

United Nations Development Program

Afghanistan

**Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project**

**FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION**

July-August 2011

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Project ID: 00051821

Duration: January 2007-June 2009

Strategic Plan Component: Poverty  
Reduction and Achievement of MDGs

CPAP Component: Greater Govt.  
Capacity for formulating gender  
sensitive pro-poor policies and  
programmatic targeting taking into  
account human development  
concerns

Total Budget: \$8,773,141 (initial;  
raised to \$11,738,893, per the ANDS  
Annual Project Report 2008)

Responsible Agency: Government

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ANDP	Afghanistan National Development Programme
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEAP	Chief Economic Advisor to the President
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CGs	Consultative Groups
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DFID	Department for International Development
GCC	Government Coordinating Committee
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
I-ANDS	Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCMB	Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board
MBAW	Making Budgets & Aid Work
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP	National Area Based Development Programme
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPPs	National Priority Programs
PDPs	Provincial Development Plan
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ProDoc	Project Document
RA	Rapid Appraisal
UK	United Kingdom
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WGs	Working Groups

## Executive Summary

This report presents the final evaluation of the UNDP-backed Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which proved to be path-breaking. The purpose of this evaluation is to (a) assess its accomplishments and challenges, and (b) from the findings, extract recommendations and lessons learned.<sup>1</sup>

### **Overview of the ANDS initiative.**

The five-year ANDS was formulated after a two-year process of analysis and priority-setting that included unprecedented consultation with Afghans from all walks of life, all 34 provinces and both the public and private sector. It is aptly described as an “Afghan-owned blueprint for progress in all spheres of national life” (ANDS Executive Summary, p. 1). The strategy was built on the eight Millennium Development Goals – with an added ninth goal of security, given the precarious Afghan context during the period. The ANDS also served as the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Its goals encompass security, governance and socio-economic development and its main general objectives are to improve the quality of life of Afghan people and to reduce poverty. But just as important as the content of the ANDS was the process through which it was created: For the first time in the country’s existence, a vast participatory effort was launched. It reached beyond the national level to the entire country; it was historic. According to the ANDS Executive Summary (p.3):

National consultations involved all major governmental and civil society institutions, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cultural associations, religious communities, tribal elders, the private sector, development experts and the international community. Sub-national consultations involved discussions with provincial governors, provincial representative bodies, village councils, parliamentarians from each province, local civil society leaders, representatives of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and prominent individuals in all 34 provinces. More than 17,000 people, with up to 50 percent women, directly participated in the consultations.

In short, the consultative process was highly successful but quite complex and rather cumbersome. The same description can be given to the resulting Strategy. The full ANDS covered 17 sector strategies and six cross-cutting issues, with all 23 subsumed under three overarching goals. Here are the Strategy’s contents, which gives an idea of both its ambitious scope and its complexity:

- The **goals** are Security; Governance, and Social and Economic Development.
- The 17 **sectors** are:
  1. Security; 2. Justice; 3. Governance, Public Administrative Reform & Human Rights; 4. Religious Affairs; 5. Energy; 6. Transportation; 7. Water Resource Management; 8.

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<sup>1</sup> This Executive Summary lists only the recommendations; the report also includes the lessons.

Information and Communications Technology; 9. Urban Development; 10. Mining; 11. Education; 12. Culture, Media and Youth; 13. Health and Nutrition; 14. Agriculture and Rural Development; 15. Social Protection; 16. Refugees, Returnees and Internal Displaced Persons; 17. Private Sector Development and Trade.

- The six **cross-cutting issues** are:
  1. Capacity Building; 2. Gender Equity; 3. Counter Narcotics; 4. Regional Cooperation;
  5. Anti-Corruption; 6. Environment (Afghanistan National Development Strategy Executive Summary, p. 5).

The five-volume ANDS was signed by the President on April 12, 2008. This, however, was six months before its original due date. The decision for an early debut was made so that donors could provide input prior to the Paris Conference, where the donors endorsed it on June 12. Total pledges came to \$50.1 billion dollars. But the early presentation of the strategy had a major consequence: the final stage of the “ANDS process” – prioritization, formulation of programs and projects, and their costing – was not finished as originally called for. Subsequent delays as the Government built capacity and donors vetted implementation procedures resulted in the slowing of the ANDS process, which remained incomplete at the time of this final evaluation in mid-August 2011.

Nonetheless, the ANDS project can point to a number of accomplishments above and beyond its most important success: the first-ever participatory consultations on which it was based, an effort that made it a truly “Afghanized” achievement. The active involvement and ownership of the line ministries was a second significant – and “Afghanized” – success. Other accomplishments were lauded in the various progress reports, e.g.:

- The 34 Provincial Development Plans (PDPs) were revamped to be in line with the ANDS sectors;
- A fruitful Government-donor dialogue took place;
- A comprehensive poverty analysis was prepared in 2007, given that the ANDS also was the national poverty reduction strategy;
- Accomplishments in 2008, in addition to the President’s signing of the ANDS and its endorsement by donors at the Paris Conference, included the establishment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Secretariat to track and coordinate progress on the benchmarks of the Afghan Compact (adopted at the January 2006 London Conference).

But another accomplishment cited in the 2008 progress report proved to be a mixed blessing. This was the splitting up of the ANDS team into three sub-teams located in three different Government locations: the Ministry of Finance (which got most of the ANDS staff and functions), the Ministry of Economy (which got the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) functions), and the Office of the Chief Economic Advisor to the President (which was to oversee ANDS implementation – a function soon added to the Ministry of Finance team). This fragmentation has affected the ANDS process ever since. The tripartite division also may have

been a factor in the slowing of ANDS progress in late 2008, which progress reports also attribute to other bureaucratic delays on both the Government and donor side.

Given the slowdown, in order to meet project goals left unachieved and to ensure full institutionalization of the project, a six-month no-cost extension was put in place, extending the project from its original completion date of January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009. The final progress report emphasizes that the six-month extension was mainly to avoid losing the well-qualified and well-trained ANDS team. The ANDS people had been employed as UN experts at high salaries. Most would not work for Government pay and left for jobs with international-level salaries. But the extra time permitted the formation of a revamped team that maintained commendable quality. The extension also permitted the ANDS documents to be retranslated into Dari and Pashto after the original translations were found to be deficient. This is another achievement for the project: the possibility of disseminating back to the people the development strategy that their consultations had been so instrumental in shaping.

A Rapid Appraisal (RA) methodology was employed to carry out the final evaluation called for in the Terms of Reference (see Annex A). This RA followed the cardinal principle of the methodology: “triangulation.” This entails obtaining at least two sources of data for each of the primary variables and issues, wherever possible via at least two research techniques. These cross-checking procedures lead to data with robust levels of validity. Three distinct methods were utilized: (1) critical review of documents (listed in Annex C); (2) key informant interviews (detailed in Annex B), and (3) a focus group (see Annex F for a fuller description of the RA methodology used). A total of 30 people were interviewed during the RA, 19 men (63%) and 11 women (37%).

### **Findings:**

The following presents a succinct summary of the findings, reviewing **both the strengths and limitations of the ANDS project**:

Its **key strengths** included:

- ***Government ownership*** of the resulting Strategy
- An exhaustive outreach by the Government in the form of a ***national and sub-national consultative process that extended down to the grass roots in all 34 provinces***, and generated input from all levels about what people really needed from the Government.
- ***Outreach to sub-national officials*** who never before had been in contact with the national government
- A crash course in development, i.e., ***accelerated capacity-building*** among those directing the consultative and Strategy-creating processes.
- Valuable support for the consultative process that was provided by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development’s National Area Based Development Project – a UNDP initiative.

Its **key limitations** included:

- The very *complexity, time and resources involved in the consultative process*
- The great *complexity of the Strategy's comprehensive framework*
- The *curtailed time period to complete costing and prioritization* of the large number of projects generated by the ANDS process; this never took place during the life of the ANDS
- The problems resulting from *splitting up the ANDS team*, that ranged from getting resources transferred to the Ministries of Finance and Economy, to competition for project components and budget, to duplications and gaps among the teams
- The difficulties linked to *institutionalization in the Government* at the end of the project, especially *loss of highly qualified staff* – although these problems ultimately were resolved.

### **Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended that the Government should look for future opportunities to engage in broad-based consultations at national and sub-national levels with the people. The ANDS was greatly strengthened by this highly participatory consultative process, with a resulting positive spillover effect for the Government.
2. It is recommended that the Government should consider the broader ramifications before speeding up project activities that already had been designed by knowledgeable project planners – and should be wary of highly complex projects, given their poor track record in many developing countries over the last 50 years. It also is recommended that future projects should be less far-reaching in scope, number of dimensions and complexity – and be set up with greater flexibility and time for completion in order to accommodate changing circumstances.
3. Over and above aiming for less complex projects, it is recommended that there be early assessment of projects that rely on cooperation and performance from several Government entities that may have different interests, resource bases and levels of capacity and competence – and that project budget be reserved for remedial action to bring lagging entities up to par before the achievements of the entire project are jeopardized.
4. It is recommended that development projects avoid splitting functionally connected teams and putting them under different managements with differing levels of resources, power, competence and agendas. It also is recommended that anything that creates extra problems of coordination that make it slower and tougher to achieve results be avoided – and splitting a well-functioning team for political reasons should be strongly discouraged. The results of more than 50 years of development projects worldwide support this recommendation.
5. It is recommended that periodic (and relatively inexpensive) consultation and engagement be promoted between the national-level Ministries and their Provincial



counterparts, in order to assure that plans developed in Kabul offices are feasible for implementation in the much harsher and different circumstances of rural Afghanistan – which still accounts for 77% of the population.

6. It is recommended that there be dissemination and feedback in Dari and Pashto nationwide, so that people can learn the extent to which their voices were heard and their ideas utilized in shaping the ANDS and follow-up activities. It also is recommended that feedback be provided for any future consultation initiatives as well, and that more attention be paid to sub-national dissemination – including by audiovisual means because of the low literacy levels in many provinces – in the future.

## **Introduction**

This report presents the final evaluation of the UNDP-backed Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which proved to be path-breaking.

- The purpose of this evaluation is to (a) assess its accomplishments and challenges – both in terms of the Results Framework and the larger context of Afghanistan development and reconstruction – and (b) from the findings, extract recommendations and lessons learned.
- The evaluation is aimed primarily at a UNDP audience, but it should be relevant to the other project donors (the UK-Department For International Development, DIFD; the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA; Norway; Italy, and the Netherlands). It also should be relevant to the Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board (JCMB), the larger international community and those Ministries of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that were involved in the creation of the ANDS, especially the Ministries of Finance and Economy. It is hoped that the evaluation results will prove useful to their ongoing efforts to create a more secure, well-governed Afghanistan that is progressing in both social and economic development.
- The report is organized as follows: the rest of this Introduction provides a narrative overview of the ANDS project history. This is followed by the Description of the Intervention section. The remaining sections are the Evaluation Scope and Objectives, the Evaluation Approach and Methods, Findings and Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons Learned. It concludes with seven Annexes, starting with the Terms of Reference (Annex A), the list of persons interviewed (Annex B) and documents consulted (Annex C).

### **Overview of the ANDS initiative.**

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These people came to present their top priority, most-needed projects for their local district. In interviews with ex-participants in the consultation process, all but one was highly enthusiastic. They saw the process as democracy in action and a transformative experience. The exception was an official from Kabul Province. He described how he participated in week-long conferences listening to provincial people's proposals and opinions. From these, Kabul Province proposed 80 rural and 80 urban projects to be included in the ANDS. But this man, an economist, saw this as a mixed success, due to the time and money spent on the process and the "wish list" nature of some of the projects that people were asking for.

In summary, the consultative process was highly successful but quite complex and rather cumbersome. The same description can be given to the resulting Strategy.

The full ANDS covered 17 sector strategies and six cross-cutting issues, with all 23 subsumed under three overarching goals. Here are the Strategy's contents, which gives an idea of both its ambitious scope and its complexity:

- The **goals** are Security; Governance, and Social and Economic Development.
- The 17 **sectors** are:
  1. Security; 2. Justice; 3. Governance, Public Administrative Reform & Human Rights; 4. Religious Affairs; 5. Energy; 6. Transportation; 7. Water Resource Management; 8. Information and Communications Technology; 9. Urban Development; 10. Mining; 11. Education; 12. Culture, Media and Youth; 13. Health and Nutrition; 14. Agriculture and Rural Development; 15. Social Protection; 16. Refugees, Returnees and Internal Displaced Persons; 17. Private Sector Development and Trade.
- The six **cross-cutting issues** are:

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<sup>2</sup> Other documents consulted give different figures for the number of persons consulted and the proportion of them who were women (as low as 10,000 consulted and 26%-32% women) but these numbers are presented as official. The Annual Progress Report of the ANDS/PRSP to the IMF and World Bank Board of Directors (2006/2007) reports that the sub-national consultations involved more than 13,000 and that "[f]emale participation was almost equal to male participation, reflecting the growing role of women in Afghan society" (p. 14). Ms. Zubaida Mohsen, National Gender Adviser of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP), gave the 26-32% figure for the proportion of women who participated in consultations held in the 34 provinces, noting that additional women participated in the national level process.

1. Capacity Building; 2. Gender Equity; 3. Counter Narcotics; 4. Regional Cooperation; 5. Anti-Corruption; 6. Environment (Afghanistan National Development Strategy Executive Summary, p. 5).

On the one hand, the very complexity of the Strategy has made it difficult to translate into implemented reality and a UNDP follow-up project, the Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project, was aimed at facilitating this process.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, to this day, many development initiatives in Afghanistan remain aligned with the ANDS – although it has evolved considerably.

This evolution is discussed below and in the ANDP evaluation cited in Footnote 2. Thus, reading the two evaluations together gives a coherent picture of the process whereby the overarching blueprint for Afghanistan’s development (the ANDS) became “Afghanized.” The process of transforming that vision into implemented programmes and projects continues to be a work in progress, now under the control of the Afghanistan Government. Both the ANDS and ANDP projects have ended but the initiatives they – and UNDP – supported and helped to shape continue to frame the parameters of Afghan progress.

The five-volume ANDS was presented in April 2008; it was signed by the President on April 12, 2008. This, however, was six months before its original due date. The decision for an early debut was made so that donors would have time for comments and input prior to the Paris Conference in June 2008 – where the donors endorsed it on June 12. It was well-received by the donor community. Total pledges amounted to \$50.1 billion dollars, including around \$14 billion in new pledges, according to data incorporated into the “Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Executive Summary 1387-1391 (2008-2013).”

But the urgent need for an early presentation of the strategy had a major consequence: There was no time to transform the strategy into programs and projects, a last step in the programmed work plan for the ANDS. It can be argued that many of the problems that have arisen since then with the “ANDS process” (see below) can be traced to the fact that the final stages of that process – prioritization, formulation of programs and projects, and their costing – were not finished as originally called for. Moreover, additional time was spent in creating a learning curve and building capacity on the Government side and lost to some bureaucratic delays on the donor side. All these further slowed the ANDS process. In fact, it still had not been completed as of the end of the fieldwork for this final evaluation, in mid-August 2011.

At this point, an overview of the project trajectory is warranted. First, from the start, the ANDS can be considered an “Afghanized” plan in two senses: the participatory consultations on which it was based already have been mentioned. The second aspect of its “Afghanization” was the active involvement and ownership of the line ministries. Indeed, the Annual Progress Report of

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<sup>3</sup> See “Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project, Final Project Evaluation.”

the ANDS/PRSP to the IMF and World Bank Board of Directors (2006/2007) states that this has “been one of the greatest achievements of the ANDS” (p. 11).

That first progress report also listed other achievements beyond those mentioned above. These included: (1) As the outcome of the sub-national consultation process, the 34 provincial development plans (PDPs) were revamped to be in line with the ANDS sectors; (2) A fruitful Government-donor dialogue took place; (3) Since PRSPs must be based on evidence, a comprehensive poverty analysis was prepared in 2007, including computation of poverty rates, and (4) Progress was made on prioritization and budget integration.

The second progress report, for 2008, noted the signing of the ANDS by the President, the endorsement by the donors at the Paris Conference, and the finalization of the initial Provincial Development Plans. In addition, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Secretariat was established to track and coordinate progress on the Afghan Compact and its many benchmarks (the Compact had been adopted at the January 2006 London Conference, along with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, I-ANDS, that set the “ANDS process” in motion).

Another accomplishment cited in the 2008 progress report has proved to be a mixed blessing: In mid-October the ANDS team was split up and relocated to three government institutions. Team 1 was embedded in the Ministry of Finance’s Budget and Fiscal Policy Unit; it was to work on implementation and coordinate budget allocation of ANDS. Team 2, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, went to the Ministry of Economy to provide M&E for the ANDS implementation process. Team 3 was put under the Chief Economic Advisor to the President (CEAP) to support the Government Coordinating Committee (GCC) and oversee ANDS implementation (ANDS Annual Project Report 2008, p. 3). This fragmentation has affected the ANDS process ever since. Even now, there are continuing repercussions from the division, as discussed below – even though everything has been brought under the Ministry of Finance except for the Monitoring and Evaluation unit that survives in the Ministry of Economy with only part of its functions intact.

It is unclear from project documents whether the tripartite division was a contributing factor – there were other bureaucratic delays on the part of both the Government and UNDP as well, linked to the complexity of the ANDS process – but progress slowed over the course of 2008, resulting “in late achievement of some of the project’s goals” (ANDS Annual Progress Report 2008, p. 4). Accordingly, it was “proposed that the project Work Plan be revised and extended from January – end of June 2009 to meet the project goals left unachieved and to ensure full institutionalization of the project” (ANDS Annual Progress Report 2008, p. 4). This six-month extension was no-cost. The 2008 report cites the “unavailability of key qualified experts (Sector Coordinators and Monitoring and Evaluation Experts)” as the main reason for the “unexpected project delays” (ANDS Annual Progress Report, p. 7; a fuller picture for the reasons for the extension is found in the Final Project Progress Report, discussed below). The ANDS Project Steering Committee approved the extension to June 30, 2009, using unspent resources. The

additional time was to be used “for the project teams to be fully embedded in the line ministries and to ensure a smooth transition phase” (ANDS Annual Progress Report, p. 7).

The Final Project Progress Report proved the least polished (and proofread) but, perhaps, the most revealing. It highlights successes but also better explains some sources of difficulty. For example, there were delays in transferring some of the project assets to the Ministries of Finance and Economy; these were ultimately resolved with help from UNDP (Final Progress Report, p. 16).

This report also sheds more light on the six-month extension: it was mainly to avoid losing the well-qualified and well-trained ANDS team. The extra time of the no-cost extension permitted a more complete process of institutionalization.

This process of transitioning from the ANDS to Government ownership as the ANDS project ended was a formidable, perhaps near-impossible task. The people who had worked with ANDS had been employed as UN experts at very high salaries. They wouldn’t work for Government pay. In Afghanistan today, many donors are competing for top people. This led to an exodus of most of the best people, although some who were committed to the “ANDS process” chose to make the transition to become Government employees.

The extra time also enabled another firm to redo the translation of the ANDS documents into Dari and Pashto: As it turned out (it had not been mentioned prior to this in the previous two major progress reports), the first translation was too poor to disseminate – and it had been intended that the document be widely disseminated in local languages. During the last months of the project, a contract was let to a publisher in Copenhagen to produce these documents before the end of 2009.

Another positive accomplishment during this period that bears mentioning was the training and assignment of two M&E focal points to each ministry to monitor the M&E process at ministry level. This also is an indication of increasing institutionalization and “Afghanization.”

Still, donors and others concerned about the delays perceived “that the ANDS had lost both momentum and national political attention” (Final Progress Report, p. 17). Thus, these national and international supporters of ANDS pushed for a second round of support for the ANDS (2009-2013) that would (a) strengthen the Secretariat; (b) improve the prioritizing of the ANDS and facilitate reaching the goal of implementable – and fundable (“bankable”) – national programs; (c) resolve the disconnect between national and provincial planning and capacity levels; (d) establish a comprehensive data gathering system for more effective M&E, and (e) introduce an “appropriate strategic communications plan with the ability to reach a broad national and international audience” (Final Progress Report, p. 17). These concerns were explicitly addressed in the subsequent Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project (see ANDP Final Evaluation).

## **Description of the Intervention**

The intended beneficiaries of the ANDS Project were, most directly, the ANDS Directorate and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) Secretariat (ProDoc, p. 10). But the unprecedented process of national and sub-national consultation has created other beneficiaries at a critical juncture in Afghanistan's history: those who participated in those meetings and the people whom they told of this never-before-attempted outreach. Even if the ANDS had not been completed with most of its intended outputs accomplished (as discussed in this report), the way it drew in the people of Afghanistan to present their needs and aspirations to representatives of the Government must be cited as a direct benefit.

The problems and issues the ANDS Project seeks to address also are discussed in the ProDoc: Afghanistan had lacked a comprehensive strategy for development; it also lacked a poverty reduction strategy and was embroiled in a host of difficulties that could complicate the successful creation of the ANDS. The ProDoc discusses the challenges and constraints facing the project. Here, its main points are presented and further explicated:

The first challenge noted by the ProDoc concerned Afghan ownership of the Strategy.

- On the one hand, there was limited understanding and ownership in many of the weaker ministries and provincial administrations of the Interim-ANDS that needed to be overcome.
- On the other hand, security and narcotics further threatened Afghan ownership. Insurgency took a sharp upturn in 2006, and in the south, south-west and south-east, some 5-6 times as many security incidents occurred as compared to 2002-2005. This affected the ability of the Government to deliver improved governance and development gains in many areas. Moreover, there also was a surge in opium production; indeed, "Afghanistan is close to descent into a narco-mafia state" (ProDoc, p. 8). At the same time, Government corruption was widespread and presented a formidable challenge, while the public mood had become more skeptical about the future in the light of the above.

The second challenge was the limited baseline information for monitoring the ANDS/Compact benchmarks and the MDGs.

- The implications of inadequate baseline information are clear: it's hard to monitor progress when you don't have good knowledge about your starting point.

The third challenge was that national capacity for planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring at national and sub-national levels remained weak.

- Since the ProDoc, there has been progress but, as with other aspects of national and sub-national capacity, unevenness is a problem. A few entities have made far more progress and increased their capabilities far more than the rest.

The fourth challenge is that there was weak aid coordination for programming, financing and monitoring.

- The challenge of donor coordination extends far beyond the ANDS Project. This is a country where the international community supports some 80% of Government revenues and each donor has a variety of programs that may reinforce or be at cross-purposed from those of another donor. Without a doubt, meshing these interests has been and is a formidable problem, although donors have put increased emphasis on the issue. For example, USAID and the American Embassy have staff solely involved in donor coordination.

Challenges aside, the Strategy also had linkages to larger development priorities. For example, it was linked to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to support the development of “national policy and planning frameworks that more extensively provide for an enabling environment for the promotion of secure and sustainable livelihoods in Afghanistan” (ProDoc, p. 10).

The ProDoc also lists the **overall objective of the Project**: “To enhance the institutional capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to plan, implement and to monitor its MDG-based national development strategy for poverty reduction” (ibid.<sup>4</sup>).

In addition, the ANDS Project was to contribute to Output 6 of the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP): “To enhance the institutional capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to plan, implement and monitor its MDG-based national development strategy for poverty reduction” (ibid., p. 10). It would do so through the **two components of the ANDS Project**:

1. Preparing a costed and prioritized ANDS through a nationwide consultative process, and
2. Coordinating and monitoring the progress of the implementation of the Afghan Compact.

In turn, the **Results Framework** is based on the objective and the two components.

**Component 1** has four *Outputs*:

***Output 1.*** ANDS/PRSP Development Team established and maintained

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. is the abbreviation used when one uses the same reference several times in a discussion. Rather than repeating the full name of a document, it is more efficient to just use “ibid.,” while also noting a new page number if the new reference is not on the same page as the previous one.



**Output 2.** Achievement of a participatory policy making/development approach in relation to the ANDS

**Output 3.** National and sub-national consultations conducted and broad ownership of the ANDS across government ensured

**Output 4.** Costed and prioritized ANDS/PRSP finalized and disseminated

**Component 2** has two **Outputs**:

**Output 1.** JCMB Secretariat established to effectively monitor and coordinate progress on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact

**Output 2.** Effective Consultative Groups and Working Groups supported.

The total **budget** for all this was listed as \$8,773,141 in the ProDoc. In addition to UNDP, the international partners/project donors were UK-DFID, CIDA-Canada, Norway, Italy and the Netherlands.

The project was quite complex and all the challenges and problems described above put additional pressure on its timely and successful implementation. Although there were no blatant design weaknesses (other than the extremely ambitious and highly complex nature of the undertaking, as noted above), it was, perhaps, optimistic to expect that the most difficult aspect of the first component – that the ANDS be costed and prioritized – could be accomplished in the time the original schedule had allotted. Nonetheless, according to the informant who described the unexpected requirement to complete the ANDS six months ahead of schedule, it was quite possible that it could have been done if the ANDS team had had the originally programmed extra six months. This speed-up, he averred, constituted the main implementation constraint.

## Evaluation Scope and Objectives

This section is delimited to what is outlined in the Terms of Reference of this final evaluation. The ToR can be found in Annex A.

Here are some of the germane sections of the ToR.

Summary of key functions:

- Final evaluation of ANDS project achievement against the ProDoc and Annual Work Plans
- Assessment of the project's overall impact as envisaged in the project document.
- Overall assessment of the project to find whether it met its objectives.
- Capturing key lessons learned and recommendation for future engagement in supporting national planning agenda.

Concerning the methodology/approach of the review, the Terms of Reference state:

The final review shall revolve around [the following evaluation criteria:] relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and outcome achievements based on the ProDoc. The purpose of the external evaluation is to ensure an objective evaluation approach.

- The evaluation methodology will be based on desk review, direct stakeholder consultations, and field mission if necessary. The review will ensure a participatory approach. It will gather information from all relevant groups/categories of stakeholders who are affected by the interventions of the project. In addition, the review team [in this case, the final evaluation consultant] will take the social, economic and security context into consideration while reviewing the project. This is important inasmuch as these factors affect the performance of the project in one way or the other.
- The review team will analyze existing documentation...Responsible/ knowledgeable staff in the project office and stakeholders who have been involved in the course of project implementation should be consulted for in-depth information. The [final evaluation consultant] will consult local partners, other ongoing Ministry of Finance projects and donor stakeholders.
- As the information gathered from the stakeholders can be construed as the most significant part for analyzing the achievements of the project, the final evaluation consultant shall develop a robust review methodology such that various subsets of stakeholders will be consulted...

The next section describes the specific methodology utilized to generate the data that address the key functions and results expected, as described in the box above.

Two broader questions that also helped guide the evaluation gradually emerged during the Rapid Appraisal:

- Was the national and sub-national consultation process worth the effort, despite its complexity and expense?
- Was the Afghanistan National Development Strategy that was built on the foundation of the consultation process worth the effort, despite its complexity and the delays in carrying it through to costing, prioritization and implementation?

## Evaluation Approach and Methods

The evaluation methodology adopted for the ANDS final evaluation was the author's version of Rapid Appraisal (RA), honed from dozens of applications over more than two decades in a couple of dozen countries. Annex F presents this methodology in greater detail. At this point, here is a brief summary of the approach.

First, there is a whole family of RA methods (as described in Annex F) but all share a crucial common characteristic: they use the process of “triangulation” in order to gather data that may be generated quickly and inexpensively but are valid. Validity is the gold standard of scientific research of any sort and RAs that use triangulation provide an evidence-based approach to assessing the successes and shortfalls of a project or programme. In Rapid Appraisals, validity is promoted in a two-step process: (1) keeping the number of variables and issues as tightly honed as possible. Then, (2) for each, at least two sources of data are obtained, where possible by at least two different methodological techniques.

In the present final evaluation, three distinct methods were used:

- (1) **Critical review of documents.** This entailed cross-checking subsequent progress reports (annual and quarterly), work plans (annual and shorter term) and relevant Government publications to get different perspectives on the central project issues, accomplishments and sources of concern. The sources consulted are listed in Annex C.
- (2) **Key informant interviews.** These were almost always with a single individual, although occasionally a second person sat in on the meeting. The evaluation consultant worked alone in all but two of the interviews detailed in Annex B.
- (3) **Focus groups.** Delays in the contracting process meant that there was less time in the field than originally contemplated. Focus groups, with five participants being the ideal number (as detailed in Annex F), are more time-consuming to set up since the schedules of both participants and facilitator (the consultant) have to be coordinated in a very tight time frame. Two were planned, both with people who had participated in the historic and participatory consultation process that ultimately generated the ANDS. One was with sub-national Government officials, all at the level of Directors, who gave their organization's – and their own – perspective on the process as seen by the participants. The other was to have been with women from grass-roots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In the end, it proved impossible to gather together such a group in the available time frame.

In addition, as further described in Annex F, an attempt was made not only to cross-check data but to do so from both an insider and a knowledgeable outsider point of view. To give an

example, not only were knowledgeable representatives from the three major international donors to the ANDS interviewed (UK/DFID, CIDA and Norway) but so, also, were knowledgeable representatives from other international donors. These included the World Bank and USAID. The “knowledgeable outsiders” from the Bank and USAID who were interviewed knew about the overarching donor-government issues in Afghanistan and were familiar with the ANDS project. But their organizations had not provided direct financial support to the project. Thus, they were in a position to provide a more dispassionate and objective view of events.

The insiders were of two basic types: those on the donor side – UNDP, DFID, CIDA and Norway – and those on the Government side – from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy, the key insiders, as well as from the Ministry of Rural and Rehabilitation Development and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, both of which had been deeply involved in the national and sub-national consultation process during the genesis of the ANDS.

All told, a total of 30 individuals were interviewed as key informants or as members of the sole focus group. Of these, 19 (63%) were men and 11 (37%) were women (see Annex B for their names and affiliations).

The largest single contingent interviewed involved six people from UNDP itself (four men and two women). Four men from the Ministry of Finance comprised the second largest group. But the donors, taken together, were the most numerous: the six from UNDP were supplemented by four from the ANDS donors, DFID, CIDA and Norway (two men and two women). The “outsider point of view” donors included two from the World Bank and one from USAID (two men and one woman). This adds up to a total of 13 representatives from the international donor community. At this point in Afghanistan’s reconstruction, donor support is funding the overwhelming share of the Government budget and they hold a corresponding proportion of the institutional memory of Afghanistan’s post-Taliban process of development.

In conclusion, use of the above Rapid Appraisal methodology permitted a thorough empirical process.

## **Data Analysis**

The procedures used to analyze the data collected to answer the evaluation questions were as follows:

1. All interviews – and the focus group – were recorded in Pitman Shorthand, in which the author has been thoroughly trained.
2. To undertake the analysis, all shorthand notes first were reread and an internal coding scheme developed by the author for analysis of Rapid Appraisal Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups was applied. This scheme codes not only important

findings but also indicates the section of the report in which the results of specific data analyses will be presented.

3. Toward the end of the fieldwork in Kabul, several additional telephone interviews were undertaken to cross-check issues about which data analysis procedures indicated some divergent and/or ambiguous answers.
4. It should be stressed that the author has applied her version of Rapid Appraisal, including data analysis, in well over two dozen countries (of the more than 40 where she has worked in/researched development topics). The appropriateness of the author's Rapid Appraisal and data analysis methods has been established empirically.
  - a. For example, in one instance, in the area in and around Chanchalo, in the Andean Highlands of Central Ecuador in the 1990s, the author carried out Rapid Appraisal evaluations of USAID dairying and agriculture projects and an anthropologist working on a US National Science Foundation large-scale agriculture and nutrition project explored many of the same topics in the same Chanchalo area, using anthropological fieldwork methods. The larger nutrition project, headed by two renowned anthropologists, also carried out a sizeable random sample survey that included the same geographic/ settlement area in and around Chanchalo as the author's Rapid Appraisal and the anthropologist's qualitative fieldwork. There was a notable convergence of findings. The author's data analysis methods were similar to those utilized here for the ANDS final evaluation.
5. With respect to possible weaknesses, it would have been useful to have had more time in the field and to have conducted the second Focus Group that had been contemplated. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the author is considered an expert in this methodology, including analysis of Rapid Appraisal data. She has written professionally on the topic, presented scholarly papers on the subject, and has conducted expert workshops for the evaluation staffs of several United Nations agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).
6. Countering potential weaknesses is the "triangulation" feature of Rapid Appraisal, i.e., the approach to validity that is embodied in its utilizing more than one research technique, sticking to a limited number of variables and issues, and cross-checking results as much as possible.

## Findings and Conclusions

In this section, the evaluation is based on the Results Framework of the ANDS as well as related issues discussed in the key informant interviews. (The reader may also want to examine the full Results and Resources Framework, originally found on pages 23-27 of the ProDoc, presented in Appendix D.)

### Findings

The most important findings did not come from investigating whether the project performed in accordance with the Results Framework. The Framework actually does not fully reflect either the magnitude of the achievements or the complexities of the undertaking known as the ANDS process.

A better view of the project comes from the Rapid Appraisal process, i.e., the combination of document review, key informant interviews, one focus group and even observation of the key players, their offices and their attitudes vis-à-vis the project.

The following presents a succinct summary of the findings, reviewing **both the strengths and limitations of the ANDS project**:

Its **key strengths** included:

- *Government ownership* of the resulting Strategy
- An exhaustive outreach by the Government in the form of a *national and sub-national consultative process that extended down to the grass roots in all 34 provinces*, and generated input from all levels about what people really needed from the Government.
- The *outreach to sub-national officials* who never before had been in contact with the national government
- A crash course in development, i.e., *accelerated capacity-building* among those directing the consultative and Strategy-creating processes.
- Valuable support for the consultative process was provided by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's National Area Based Development Project – a UNDP initiative.

Its **key limitations** included:

- The very *complexity, time and resources involved in the consultative process*
- The great *complexity of the Strategy's comprehensive framework*

- The *curtailed time period to complete costing and prioritization* of the large number of projects generated by the ANDS process; this never took place during the life of the ANDS
- The problems with *splitting up the ANDS team*, from getting resources transferred to the Ministries of Finance and Economy, to competition for project components and budget, to duplications and gaps among the teams
- The difficulties linked to *institutionalization in the Government* at the end of the project, especially *loss of highly qualified staff* – although these ultimately were resolved.

That said, the next section of the Findings does focus on the Results Framework:

**Component 1:** Preparing a costed and prioritized ANDS through a nationwide consultative process.

With respect to achievement, this component splits down the middle, as discussed above. Based on the key informant interviews (see Appendix B) and the triangulation process of the Rapid Appraisal methodology utilized, the evidence is clear-cut:

- (1) The nationwide consultative process was a resounding success in all aspects except, perhaps, the time and resources it took – but the enthusiasm with which participants responded to the Government’s outreach attempt far overshadows concerns about money and time expended.
- (2) The preparation of a costed and prioritized ANDS was not completed during the life of the project and this shortfall cast a shadow over the project’s other successes. As of mid-August 2011, there has been very little actual implementation of the ANDS strategy and people continue to demand results with diminishing patience and hopes.

The findings on the four Outputs of Component 1 also were unambiguous.

***Output 1:*** ANDS/PRSP Development Team established and maintained.

This is a simple output as a measure for a complex process. But there was unanimity that the team was established and maintained, even though the team ultimately was split into different government institutions.

There also was a consensus that the team started out with high-quality, committed individuals who gave their best efforts to development of the ANDS/PRSP. And most agreed that, despite the problems with institutionalization at the end of the project, which entailed the loss of most of the original, highly paid team members, the quality of the human resources in the successor MoF and MoEc teams remains high.



The problems involving the ANDS/PRSP Development Team that occurred during the ANDS Project revolved around the dividing up of the team into different government entities. As described in the Introduction, the Ministry of Finance eventually prevailed in taking over most of the ANDS process. In the split-up process, it got the largest team, Team 1. That team was involved with implementation as well as coordination of the ANDS budget allocation; these proved to be the most central functions and the team has grown in size as well as reach. Team 2, the Monitoring & Evaluation unit, was embedded in the Ministry of Economy. It was to rely on the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO's data gathering capacity was widely seen as deficient and in need of strengthening. Thus, Team 2 ended up in a Ministry with fewer resources and linked to a somewhat problematic partner. Team 3 was put in the office of the Chief Economic Advisor to the President (CEAP) but the MoF eventually enfolded its functions into its own mandate.

***Output 2:*** Achievement of a participatory policy making/development planning approach in relation to the ANDS.

Here, too, there was unanimity. All individuals interviewed lauded the participatory nature of the ANDS process – even the lone Kabul Province economist who fretted over the time and expenditures involved. This topic has been described extensively in the Introduction, to which the reader can return for more discussion of the ANDS project outreach phase.

It is an understatement to say that this Output was “over-achieved.” It is more fitting to say that history was made.

\* \* \*

Here is a vignette that illustrates the above statement:

*One woman professional from the Ministry of Women's Affairs worked with the MRRD's National Area Based Development Plan in five provinces. She described the on-the-ground procedures of the participation process as well as the spirit that it engendered. In Kapisa, she said, there are 11 districts. They invited two men and two women from each district. These men and women were mostly literate and educated; some were teachers. But there also were uneducated people who came as representatives of their people. She was struck by the unexpected fact that some of these illiterate people had excellent ideas.*

*As part of the consultation process, representatives from the various ministries came to the provincial capital. These representatives dealt with nine sectors, such as Education, Health, etc. The procedure was that two men and two women from each district traveled to the provincial capital and went before these representatives. They conveyed the problems and issues in their district to the relevant sector representative. She recalled that in Kapisa, both men and women spoke freely. She was surprised that the women were so willing to speak.*

*The Ministry of Women's Affairs had urged separate meetings for women and men, since they thought the rural women would not talk in the presence of the men. NABDP insisted on the mixed meetings with the two males and two female representatives from each district. To her surprise, NABDP was correct – the momentous nature of the process broke down the women's constraints about speaking. And she, herself, also experienced the breaking down of constraints in the heady days of the consultation. She traveled in a bus with 24 male representatives of various government entities and she had no problems, she said emphatically.*

\* \* \*

**Output 3:** National and sub-national consultations conducted and broad ownership of the ANDS across government ensured.

Based on the interviews encompassing 30 people, it should be reiterated: the unprecedented series of national and sub-national consultations were the crowning achievement of the ANDS. They provided a vehicle for participation for people who had had little positive contact with their Government prior to this extremely ambitious consultative process. And that encompassed not only citizens but also sub-national officials: there never had been such a large-scale, systematic Government outreach before.

That all these consultations took place at a time of deteriorating security in the south, south-west and south-east makes their success even more extraordinary.

Also, no significantly negative comments were received concerning ownership of the ANDS across government. The only comments about this issue that were not praise were a few noting that the capacity levels of the ministries varied greatly and that the process went more smoothly

in the ministries with higher capacity levels. Still, since the ANDS did not reach the stage of implementing projects, this does not seem to be a major concern vis-à-vis this Output.

Here is another vignette from the Focus Group held with sub-national officials who had been involved in/had knowledge of the consultation process:

*There was an important debate among two of the participants: an official of the Kabul Province Women's Affairs Department who had traveled to all 34 processes and had been totally immersed in the grass-roots consultations and a Kabul Province economist who had helped conduct the meetings and conferences at which the grass-roots participants from all districts in the province had presented their proposed district-level projects. She was very insistent that the process had been worthwhile and a milestone for Afghanistan; he saw some value in the exercise but was concerned, as an economist, about the time, money and staff resources that had been expended. Be that as it may, he finally agreed that the ANDS consultation process had merit, despite his caveat.*

\* \* \*

**Output 4:** Costed and prioritized ANDS/PRSP finalized and disseminated.

As noted above, the unfinished costing and prioritizing is the big shortfall of the ANDS. It emerged as an issue in almost every interview touching on the ANDS. This topic already has been considered extensively in this evaluation. The time crunch, the immensity of the Strategy's scope, the complexity of its 17-sector framework – all these have been discussed above. Furthermore, the ANDP Support Project was created to help remedy this ANDS shortfall.

In contrast, the “dissemination” component of this Output never came up in interviews, even when the Output was read aloud to an interviewee. The lack of costing and prioritizing the project was the only thing they responded to with respect to this output. This inattention to dissemination is striking because the Government's reaching out to find out what the people wanted and needed is praised in all quarters. But no one asked if the people had received any feedback on the results of the consultation – in their own languages and, for those who are not literate, via audiovisual means, including radio.

Project documents reveal that translation did become a problem. The first time the translation and dissemination issue comes up is in the Final Progress Report in a discussion of the no-cost six month extension. It turned out that the first translation was so poor it had to be redone before it could be disseminated. Fortunately, the extra six months provided time for this to be accomplished. It was not ascertained if and to what extent dissemination actually took place.

Perhaps the silence is significant. People who had eagerly participated in the consultation process apparently were not clamoring to learn about the final document that emerged from their input. Results speak louder than words and results still have not been forthcoming.

**Component 2:** Coordinating and monitoring the progress of the implementation of the Afghan Compact.

Everyone queried agreed that this component was carried out during the life of the project. But there was not much mention of the Compact in any of the interviews. It seemed that the focus of attention had moved on.

One interviewee, however, wondered why there had not been a document published about progress toward the Compact benchmarks after five years. He suggested undertaking an evaluation of the Afghanistan Compact to extract Lessons Learned. He said that now that Afghanistan is entering a new phase, with transition fast approaching (i.e., the 2014 date for the departure of international armed forces) and the “Kabul process” now an important focus, it would be very useful to know what happened with the Afghanistan Compact for two reasons: First, in order not to repeat the same mistakes. And second, to build on the successes of the Compact.

**Output 1:** JCMB Secretariat established to effectively monitor and coordinate progress on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact.

The MoF people who were directly involved with the JCMB as well as the donor representatives interviewed for the “outside point of view” agreed that the JCMB had been set up and functioned effectively – especially with respect to the co-chair arrangement involving UNAMA and the MoF. All queried said that JCMB effectively tracked progress on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact during the life of the project.

The discussion about the JCMB did not revolve around the Afghanistan Compact, however. Currently, the JCMB is not meeting because there is no IMF agreement in place. This fact was widely remarked since it is holding up progress on the 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs) that, since the end of the ANDS project, have become the chief vehicles for achieving the underlying ANDS goals (the ANDP Final Evaluation discusses post-ANDS developments). Nevertheless, the impasse between the IMF and the Government of Afghanistan over bank corruption may be ending, as discussed in footnote 5. This should clear the way for JCMB meetings – and NPP approvals – to resume.

In any event, the JCMB has broadened its functions beyond the Afghanistan Compact: it now is the forum where the NPPs are discussed and endorsed. One interviewee said that even before

the IMF dispute,<sup>5</sup> the JCMB was meeting much less than quarterly (its intended frequency). This further delayed progress on realizing the thrust of the ANDS, he said.

**Output 2:** Effective Consultative Groups and Working Groups supported.

The interviews revealed that the CGs and WGs were uneven in their effectiveness. For example, the WGs involving the Ministries with the best capacity, including Education, Health and Power, have “bottom up” coordination. So these WGs worked effectively. Conversely, in Ministries with less capacity, one donor representative interviewed for the “outside point of view” stated that “forcing people to meet doesn’t work until you have capable and committed Ministers and leadership.”

Another interviewee said that the CGs had been overtaken by events. Because of the shift to the NPP system (further discussed below), the CGs are not in existence anymore and they have not been replaced by any other system. He concluded that the ANDS is in the background now that everyone is working on the 22 NPPs. Since, in fact, the CGs had been set up to promote the Strategy, it is not surprising that they have ceased to function.

**Conclusions.**

- 1. Under the unique historical circumstances of a nation emerging from conflict and terrible poverty, the participatory national and sub-national consultation process of the ANDS must be considered as important as the content of the Strategy. It provided an unprecedented outreach by the Government to the provincial and district level, encompassing sub-national officials and local leaders and rank-and-file citizens in an exhilarating act of national unity and hope for the future. In fact, it also can be concluded that the audacious scope and participatory consultation process were just what Afghanistan needed at that moment.*

The positive value of the ANDS process of national and sub-national consultation was agreed to by all people interviewed, even the lone critic who thought it had been too time-consuming and costly. Some saw it as a once-in-a-nation’s history event. Others

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<sup>5</sup> The IMF program was suspended due to corruption, in the wake of the scandal that emerged in 2010 when it was discovered that the reserves of the Kabul Bank, Afghanistan’s largest, were being looted. Many international donors stopped authorizing foreign aid payments and the JCMB stopped meeting. Officials have recovered less than 10 percent of the nearly \$1 billion that went missing. Afghan officials said that the IMF asked them to recapitalize the bank with government money and take other steps in order for the IMF to reinstate its program. The Ministry of Finance asked parliamentary approval for a \$73 million supplementary budget to start recapitalizing the bank. But parliament couldn’t consider this request because, due to a controversy over the dismissal of nine lawmakers, it had lacked a quorum (Washington Post, 3 Oct. 2011, p. A11). But in a new development, lawmakers finally voted on October 15 to pay back Afghanistan’s central bank for bailing out the Kabul Bank in 2010. According to Afghan and Western officials, this could clear the way for a new line of credit from the IMF (Washington Post, 16 Oct. 2011, p. A12). The agreement with the IMF presumably also would lead the donors to resume suspended assistance as well as the JCMB meetings.

wistfully indicated that it might be something that could be repeated in the future on other matters where citizen and sub-national input might enhance national cohesion.

2. *The biggest difficulties with the ANDS were with the costing, prioritizing and dissemination of the Strategy – almost everything else went well and the success of the consultation process is recognized in the previous point.*

This conclusion is inescapable. The ANDS process did not reach its goal of getting to the point of implementation. The question remains: Could the ANDS have been finished if the team had not lost six months of work time with little notice, and had been permitted to present the full ANDS product in the fall – as originally scheduled? This is difficult to answer. The key informant who discussed the six-month speed-up of the presentation of the ANDS in order to make the deadline of the Paris Conference was one of the last interviews of the consultancy and it has not proved possible to cross-check whether others who had criticized the failure to finish costing and prioritizing the ANDS would have agreed that these tasks could have been completed with six more months, taking into account the high energy level and commitment of the ANDS team. The informant who emphasized the lost six months was an optimist. Some of those who criticized the project for not completing the costing and prioritization were more pessimistic and/or cynical. They stressed the immensity of the task of costing and prioritizing a Strategy that ran to five volumes totaling over 300 pages, 17 sectors, six cross-cutting issues and a “wish list” reputation.

3. *Despite the active involvement of line Ministries, not all were equally capable of pulling their weight in such a complex endeavor as the ANDS process. More intensive help to the weaker ones should have been programmed into the project.*

International technical assistance to different Ministries was uneven and often was disproportionately lavished on the best-performing ones (e.g., Finance; Education). But the adage that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link should have been factored into project execution as soon as it became evident that progress in formulating the specific sectors of the ANDS was not uniform.

4. *Splitting the ANDS Team when it was institutionalized into the Government added a large extra burden of complexity to a project that already was precariously complex. The jockeying among Ministries that resulted, the duplication of some functions and the gaps that opened in others (especially with respect to Monitoring and Evaluation), made it more difficult for the essential work of costing, prioritizing and dissemination to proceed at a sufficient pace that would have permitted the people of Afghanistan to see concrete results, especially with respect to service delivery. Despite the successes of the*

*ANDS Project, this has yet to happen. Splitting the team was not the way to facilitate the path to results.*

The fact that there were very competent and committed people in the various ANDS teams that were embedded initially in three entities – Finance, Economy and the Chief Economic Advisor to the President – kept this from being more of a hindrance to project achievements. But it certainly didn't help.

5. *The attempts to bring different actors together to finally hammer out implementable and fundable projects that would make the Strategy an on-the-ground reality have disproportionately focused on the inter-Ministerial level. The brief burst of national/sub-national cooperation that characterized the consultative process has not been emphasized since. The Government is losing an important source of reality-testing of its plans by not devoting more attention to the national/sub-national interface. Inter-Ministerial Committees are insufficient to come up with costed, prioritized initiatives that are likely to succeed.*

Compared to the cost of incorporating thousands of grass-roots people into an all-out consultative process, the price of periodic consultation with sub-national officials is low – and could be further lowered by use of IT mechanisms such as teleconferencing via Skype, etc. The rewards are likely to be more feasible projects that take sub-national variation and circumstances into account.

6. *The ANDS always had intended to disseminate its Strategy widely and in Dari and Pashto, as well as the original English. Indeed, various translation and dissemination activities were incorporated into the Annual Work Plans (AWPs). As it happened, a late-discovered problem could have undercut this intended output: the translations were found to be too poor to distribute. Fortunately, the six-month no-cost extension seems to have remedied the flaw: new translations were commissioned and publishing arrangements were made.*

But there is a need for more outreach on the part of the Government to make sure that the intended beneficiaries of its projects get feedback on the fact that their voices were heard in the consultative process. Their input shaped the Strategy but there does not seem to have any significant efforts to get this information – and the documents – to sub-national and grass-roots levels.

## **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the Government should look for future opportunities to engage in broad-based consultations at national and sub-national levels with the people. The ANDS was greatly strengthened by this highly participatory consultative process, with a resulting spillover effect for the Government.
2. It is recommended that the Government should consider the broader, potentially negative ramifications of speeding up project activities that already had been designed by knowledgeable project planners – and also should be wary of highly complex projects, given the poor track record of complex projects in many developing countries over the last 50 years. It is recommended that future projects should be less far-reaching in scope, number of dimensions and complexity – and be set up with greater flexibility and time in order to accommodate changing circumstances.
3. Over and above aiming for less complex projects, it is recommended that there be early assessment of projects that rely on cooperation and performance from several Government entities that may have different interests, resource bases and levels of capacity and competence – and that project budget be reserved for remedial action to bring lagging entities up to par before the achievements of the entire project are jeopardized.
4. It is recommended that development projects avoid splitting functionally connected teams and putting them under different managements with differing levels of resources, power, competence and agendas. It is recommended that anything that creates extra problems of coordination that make it slower and tougher to achieve results be avoided – and splitting a well-functioning team for political reasons should be strongly discouraged. The results of more than 50 years of development projects worldwide support this recommendation.
5. It is recommended that periodic (and relatively inexpensive) active consultation and engagement be promoted between the national-level Ministries and their Provincial counterparts, in order to assure that plans developed in Kabul offices are feasible for implementation in the much harsher and different circumstances of rural Afghanistan – which still accounts for 77% of the population.
6. It is recommended that there be dissemination and feedback in Dari and Pashto to all 34 provinces so that people can learn of the extent to which their voices were heard and their ideas utilized in the shaping of the ANDS. It is also recommended that feedback be provided for any future consultation initiatives as well and that more attention be paid to sub-national dissemination – including by audiovisual means because of the low literacy levels in many provinces – in the future.



## Lessons Learned

1. Democratic participation is a powerful force in nation-building but it cannot take the place of concrete results. Consulting so widely in the run-up to the ANDS worked exceedingly well. But the same people who participated with eagerness in the ANDS process have had to wait a very long time for actual results – which have yet to materialize.
2. While the ANDS is well above the average in complexity in development initiatives worldwide, its performance in many aspects – other than costing, prioritization and dissemination – ranged from good to exceptional. The overall balance is positive but this was affected by the specific historic circumstances during 2006-2009. In the future, the Government should heed one of the principal Lessons Learned of the development literature: simpler projects tend to be more likely to actually be implemented and accomplish their objectives.
3. Resources such as funding and technical assistance have been given very unevenly to Afghan Ministries. This has led to a price in which weaker Ministries fall farther behind, with resultant negative impacts on morale and on their ability to contribute to a national effort such as the ANDS. This, in turn, contributes to citizen despair and/or cynicism in the absence of visible accomplishments in better service delivery and other Government functions. The Lesson Learned here is that if a project mixes Government entities at different levels of performance there must be provision for special help to the weaker one(s), so that the entire project is not slowed or derailed.
4. Splitting up a well-functioning team is almost never a good idea and doing it for purposes unconnected to the work of the team (e.g., for political reasons) increases the likelihood of causing harm to the accomplishment of a development project's objectives. In this case, the quality and commitment of the teams placed in different Government entities somewhat mitigated the problem but this still should serve as a lesson of something to be avoided in future Afghanistan development efforts.
5. The Lesson Learned of the ANDS consultation process needs to be revisited as the elements of the Strategy slowly are being shaped into costed, prioritized projects ripe for donor support and implementation: the reality in the field is quite different than in Kabul and there needs to be regular consultation with sub-national officials as a reality check to plans developed in the capital.
6. The near-absence of a translation of the ANDS into Dari and Pashto and appropriate dissemination activities provides an important lesson: it is essential for the Government to provide feedback to the sub-national and even grass-roots level about the outcome of the historic consultation process so that people can understand that their voices were heeded and their ideas were incorporated into the Government's development efforts.

Such an activity might not be as welcomed as improved service delivery – which still has not materialized – but it demonstrates that the Government takes them into account.

## Report Annexes

### ANNEX A: Terms of Reference



## UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### JOB DESCRIPTION

#### I. Position Information

**Job Code Title: International Consultant  
Final Evaluation of Afghanistan National  
Development Strategy Project**

**Unit : Project Management**

**Project : ANDS**

**Reports to: ACD PRSL**

**Duration of Service : One Month**

**Duty Station : Kabul**

**Current Grade: SSA xxxx USD/ Per  
day**

**Approved Grade:**

**Position Classified by: ( fill in by HR )**

**Classification Approved by ( fill in by  
HR )**

#### II. Organizational Context

**UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with national counterparts on their own solutions to global and national development**

challenges.

**The ANDS Support Project I, administered by UNDP (2006-2009), was designed to enable the formulation of the ANDS document, create the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board Secretariat and establish a central monitoring framework.**

### **III. Functions / Key Results Expected**

**Summary of key functions:**

- **Final evaluation of ANDS project achievement against the ProDoc and Annual Work Plans**
- **Assessment of the project's overall impact as envisaged in the project document.**
- **Overall assessment of the project to find the whether it met its objectives.**
- **Capturing key lessons learned and recommendation for future engagement in supporting national planning agenda.**

**Methodology/approach of Review: The final review shall revolve around relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcome achievements based on the ProDoc. The purpose of the external evaluation is to ensure an objective evaluation approach.**

The evaluation methodology will be based on desk review, direct stakeholder consultations, and field mission if necessary. The review will ensure a participatory approach. It will gather information from all relevant groups/categories of stakeholders who are affected by the interventions of the project. In addition, the review team will take the social, economic and security context into consideration while reviewing the project. This is important in as much as these factors affect the performance of the project in one way or the other.

The review team will analyse existing documentation with particular attention to project document, various implementation plans, progress reports-both project and financial reports, mission reports and other official published/unpublished reports. Responsible/knowledgeable staffs in the project office and stakeholders, who have been

involved in course of project implementation, should be consulted for in-depth information. They will consult local partners, other ongoing MoF projects, donor stakeholders.

As the information gathered from the stakeholders can be construed as the most significant part for analysing the achievement of the project, the review team shall develop a robust review methodology such that various subsets of stakeholders will be consulted and adequate interaction will be made with them.

### **Stages/phases of Review**

**The final evaluation shall consist of the following stages/phases:**

1. Desk review:
2. Meetings and consultations:
4. Preparation of Review Reports:

**The review team shall provide the following reports for the project.**

- A. Inception Report:
- C. Draft Report:
- D. Final Report:
- B. Debriefing Session:

### **Time Frame and Reporting**

The review should be completed within 4 weeks and the reporting frame will be as follow:

Planning for review assignment	first week
Desk Review	first and second weeks
Meetings/consultations	first and second weeks
Information collation and analysis	first and second weeks
Draft report submission	third and fourth week
Final report submission and debriefing session	third and fourth week

#### **IV. Impact of Results**

**The impact of the review result on the project will be as follows;**

- **The review should explain if the project met its result objectives**
- **The review should explain if the achievement of the project is based on the plan and ProDoc.**
- **The review should capture the impacts made by the project and how the project achievements are linked to overall improvement in national processes of planning and development.**

## V. Competencies

Demonstrates integrity by and adherence to 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 favoritism.
- Functional Competencies:

### Knowledge Management and Learning

- Promotes a knowledge sharing and learning culture in the office;
- In-depth knowledge on parliament/policy issues;
- Ability to advocate and provide policy advice;
- Actively works towards continuing personal learning and development in one or more

### Practice Areas, acts on learning plan and applies newly acquired skills. Development and Operational Effectiveness

- Ability to lead strategic planning, results-based management and reporting;
- Ability to lead formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development;
- Programmes and projects, mobilize resources;
- Good knowledge of the Results Management Guide and Toolkit;
- Strong IT skills;
- Ability to lead implementation of new systems (business side), and affect staff behavioral/attitudinal change.

### Management and Leadership

- Focuses on impact and result for the client and responds positively to feedback;
- Leads teams effectively and shows conflict resolution skills;
- Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates strong oral and written communication skills;
- Builds strong relationships with clients and external actors;
- Remains calm, in control and good humored even under pressure;
- Demonstrates openness to change and ability to manage complexities.

## VI. Recruitment Qualifications

Education:	A post Graduate Degree in a development-related field, e.g. development planning, or a related field in social-sciences.
Experience:	At least 7 years relevant working experience with UN/UNDP or international/multilateral organizations in

	monitoring and evaluation, audit of development projects. Experience in conflict and post-conflict countries. Understanding of Afghanistan context Strong organizational, political and interpersonal relationship skills Strong proven report writing experiences	
Language Requirements:	Excellent command of written and spoken English Knowledge of a local language would be an asset	
<b>VII. Signatures- Post Description Certification</b>		
Incumbent (if applicable)		
Name	Signature	Date
Supervisor Name:	Signature	Date
Head of Unit /Section		
Name	Signature	Date



## **ANNEX B: List of Individuals and Groups Interviewed**

### 31 July, Sunday

1. Abdul Qadeer Jawad, UNDP, Program Officer (M)
2. Anil Kumar K.C., UNDP, Assistant Country Director (Programme Support Unit) (M)
3. Farida Alam, UNDP, Program Associate (F)
4. Freshta Yama, UNDP, Program Assistant (F)

### 2 August, Tuesday

5. Manoj Basnyat, UNDP, Country Director (M)
6. Shafiq Qarizada, Ministry of Finance, Acting Deputy Minister, Policy (M)

### 3 August, Wednesday

7. Ameen Habibi, Ministry of Finance, General Director for Strategic Implementation (M)
8. Parwiz Qarizada, Ministry of Finance, HR Officer, ANDP(M)
9. Dr. Mohammed Ismail Rahimi, Ministry of Economy, Director General of Policy and ANDS M&E (M)
10. Dr. Nematullah Bizhan, Ministry of Finance, Head of the JCMB Team (M)

### 4 August, Thursday

11. Gemma Wood, DFID Afghanistan, Results Team Leader (F)
12. Philippa Thomas, DFID Afghanistan, Social Development and Results Advisor (F)

### 6 August, Saturday

13. Eric Pulliam, USAID, Donor Coordinator, Office of Program and Project Development (OPPD) (M)

### 7 August, Sunday

14. Hassan Fahimi, UN Women, Research Officer (M)

### 8 August, Monday

15. Claudia Nassif, World Bank, Senior Country Economist (F)

16. Hugh Riddell, World Bank, Operations Officer, Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) (M)

17. Ahmad Masood Kamal, UNDP/Ministry of Finance, Project Manager, Making Budgets & Aid Work (M)

9 August, Tuesday

18. Anders Wirak, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kabul, Counsellor, Development Affairs, Education Focal Point (M)

19. Homa Sabri, UN Women, Unit Manager, Institutional Capacity Development Unit (ICDU) (F)

20. Latifa Hamidi, UN Women, Deputy Unit Manager, Institutional Capacity Development Unit (ICDU) (F)

21. Arnold Serra-Horguelin, UNAMA, JCMB [get title from email] (M)

22. Abdullah Mojaddedi, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Senior Development Officer; Europe, Middle East, Maghreb, Afghanistan and Pakistan (EMMAP) Directorate [telephone interview – Ottawa, Canada] (M)

10 August, Wednesday

23. Golrukh Badakshi, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), Gender Manager, Training and Gender Advocacy Department. (F)

24. Najia Azimi, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), Rank 4 Staff, Planning Department, Gender Policy Specialist. (F)

25. Wahidullah Waissi, Ministry of Finance, Senior Advisor to the Minister and Former Director, Budget Policy and ANDS Directorate, General Budget Directorate (M)

13 August, Saturday

26. Zubaida Mohsen, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, National Area Based Development Program, National Gender Advisor (F)

14 August, Sunday

27. Karima Salik, Director for Women's Affairs, Kabul Province (F)

28. Al. Lal. M. Wali Zada, Head of Economy & Secretary, Provincial Development Council, Kabul Province (M)

29. M. Aslam Massudi, Economic Development Expert, Kabul Province (M)

30. Naweer Sahaii, Security Expert, Judicial Affairs, Kabul Province (M)

**Totals: 19 men (63%); 11 women (37%) = 30**

## **ANNEX C: Documents Consulted for ANDS & ANDP Final Evaluations**

Blumberg, Rae Lesser. 2011. Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Final Project Evaluation. Kabul, Afghanistan: UNDP.

Department for International Development (DFID). 2009. Project Closure of Technical Assistance for ANDS Implementation: Lessons Learned. June.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2010. London Conference, 28 January.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Executive Summary 1387-1391 (2008-2013).

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2007. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) to IMF/World Bank Board of Directors (2006/2007). December.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Women's Affairs. No date. *National Action for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) 2008-2018*.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2008. Women and Men in Afghanistan: Baseline Statistics on Gender.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan Country Report 2008-2010: India Forward Moving Strategies for Gender Equality 2008.

Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board/Socio-Economic Standing Committee. 2011. Socio-Economic and Governance Standing Committees: Synthesis Paper. 26 July.

Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan. 2010. Afghanistan National Development Strategy: Prioritization and Implementation Plan, Mid 2010-Mid 2013, Volume 1. 20 July.

KPMG Afghanistan Limited. 2011. United Nations Development Programme – Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP). Award ID 000471111, Project No. 00074281. Auditor's Reports for the period from 01 Janary [sic] 2010 to 31 December 2010. 29 May.

KPMG Afghanistan Limited. 2011. United Nations Development Programme – Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP). Award ID 000471111, Project No. 00074281. Management Letter for the period from 01 January 2010 to 31 December 2010. 29 May.

UNAMA. No date. *United Nations Development Framework in Support to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2010-2013*.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2009. *Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2013*. December.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2010. Afghanistan National Development Strategy Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2010 (Jan-March): Version A.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2008. Afghanistan National Development Strategy 9 Months Work Plan from Oct 2008 to end June 2009: Version A – Dated 15 December 2008.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2008. Afghanistan National Development Strategy Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2008.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2007. Afghanistan National Development Strategy/Joint Coordination & Monitoring Board Project: Annual Work Plan for 2007.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project: Final Project Progress Report 2007-2009.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project: Annual Project Report 2008.

UNDP Afghanistan/Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. No date (2009?). *Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project January 2010-June 2013*. ProDoc.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. (2006?). *ANDS/JCMB Project February 2007-January 2009*. ProDoc, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, UNAMA, UNDP.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) Project Final Report for 2010-2011.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) Annual Progress Report – 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) Third Quarter Project Progress Report – 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) Second Quarter Project Progress Report – 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) First Quarter Project Progress Report – 2010.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2010. Minutes of Project Board Meeting (ANDP). April 25.

UNDP Afghanistan. 2010. Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme, ANDP Project. May.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Programme Three Months Work Plan (WP) for 2011: Version A.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. Afghanistan National Development Programme Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2010: Version A.

UNDP Afghanistan. No date. National Area-Based Development Programme.

United Nations. 2009. *Country Programme Document for Afghanistan (2010-2013)*. April. DP/DCP/AFG/2.

Washington Post, Ernesto Londono. 2011. "In Bank Scandal, Kabul Struggles to Recover Missing Money." 3 October, p. A11.

Washington Post, Joshua Partlow. 2011. "Afghans Approve Repayment to Bank." 16 October, p. A12.

#### **ANNEX D: Results and Resources Framework for ANDS**

Intended outcome as stated in the UNDP Country Results Framework:				
Increased capacity of the Government to formulate MDGs – based PRSP				
Outcome indicator: National ministry based sector strategies integrated into the ANDS, including compact benchmarks and MDGs , ministry strategies reflect provincial priorities generated through a participatory and inclusive consultative process at the provincial level; Ministry strategies including cross- cutting issues; Ministry strategies are costed for benchmark and MDG targets: Ministry strategies are financed, realistic and capable of implementation				
Applicable MYFF Service Line: Service line 1.1 MDG country reporting and poverty monitoring				
Partnership Strategy: ANDS/JCMB Secretariat, Ministry of Finance, Project donors				
Project title and ID: ANDS/JCMB project				
<b>Intended Outputs</b>	<b>Output Indicators</b>	<b>Annual Output Targets</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
ANDS/ PRSP Development Team Established and maintained	Effective and capable team in place	ANDS/PRSP formulated and implemented including sub-national consultations in 2007 and disseminated and	Activity 1.1: Recruit staff to support overall guidance to the ANDS/ Compact process  Activity 1.2: Coordinate and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 PRSP</li> <li>- 1CG/ National / Sub- national consultations Adviser</li> <li>- 1 Senior Strategic</li> </ul>

		costing in 2008	<p>build synergies between compact monitoring and ANDS</p> <p>Activity1.3: Raise awareness about the ANDS</p> <p>Activity1.4: Conduct national and sub-national consultations and ensure full participation of partners</p> <p>Activity1.5: Prepare and disseminate ANDS</p> <p>Activity1.6: Cost prioritized sector strategies</p>	<p>Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 ANDS Development Process Manager</li> <li>- Compact Monitoring Manager</li> <li>- 1 MDG officer</li> <li>- 1 Document Manager Specialist</li> <li>- 1 Executive Assistant</li> <li>- 1 Personal Secretary</li> <li>- 2 Admin/ Technical Assistants</li> <li>- 1 Receptionist</li> </ul>
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<b>Intended Output</b>	<b>Output Indicators</b>	<b>Annual Output Targets</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
Achievement of a participatory policy making /development planning approach in relation to the ANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mechanism to ensure participatory of civil society</li> <li>- Communication Strategy</li> <li>- Public awareness campaigns on national and sub-national levels</li> <li>- Trainings, conferences,</li> </ul>	Increased awareness and understanding of ANDS/MDGs amongst civil society, donors, parliament and other government entities	<p>Activity 2.1: Design a communication plan for wide dissemination of the MDGs, the I-ANDS and the Compact, design awareness-raising campaign and identify the main implementing partners.</p> <p>Activity 2.2:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Consultation Manager</li> <li>- 1 Communication officer</li> <li>- 1 Regional Consultants Coordinator</li> </ul>

	<p>workshops round tables on national and sub-national levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ANDS translated and disseminated nationally and sub- nationally</li> <li>- Scale of Mass Media involvement</li> </ul>		<p>Develop support materials in Dari/ Pashto for the awareness-raising compaigns , such as dramas, radio programmes, short movies, media packages, briefing packages for MPs and Civil servants, and Afghan Embassies.</p> <p>Activity 2.3: Organize a training of local media on the MDGs, and the ANDS (newspapers, radios, TV)</p> <p>Activity 2.4: Organize awareness – raising compaignes at national and sub-national levels on the MDGs the I- ANDS and the ANDS process (target ministries, sub national authorities , civil society and the general population) at different stages of the process ( including the dissemination phase.)</p>	
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<b>Intended Outputs</b>	<b>Output Indicators</b>	<b>Annual Output Targets</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
National and sub-national consultations conducted and broad ownership of the ANDS across government ensured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National consultations</li> <li>- Sub- national consultations</li> <li>- Ministries actively involved in the ANDS process</li> <li>- Non-governmental agencies engaged in consultations on the ANDS</li> </ul>	Formal consultative mechanisms in place with the capacity to produce PDPs through a bottom up consultative and broad-base process resulting in consensus of the ANDS	<p>Activity 3.1: Engage the National Assembly and the provincial Councils in a discussion about the ANDS and establish processes for them to facilitate ANDS dialogues with their constituents.</p> <p>Activity 3.2: Organize workshops for line ministries and government agencies on the content of the I-ANDS, the MDGs, the Compact and the preparation process of the full ANDS and its implications for their ministries.</p> <p>Activity 3.3: Consult with Civil Society, NGOs and donors</p> <p>Activity 3.4: Facilitate and coordinate the provincial consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Advisor for National / sub-national consultations</li> <li>- 1 Consultations Coordinator</li> <li>- National Consultations including technical support</li> <li>- Co-facilitators</li> <li>- Growth/Poverty study teams</li> <li>- Editors</li> <li>- Regional consultations</li> </ul>

			process  Activity 3.5: Support the preparation of provincial development strategies and plans	
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<b>Intended Output</b>	<b>Output Indicators</b>	<b>Annual Output Targets</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
Costed and prioritized ANDS /PRSP finalized and disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Costing methodology and estimations in place</li> <li>- MDG baselines established within the context of the ANDS</li> <li>- National policies incorporating the cross-cutting themes of gender, counter narcotics, human rights, regional cooperation and anti-corruption</li> </ul>	2007-2008 sectoral priorities developed costed and disseminated	<p>Activity 4.1: Support to the development of a suitable methodology to conduct MDG-based PRSP costing in collaboration with the world bank and other donors</p> <p>Activity 4.2: Consolidation of prioritized and costed sectoral strategies prepared by the ministries with support of the CGs /TWGs and inputs from consultations</p> <p>Activity 4.3: Dissemination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 short-term experts on costing</li> <li>- 4 short – term PRSL authors</li> </ul>

			of the full ANDS	
JCMB Secretariat established to effectively monitor and coordinate progress on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effectively managed and coordinated secretariat</li> <li>- Good quality Periodic progress reports</li> </ul>	JCMB informed on regular basis by quality reporting	<p>Activity 1.1: Establish the JCMB Secretariat with adequate staff and capacity to fulfill function.</p> <p>Activity 1.2: Co-ordinate and monitor progress through consolidation and analysis of information and liaison with CG/WGs, line ministries and donors</p> <p>Activity 1.3: Preparation of periodic progress reports on the implementation of the Compact.</p> <p>Activity 1.4: Convening of regular meetings</p> <p>Activity 1.5: On-going formulation of economic policy, analysis and management of relationship pertaining to the oversight of the ANDS and the monitoring of</p>	<p>1 JCMB Report compiler</p> <p>1 Special Assistant</p> <p>1 Compact Monitoring Coordinator</p> <p>1 Senior programme Assistant</p> <p>1 Senior Administrative officer</p> <p>1 Senior Administrative Assistant</p> <p>1 Executive Assistant</p>

			<p>the Compact</p> <p>Activity 1.6: Tasks related to function as the ANDS OC and co- chair of the JCMB (reporting, monitoring, linking Afghan policy, ensuring cross-cutting themes are integrated into the ANDS</p>	
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<b>Intended Outputs</b>	<b>Output Indicators</b>	<b>Annual Output Targets</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
Effective Consultative Groups and working groups supported	- Well organized and coordinated CGs and WGs	206-2008 8 well-functioning GCs and 22 WGs which are active and engaged in the process of ANDS formulation and interface for donor, aid , government aid coordination	<p>Activity 2.1: Review policies and programmes in the I-ANDS</p> <p>Activity 2.2: Establish baselines, annual targets (national and sub- national ), develop standardized reporting formats to monitor the AC( on going )</p> <p>Activity 2.3: Coordinate support to the line ministries in planning and budgeting of the</p>	<p>1 Compact Monitoring Manager 8 Sector Coordinators 2 Cross-cutting issues coordinators 2 Admin/ technical assistants</p> <p>Technical expertise on sectors, ADF, presentation and dissemination of documents ICT support Technical support Operation, Equipment and</p>

			sectoral strategies ( on going )  Activity 2.4: Include outputs of the provincial consultations in the sectoral strategies	Logistical support
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### **ANNEX E: Short Biography of Rae Lesser Blumberg**

**Rae Lesser Blumberg** is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia, USA. Previous academic appointments were at the University of California, San Diego and the University of Wisconsin. She received all her degrees – B.S. in Journalism, M.A. in Sociology, and Ph.D. in Sociology – from Northwestern University. Academically, she is the author of over 100 publications, including books, monographs, edited volumes, journal articles and book chapters. She also is an expert in development, having worked in over 40 developing countries worldwide since her service as a Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to teach Sociological Research Methods at Andres Bello University in Caracas, Venezuela. Professor Blumberg has worked or carried out research in virtually all sectors of economic development; in particular, however, she is considered an expert in Monitoring and Evaluation. She worked in that capacity for the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and has presented expert workshops in Rome for the M & E professionals of the resident UN agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), IFAD, and the World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, she has worked with a wide variety of other UN agencies (e.g., UNESCO, UN-ESCAP, UN-INSTRAW), the World Bank, USAID, international NGOs such as CARE International and directly for some governments such as Venezuela and Thailand.

## **ANNEX F: Additional Methodology-related Document**

### **RAPID APPRAISAL: FAST, CHEAP AND VALID?<sup>6</sup>**

Rae Lesser Blumberg, Ph.D.

William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia, USA

Development aid aims to improve lives. How to measure the impact of that aid when time and budgets are tight has been a major problem for many development agencies, including UNDP. An increasingly popular solution has been a tool that has evolving since the late 1970s: Rapid Appraisal (RA). In this Annex, the basics of one version of RA (e.g., Blumberg 2002, 2004) are presented. In these previous papers, it was concluded that rapid appraisal seems to be the most appropriate methodology to use in exploratory – and evaluation – research. Let's see why an RA is suitable and how the method works.

#### **A. History and Advantages of Rapid Appraisal Methodologies**

The first rapid appraisal methodology was named Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) at a conference at the University of Sussex in 1978, and proposed the concept of “triangulation” for establishing validity. Triangulation entails working with a short, tightly focused list of variables and issues and, for each of them, gathering data from (at least) two sources, preferably using (at least) two different research techniques (say, focus groups and key informant interviews). Soon there was a growing family of rapid appraisal methodologies, including Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP).

All RAs, however, rely on the principle of triangulation for validity. It is precisely this systematic attempt at cross-validation that raises the rapid appraisal methodologies above journalistic accounts, or “quick and dirty” research (see also Beebe 2001).

Even with triangulation, rapid appraisals produce data that are not as rigorous as random sample survey research. But because of their better ability to handle contextual data, rapid appraisals may have comparable – and sometimes better – levels of validity. This is especially likely when new research ground is being broken, as in the proposed exploratory research comparing the formal system of accountability structures affecting SMEs with the way the system really works for a given cross-cutting issue or economic sub-sector. As discussed below, on the negative side, a random sample survey may have intrinsic methodological drawbacks for

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<sup>6</sup> This document is partially based on Part II, the methodology section of “Ageing in Asia: A Rapid Appraisal/‘Bottom Up’ Approach to Measuring Progress toward Meeting the Goals of the Madrid Plan of Action at the Community Level,” by Rae Lesser Blumberg (Bangkok: UN-ESCAP 2004). It has been edited to be more germane for carrying out evaluations, as in the current final evaluation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project.

the proposed research. On the positive side, RAs also are far superior with respect to both cost and time.

There are five other potential advantages of rapid appraisals that are relevant for a wide array of development projects:

- (1) RAs are extremely useful for measuring results or impact at any point in the life of a project, and RAs can be integrated into any Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.
- (2) Moreover, RA focus group discussions with various subgroups of both clients/target group and control groups can be used to supplement quantitative indicators; these focus groups also provide the prospect of a more participatory way of creating and periodically measuring indicators of progress and impact.
- (3) As noted, RAs are particularly suitable for exploratory research involving new target groups and/or new approaches to aiding them.
- (4) Additionally, RAs are potentially more sensitive to gender issues than traditional development research techniques.
- (5) Finally, RAs usually can be carried out when it is not possible to do a random sample survey.

Next, let us consider four main reasons why random sample surveys may not be the method of choice in a given research situation:

- (1) It may not be possible to obtain a random sample. A frequent reason for not being able to fashion random samples is that in many remote, large, or difficult terrain areas, it is too difficult and expensive to undertake the mapping that can establish the universe from which the random sample must be drawn.
- (2) Projects involve new phenomena about which little is known. The main reason that surveys are inappropriate for the early, exploratory stages of development initiatives is that we don't know enough to write out a full and valid set of probable responses ("closed-end" alternatives) for the survey questions. In fact, the multiplicity of open-ended questions that are needed at this juncture are horrendously expensive to code and analyze, and the process usually takes so long that results come in much too late to be of use to the average development project.
- (3) The topics and/or target group may not be amenable to the rigid format of a survey. First, surveys need a "constant stimulus," which means that questions must be asked in precisely the same way and in exactly the same order. With some groups and topics, doing this destroys rapport or leads to inaccurate responses. Surveys also may be contraindicated when the topic is too controversial or delicate or complex, and/or the target group may be engaged in activities that are too intimate or illegal to be willing to give truthful answers to the interviewer. It also is impossible to delineate the universe of those engaged in marginal or illegal activities, thus precluding a random sample.
- (4) It is suspected that there is little variation in people's responses to questions of interest. Surveys are too expensive just to confirm key respondents' assertions of uniformity (e.g., that almost 100% of the farms in District X raise maize and cattle). Conversely, a large-scale random sample survey is most justified where there is lots of variation in people's responses to the questions being studied – and the phase of exploratory research is over).

## B. A Typical Rapid Appraisal: The “Topic List” and Sequence

First, an important aspect of rapid appraisal is the use of a flexible, adaptable, semi-structured **topic list**, rather than the rigid, fixed questionnaires required in survey research. This topic list can and should be continually adapted/modified as new insights and issues emerge.

This topic list is one of the principal ways in which rapid appraisals are more flexible than surveys. Science is generally defined as (1) cumulative, and (2) self-correcting. Topic lists in rapid appraisals meet these two criteria. If, for example, new information emerges in the phase of key informant interviews, the topic list can and should be modified. It can be fine-tuned to accommodate cultural, gender, class and other differences, with new questions added and old ones dropped or modified as needed – and as the researchers deem fit. (In contrast, once a survey questionnaire has been finalized, it is cast in concrete. If new information surfaces during the interviews, there is no easy or inexpensive way to modify the questionnaire and re-interview everyone.)

Second, in keeping with the method’s formative approach, even the sequence of research steps is not invariant. For example, not all the steps presented here must always be done, nor must they be done in the following order; sometimes two or more steps can take place concurrently. What is important is that the information obtained is triangulated, or cross-validated. This means using two or more techniques, comparing the vision of “insiders” and “outsiders,” and (where projects or other interventions already are under way) contrasting the experiences of both clients and control groups.

Caveats aside, the typical components of a rapid appraisal for a development project, program or other initiative are:

### **1. Review of secondary data.**

This includes two types of **literature/documents**: **outside** literature (e.g., social science studies, government reports, donor studies, “gray literature,” etc.), and **inside** literature (those documents, reports, etc. related to the organization’s project cycle, from initial formulations to final evaluations).

It also can include **re-analysis of existing data**. Again there can be **outside** sources (such as national account statistics, household surveys, census, and/or quantitative data generated by bilateral or multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank LSMS series), and/or **inside** sources (e.g., rerunning tables to disaggregate them by gender, age groups, region, economic sector, etc.). The idea behind re-analysis of extant data is to use variables: (1) for which information had been collected, and (2) are important to you, but (3) had not been (fully) analyzed in the past. A good example of such re-analysis is rerunning tables on health visits in order to disaggregate them by gender and age because these dimensions are important to you, even though the original researchers weren’t interested in them.



## 2. Gathering of primary data.

Here are the main techniques:

- Key informant (KI) interviews. These make use of a topic list, as described above.
  - Typically, KI interviews begin at the top, at the national level, and then work their way down to the grass roots level.
  - KI interviews also should involve both **outsiders** (e.g., the staffs of NGOs that compete with the one(s) involved in the project or initiative; locally knowledgeable people such as teachers, health post workers, etc.) and **insiders** (various levels of project or NGO staff).
- Focus group discussions. Focus groups are almost invariably a part of rapid appraisals because of their flexibility and the sometimes astonishingly rich data obtained in a very brief time. These can be conducted in a participatory manner by a trained facilitator, so that participants interact and discuss topics among themselves, often arriving at new insights and recommendations. Another advantage of this technique is that many empathetic and intelligent people can be trained as facilitators fairly easily even if they don't have a formal social science background.
  - The following points describe the best use of focus groups for development-related research, as opposed to market research, political preference investigations or mock jury research, all of which use focus groups differently. These points are distilled from the author's experience in over 40 developing countries worldwide:
  - The most essential thing is that focus groups should be **homogeneous**. One should never combine people whose interests are likely to be in conflict in the same focus group (e.g., labor and management; customs officials and exporters; large landlords and tenant farmers, and – in many situations – men and women). Neither side will be forthcoming and honest. (In contrast, marketing and political preference studies use heterogeneous focus groups.)
  - Focus groups also should be **small**. Groups of a dozen or more often are used in market and political preference research. But based on the author's experience around the world, the ideal size for development research, especially with vulnerable groups, seems to be **five**. In practice, up to eight can be manageable with a fully trained facilitator running the discussion and a second person recording; conversely, the occasional group of four (or even three) may be necessary if there are "no shows."
  - **Why five?** Social psychology research has established that when group size goes above five, a clear leadership structure begins to emerge: one or two dominate the group and one or more tend to withdraw, saying little or nothing. I, too, have found that five is indeed the "magic number" for interactive, insight-producing discussions that can be managed by one facilitator (aided, perhaps, by one assistant to help record answers).
  - Focus groups can collect two kinds of data: (a) on the **issues**, and (b) **socioeconomic and socio-demographic** information. The social data (e.g., years of schooling, occupation, age, parental status) can be collected at strategic moments when the issues discussion is veering off on a tangent, or being

monopolized by one or two people. The facilitator announces that it is now time “to go around the circle,” and asks everyone, in turn, e.g., last year of education completed, current occupation, how many children they have, etc. Such questions break up the unwanted discussion pattern and the facilitator can pick up with a new topic or ask for a comment from someone who had not spoken. (It’s always useful to keep a handy list of socioeconomic and demographic variables when running this type of focus group.)

- During the project implementation phase, focus groups should be conducted not only with **insiders/clients** but also with **outsiders/controls**. It is necessary to have separate control group meetings in order to find out what other factors (exogenous variables or externalities) may have been affecting the people in the area, independent of the program/project. In a project where the target group are receiving some specific benefit, control groups of people like themselves – but who are not receiving the benefit – typically are recruited by snowball sampling. Often, an enthusiastic member of a focus group can be enlisted to provide the initial nucleus for the snowball sample.
- Supplemental techniques. These include:
  - **Follow-up individual interviews** with a few people from the focus groups to clarify points remaining in doubt.
  - **Observation**. This can be a powerful tool for cross-validation, especially for agricultural or conservation/natural resource management projects. One can walk a farmer’s fields and see what he/she actually is doing, vs. what the person may claim to be doing in an individual interview or focus group.
  - **Content analysis** of newspapers or other media (TV, radio, magazines) or even donor or project documents can be very revealing. This technique is especially well suited to reveal often subtle biases – e.g., not mentioning vulnerable sub-groups, such as women, landless, widowed elderly, the disabled, etc. – or presenting them in a stereotyped way.
  - **Group meetings** may sometimes be used, although they have their special perils.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> One of the earliest rapid appraisal methodologies is called “Participatory Rapid Appraisal,” or PRA. Since fostering client participation in development initiatives has been an important goal of most development agencies in recent years, many have attempted to apply this particular rapid appraisal methodology. Often, they use a printed PRA guidebook that has been widely circulated. It should be noted, however, that the background of some of the initial creators of PRA was more agricultural than social science. Some of the techniques they advocated have since been criticized by social scientists as being prone to capture by local male elites, to the detriment of women, minorities and the very poor. The reasons are as follows:

- First, large group meetings were an initial component of the methodology. Unfortunately, people with more power and affluence tend to dominate such gatherings. This is because the others tend to be afraid to speak their minds in these forums, especially to criticize these local (usually male) elites. Their reluctance to be forthcoming about their own and the local situation is especially likely if the elites have power to affect the well-being, livelihood, housing, etc., of the less powerful attendees.
- Second, some of the research operations called for in a PRA involve a heavy investment of time over as much as two weeks (e.g., “walking the transects,” in which volunteers walk the different gradients in the target village and its environs). Some social scientists who followed up PRAs conducted in this manner found that a disproportionate number of the volunteers who were generating the “participatory” data turned out to be the adolescent and post-adolescent sons of the local elites who dominated the group meetings (and set an agenda

- A last-step (generally small) survey. Many people with a quantitative background (e.g., most economists) remain uncomfortable with qualitative techniques – even if a validity-encouraging tool such as triangulation is used. It should be noted, then, that surveys can often be combined with such approaches as focus groups, observation and the like. After the more qualitative methods have been applied, a “last-step survey” may be useful if:
  - We still cannot predict what the people in the next focus group are going to say on a particular topic from the by-now highly polished topic list, or
  - We need quantitative data, either to convince skeptics or because the consequences of loose estimates for a particular issue/variable could be detrimental to the clients/target group as a whole or to vulnerable sub-groups.

But this last-step survey need not include all the items for which clear patterns have emerged. For example, if we already know the main crops and livestock in the area, the gender (and age) division of labor vis-à-vis those crops and livestock, as well as any variation in that gender division of labor by ethnic group or level of wealth, we do not have to include these items in the survey instrument.<sup>8</sup>

To reiterate, the questionnaire for this survey need contain only the questions that remain in doubt. By this time, we probably know enough about even those issues to be able to make most of the questions in the last-step survey “closed-end.” (This means that we can write a coherent set of short, fixed alternatives that fully describe the answers people are likely to give. Relying on closed-end questions makes a survey much less expensive and much less time-consuming – although it is prudent to leave space for an open-ended “other” response.<sup>9</sup>)

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for action that largely addressed their own concerns and interests). These young males often were not yet involved in full-time employment and could spare the time – since their families were supporting them, in any event. In contrast, other groups, such as poor women, could NOT spare the time, so their viewpoints and concerns were hardly reflected in the “participatory” product that emerged.

- Third, these problems sometimes lead researchers to conclude that most villagers are apathetic and uninterested in working for change. They also attribute poor rapport to the attitudes of the villagers rather than structural problems with the methodology.
  - In contrast, I have found that using the small, homogeneous focus groups discussed above tends to promote both rapport and participation, and at a much lower level of time commitment by poor people who can’t afford to take time off from trying to make a living.

There is a place for group meetings in the rapid appraisal approach advocated here, however: On the one hand, it is a good device for getting information about things that can easily be quantified by having people raise their hands (e.g., “Have you ever attended school? Raise your hand if you did”) or by giving a single number (e.g., “What was the highest grade you completed in school? Was it [first, second, etc.]?”) On the other hand, it is a good vehicle to provide feedback to a large group of villagers about the results of those small, homogenous focus groups.

<sup>8</sup> Actually, there is a useful shortcut to obtain much of this information: within a given agro-ecological area, the gender division of labor tends to be fairly uniform, varying (if at all) only by ethnic/religious group and/or social class.

<sup>9</sup> One of the main reasons first-step surveys are inefficient for exploratory research, is that we don’t yet know enough to write a coherent set of closed-end alternatives that include all the most frequent answers. A famous example involved the middle class Lake Meadows high-rise apartments that were racially integrated in Chicago in the 1950s, one of the first such places in the U.S. where middle and upper-middle income whites and blacks lived in harmony as neighbors. The researchers, from Northwestern University, wanted to know where people who had developed interracial friendships had met their opposite race friend(s). They wrote a list of closed-end alternatives, such as “in the elevator,” “at the tenants’ meetings,” etc. They also left one alternative unspecified:

Finally, it may be feasible to conduct a random sample “last step” mini-survey even where it would have been impossible to undertake a “first-step” random sample baseline survey (for the reasons discussed above). For example, it may be that the unsettled issues turn out to be confined to a small sub-sector of the original geographic area. Alternatively, with the knowledge base already created, it may be possible to carry out the survey among the members of a group (e.g., those who belong to the Association of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs, or those whose businesses are classified as SMEs in some government data base to which one has access. If so, the cost of constructing the “sampling universe” and then drawing a random sample from that universe could be greatly reduced, sometimes almost to the vanishing point.

### **3. Feedback.**

In order to help the various stakeholder groups feel a sense of ownership in a project, it is necessary to encourage their participation in decision-making related to that project. One key step is to consult periodically with principal stakeholders about an on-going initiative’s progress and/or problems. This is enormously facilitated where a twice-yearly M&E system utilizing focus groups has been introduced. As noted above, periodic rapid appraisals can easily be part of a more quantitative system of indicators. The general sequence for sharing feedback – and disseminating the most recent M&E/focus group results – is to reverse the original process and “go back up the pyramid.” In short:

- One would start with some of the grass roots people who had been focus group participants and/or key informant interviewees. (In the proposed Accountability Mapping research, these would be the SMEs or rank-and-file government staff in the interfacing agency or institution.)
- Then one could hold a community-level meeting, even though those with less power would be unlikely to participate freely (as noted in Endnote 1, this is one of the main defects of the original Participatory Rural Appraisal model: it used large group meetings, which typically were dominated by local elites; the poor and powerless would rarely tell the whole truth in the presence of those who had power over their livelihood). But it is useful for the whole target community – social or business – to hear the results of small focus groups whose participants are drawn from subgroups that are relatively disadvantaged with respect to economic resources and/or power. (In the Accountability Mapping case, the target community might include leaders of the Association of SMEs, other top business leaders, and, perhaps, high-level government officials in the relevant agency/ministry. It also would include relevant lower-ranking members – SMEs and government personnel.)
- In the case of a development project-focused RA, there also should be feedback meetings with project staff (front-line workers as well as project management).

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“other.” It turned out that over 80 % of the responses were recorded in “other,” and almost all of them named the laundry room as where they met their opposite race friends. If there had been an earlier qualitative or rapid appraisal study, it almost surely would have revealed this pattern. It was only the fact that the researchers were thorough enough to include the alternative of “other” that rescued what was then publicized as an important finding in a country still wrestling with racial segregation.

- Finally, feedback meetings also could be convened at the national level where deemed appropriate (e.g., with top management of the project, NGO or association; relevant donors; top-echelon government officials, etc.).

In sum, rapid appraisals can provide data that generally can be defended with respect to validity and can provide them more quickly and cheaply than any comparable method. An RA-based methodology clearly is appropriate for blazing a new path on the tangled trail toward governance. For the proposed exploratory, probably sensitive study of formal vs. informal systems linking government and SMEs, would seem to be the method of choice.

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**Annex G: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**



*Afghanistan*

**Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form**

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

Name of Consultant: Rae Lesser Blumberg

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant):

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (Charlottesville, VA 22903, USA ) on (25 October 2011)

Signature:

Rae Lesser Blumberg