been the biggest challenges in the project?
7. What have been the biggest achievements in the project?
8. What are your current development priorities and how does the project fit into these?
9. Anticorruption is an area requiring long-term transformational assistance for effective change, at all levels – from individual to system level. Do you have longer term aspirations in providing assistance in this area?
10. What are your long-term priorities for Afghanistan?
11. A rapid political transformation of Afghanistan occurred in August 2021. What was your position as a donor to the ACTION Project?
12. Are you satisfied with the level of coordination between the ACTION Project and other anticorruption initiatives in the country?
13. Why did you choose to support a UNDP project? What do you perceive UNDP's comparative advantages to be? Do you feel that you are getting value for money with UNDP?

Interview questions for Civil Society Organisations (related to KIIs and FGD

1. What is the mandate of your organisation?
2. What are the main challenges with respect to anticorruption in Afghanistan? Are there different challenges for different groups – e.g. women, ethnic minorities, PWDs etc.?
3. What are the legal and institutional instruments/remedies available for these victims? How would you assess the effectiveness of these remedies? What are the gaps and how can these be addressed?
4. Are you familiar with the ACTION project? How did your organization participate in the ACTION project? What were the results of your work under the ACTION project? For media related organizations, focus in on the Access to Information Law and its use.
5. Is the project relevant to strengthening anticorruption efforts in your country? Among the activities conducted under the project, which of them are most relevant and why? Are there any less relevant activities?
6. In your view what is the long-term impact made by the project activities?
7. Have you noticed any unintended consequences, whether negative or positive of the project? Give examples
8. Will your organization continue with any of the project activities beyond the lifespan of the project? If so, which ones? And if not, why not?
9. What are your priorities in terms of anticorruption in the short (1-2 years) and mid-long term (3years)? How can the project support you with these priorities?
10. In which areas do you think the project should focus on in the short-term (1-2 years) and longer term (3 years and beyond)?

Focus Group Discussion questions for volunteer community members

1. Which community do you belong to and what was your role as a volunteer community member?
2. Are you familiar with the ACTION Project? How did you come in contact with the project? Please elaborate on the type of support you received from the project.
3. In your opinion, what are the main achievements/improvements you reached with support from the ACTION Project? Give us a concrete example of a success story.
4. Have you noticed any unintended consequences, whether negative or positive of the project? Give examples
5. What were the main challenges in implementing this project, in your opinion?
6. Where do you see room for further improvement in reaching better transparency and integrity and how could UNDP help you with that?
7. How aware are people in your community of their rights to transparency and integrity?
8. Was is your personal opinion – has corruption decreased in your country? If yes, why has this happened in your opinion?
9. Would you make any connections between the security situation in the country and levels of corruption? How has the overall context since 2021 affected corruption at community level? What are some of the measures you see as effective at community level for combating corruption?
10. In your opinion, how do the current bans on female participation affect their inclusion in projects such as this one?
11. Did you receive support from another development partner in the same field of transparency and integrity, fight against corruption? Please describe the support and how useful was it?
12. What are general needs of your community? How do you see your potential role in meeting these needs?

Interview Questions for volunteer community members

1. Which community do you belong to? Please specify region / province /district / village / community.
2. Are you familiar with the ACTION Project? How did you come in contact with the project?
3. Please elaborate on the type of support you/ your community received from the project. Did the support match your/community needs?
4. In your opinion, what are the main achievements/improvements you reached with support from the ACTION Project? Give us a concrete example of a success story.
5. Are you satisfied with the cooperation with the project/UNDP? Did you have opportunity to raise your (potential) concerns to the project team during the implantation? If yes, what was the response/ reaction?
6. Have you noticed any unintended consequences, whether negative or positive of the project? Give examples
7. Did the project bring any benefits to you/or your community?
8. Did you receive support from another development partner in the same field? Please describe the support and how useful was it?
9. In your view what is the long-term impact made by the project activities?
10. What are general needs of your community? How do you see UNDP potential role in meeting these needs?

Interview Questions for investigative journalists

1. Are you familiar with the ACTION Project? How did you come in contact with the project? Please elaborate on the type of support you received from the project.
2. In your opinion, what are the main achievements/improvements you reached with support from the ACTION Project? Give us a concrete example of a success story.
3. Have you noticed any unintended consequences, whether negative or positive of the project? Give examples
4. Having in mind that you were writing about sensitive issues, did you face any obstacles, pressures or threats? If yes, how did you overcome them?
5. Where do you see room for further improvement in reaching better transparency and integrity and how could UNDP help you with that?

Interview Questions for other development partners

1. Please describe the coordination mechanisms of the international community in Afghanistan on anticorruption.
2. What level of cooperation did you have with the ACTION project? Were your inputs sought at the design stage?
3. What are your views on the project and its results achieved to date?
4. Do you have active projects in this field? What is their scope of work and who do you partner with? Have you continued operations in this field after the 2021 political changes?
5. In your opinion, what is the current status of the fight against corruption in Afghanistan?
6. What are your priorities in terms of anticorruption in the short (1-2 years) and mid-long term (3years)? What gaps do you see remaining and in need of development assistance in that regard?

Annex VI 2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation Pledge



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible**.



ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration** of risks and benefits from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm**. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

30 December 2022

(Signature and Date)

Annex VII Informed Consent Protocol

Purpose and procedures

Hello, my name is Olivera Puric and I am engaged as the evaluator for the Afghanistan Anti-Corruption, Transparency, Integrity and Openness (ACTION) Project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

We are inviting you to participate in this evaluation through this (interview/ focus group), with the purpose to discuss the ACTION project implemented by UNDP. This will take approximately (60minutes) of your time.

We hope that this evaluation will help us better understand what has worked well or less well in order to improve future programming. For this evaluation, participants were identified based on their role in the project.

We may wish to follow up with you, in the next (*time frame*), but you are free to decline participation in the follow-up if you wish.

Risks and rights

Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to decline participation, skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or stop the interview at any time.

Confidentiality

The answers you provide will be kept confidential to the extent possible. The answers you provide will only be accessible to the evaluator and individuals from UNDP who oversee the evaluation. UNDP will destroy your personal data as soon as it is no longer needed for the evaluation. UNDP evaluations are made public. Only information that does not identify you may be shared with other people or organizations. You may be contacted to participate in follow-up data collection or another evaluation at a future date.

You can get in touch with the evaluator to request access, verification, rectification, and/or deletion of your personal data at any point in time during the course of this evaluation.

Contact information and questions

Please contact Olivera Puric (email: puriceva10@gmail.com) if you have questions about the evaluation. Do you have any further questions?

Response

If I have answered all your questions, do you agree to participate in this evaluation? (*Provide participant opportunity for verbal or written consent.*)
Do you agree to be contacted in the future for follow-up data collection?