

United Nations Development Program

Afghanistan

Afghanistan National Development Program (ANDP) Support Project

FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION

July-August 2011

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Duration: January 2010-March 31,
2011

Strategic Plan Component: National
development policies for economic
growth and poverty reduction

CPAP Component: Increase
opportunities for income generation
through the promotion of diversified
livelihood, private sector
development and public-private
partnership

Total Budget: \$10,005,652 (approx.);
UNDP: \$2 million from core budget

Responsible Agency: Government –
Office of Deputy Minister of Finance
for Policy, MoF

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	10
DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION	15
EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES	18
EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS	20
DATA ANALYSIS	23
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	25
RECOMMENDATIONS	40
LESSONS LEARNED	42
REPORT ANNEXES	43
ANNEX A: Terms of Reference	44
ANNEX B: List of Individuals and Groups Interviewed	50
ANNEX C: Documents Consulted	53
ANNEX D: Results Framework for ANDS	56
ANNEX E: Short Biography of Rae Lesser Blumberg	62
ANNEX F: Additional Methodology-related Document	63
ANNEX G: UNDP Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System	74

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
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
IMCs	Inter-Ministerial Committees
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCMB	Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board
MBAW	Making Budgets & Aid Work Project (UNDP/MoF)
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
TA	Technical Assistance
UK	United Kingdom
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

This report presents the final evaluation of the UNDP-funded Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project. The purpose of this evaluation is to (a) assess its accomplishments and challenges, and (b) from the findings, extract recommendations and lessons learned.

Overview of the ANDP initiative.

The ANDP represents a further evolution of the process that created the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The ANDS project (January 2007-June 30, 2009) had been uniquely successful in one aspect: it carried out, for the first time in Afghanistan's history, a large-scale outreach and consultation that encompassed some 17,000 people in all 34 provinces, including up to one-half women, at both the community level and in sub-national government entities. These people enthusiastically shared their ideas about local development needs and plans. The resulting Strategy document proved to be quite complex: it transformed these ideas into a five-volume document of over 300 pages that contained 17 sectors and five cross-cutting issues. For a number of reasons, however, the Strategy's last steps – to prioritize, cost and formulate concrete projects and programs that could quickly begin implementation – were not finished during the life of the project.¹

The ANDP, which began in January 2010, was aimed at filling that gap. In a nutshell, the ANDP was an effort by UNDP to move the ANDS strategy to completion and implementation. This, of course, is what the public had been waiting for since the ANDS process began: actual service delivery and other tangible results.

In an intensive effort during the ANDP's first six months, the ANDS was recast. The Government had taken ownership of the ANDS process and worked with donor-provided national and international technical assistance to produce a new format that involved 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs) divided into six Clusters. These were introduced in the form of 22 Concept Notes, one for each NPP, at the Kabul Conference in July 2010. The NPPs were "Afghan owned," promoted by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), and well-received by donors. They were formulated at a more operational level than the often general ANDS and donors saw them as more likely to be costed, funded and implemented.

The ANDP had been intended as a four-year initiative but it was terminated after only 15 months, at the end of March 2011. Despite its short duration, it led to a number of accomplishments. Moreover, many elements of the ANDP – and the original ANDS process – survive. They now are under the umbrella of a single UNDP project, Making Budgets & Aid Work (MBAW), housed in the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

¹ See "Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project Final Project Evaluation."

Nevertheless, due to a combination of internal and external reasons, to date, only two of the NPPs have been approved by the Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board (JCMB) Secretariat (which was created by the ANDS and continues to function); seven more are ready for JCMB approval. This approval is the final gateway before NPPs can begin implementation. The internal reason is that some of the Ministries and Clusters are weaker than others and need more technical assistance to bring their NPPs up to the level for approval and implementation. However, such technical assistance was not included in the pre-implementation phase, according to the Results Framework (see Annex D; TA was aimed at the implementation phase). So it is presently ambiguous as to how TA to help hone unfinished NPPs could be provided through the surviving ANDP elements now under MBAW oversight.

The external reason for delays in moving forward with the NPPs is that the JCMB, which is co-chaired by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the donors and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for the GoA, is not holding meetings. The reason is because the donors have suspended them pending resolution of a dispute between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the GoA (discussed in footnote 4, below).

There also are some concerns about Monitoring & Evaluation. In the middle of the ANDS project, M&E had been split between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy (MoEc). Currently, the MoF is in charge of outputs and deliverables monitoring and the MoEc is responsible for outcome and impact M&E. An old issue involves gaps and duplications between the MoF and MoEc M&E activities. New issues also have surfaced. One is concern about the validity (accuracy) of data on outputs and deliverables that are forwarded by line Ministries to the MoF M&E unit, which accepts them without field verification. (Key informants in the MoEc raised the possibility of using 900 field staff from that Ministry to possibly help in field checking the data but this seems beyond the scope of the ANDP or its ongoing activities in the MBAW.) Also, the early termination of the ANDP meant that technical assistance to the MoEc partner in M&E, the Central Statistics Office, scheduled for later in the project (see Results Framework, Annex D), has not taken place, although the CSO was seen as needing help with data collection. (It is not clear if it can receive TA under post-ANDP arrangements.)

This evaluation also found that the final component of the ANDP, Strategic Communications, which had been essentially at a standstill, has seen some recent signs of imminent progress. If these efforts prove fruitful, this would finally permit dissemination of information about the ANDS process and, hopefully before long, NPP implementation. There are plans to translate documents from English into Dari and Pashto and to use audiovisual means of communication. This is appropriate in a country that remains 77% rural, with high levels of illiteracy, especially among women. But initial activities involve a website that would seem most relevant for Government employees.

Findings:

The following presents a short summary of the **strengths and sources of concern of the ANDP project**:

The ANDP Project's **key strengths** include:

- **Some notable progress on the NPPs, spearheaded by a few well-advanced Clusters, such as education.**
- **Strong leadership from some Cluster Coordinators, that includes helping weaker Ministries in their Cluster come up to speed**
- **15 of 22 NPPs at or near JCMB endorsement**
- **Competent performance from the MoF Deputy Minister-Policy units, including Strategic Implementation General Directorate**

The ANDP Project's **key sources of concern** include:

- **Only a few pre-existing projects linked to the 22 NPPs are already in implementation** and, apparently, none of them promise immediate and major benefits to a results-starved public.
- **Only two NPPs have been approved, with seven more ready for approval; some of the lagging ones involve weaker Ministries and there is no systematic way of providing technical assistance to bring these weaker Ministries and NPPs up to speed;**
- **[There also is an external reason, beyond the project's scope, that more NPPs have not been approved: a dispute between the Government and the International Monetary Fund that has caused donors to suspend meetings of the Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board, at which NPPs are presented for approval.]**
- **The split of the Monitoring & Evaluation functions between the MoF and the MoEc, which occurred during the ANDS project, has led to new causes for concern:**
 - **Under the NPP process, the MoF team is monitoring Outputs by relying on the quantitative and qualitative data sent in by the line Ministries – with no verification on the ground.**
 - **The MoEc team is monitoring Outcomes and Impact, relying on data collection from the Central Statistics Office, but the ANDP project ended before the CSO was to receive training to improve their data.**

Specific Recommendations (see text for General Recommendations and Lessons Learned):

1. It is recommended that ways be found to provide additional technical assistance as quickly as possible to the weaker Clusters and Ministries that have fallen behind in

finalizing their NPPs. Consider having successful Ministries provide a little TA from their own insider point of view on how to negotiate the NPP process.

2. It is recommended that the M&E problem receive attention in all its dimensions, from the possible duplication and gaps engendered by the splitting of M&E into MoF and MoEc units to the possible need to provide technical assistance to the CSO to buttress the MoEc M&E unit in its outcome and impact evaluations.
 - a. In the case of the output and deliverables data sent to the MoF M&E unit by the line Ministries, it is recommended that an independent field study be undertaken with a small random sample to verify the accuracy of the output and deliverables data sent to the MoF M&E unit by the line Ministries. If anomalies emerge, it is recommended that steps to check validity of data sent in by line Ministries be incorporated into the M&E system and that a wide variety of suggestions about how to do this be explored (e.g., the possible use of some MoEc field staff, etc.).
3. It is recommended that consideration be given to making the Strategic Communication unit that is just starting to function in the MoF less top-down oriented, and having it include audiovisual outreach efforts in Dari and Pashto and, where needed, other languages – so that rural and illiterate people, and women as well as men, may be included in national dialog and get feedback at last about what their consultation process inputs have led to.
4. It is recommended that over and above the ANDS/ANDP/NPP process, a feasibility study of a National Planning Commission be carried out, as suggested by two highly placed key informants.

Introduction

This report presents the final evaluation of the UNDP-backed Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP) Support Project.

- 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 donors that had backed its predecessor, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project, and remain involved in the unfolding of the “ANDS process.” These include the UK-Department For International Development, DFID; 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 and evolution of the ANDS, especially the Ministries of Finance and Economy. The MoF and MoEc not only worked on the ANDS and ANDP but they continue to work on the components of the ANDP that survived its termination and now are lodged in the Making Budgets & Aid Work (MBAW) project. It is hoped that the evaluation results will prove useful to 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 ANDP 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 ANDP Initiative.

According to the ProDoc (p.2), the ANDP had been designed as “a four-year program of assistance to the Government of Afghanistan (G0A) in support of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The ANDS is the nation’s country-wide strategy designed to promote security, governance and socio-economic development.”

The ANDP was built on the work completed during the UNDP-supported ANDS project, which ran from January 2007 through June 2009. The ANDS project had been designed to support the formulation of a coherent national strategy for development and it entailed a unique consultation process that represented a historic first for the Government of Afghanistan: a highly successful outreach effort in all 34 provinces, where ordinary citizens and sub-national officials provided input on their most urgent development needs. The ANDS project also created the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board (JCMB) Secretariat, which remains in existence, exercising functions that were pertinent to the ANDP and remain so for the continuing ANDS process now housed in the MBAW (see below). In addition, the ANDS initiative established a central monitoring framework – although its implementation became divided between two Ministries, Finance and Economy, during the life of the ANDS Project.

Since the end of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project on June 30, 2009, there have been many other changes beyond the splitting of the Monitoring & Evaluation effort. Most importantly, under the ANDP, the ANDS strategy – aimed at security, governance and socio-economic development – was recast completely. The original Afghanistan National Development Strategy ran over 300 pages in five volumes and was quite comprehensive but its format was very complex, consisting of 17 sectors and six cross-cutting issues – all stated in rather general terms. During the first six months of the ANDP initiative, it was reconfigured as 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs) grouped into six Clusters – all designed to be more concrete and easily translated into implementation. As further discussed below, these NPPs first were presented at the Kabul Conference in July 2010, six months after the ANDP was launched in January; currently the NPPs are in varying stages of completion and endorsement by international donors.

The ambitious ANDS project never completed the last stage of its programmed work plan: transforming the strategy into costed and feasible programs and projects.² In a nutshell, the follow-on Afghanistan National Development Plan Support Project (ANDP) was an effort by UNDP to move the ANDS strategy to completion and implementation. It was created to facilitate the NPP/Cluster process and carry it through the final stages of (1) costing of individual projects and programs, and (2) pledges from donors to bring them into full implementation. This, of course, is what the public has been waiting for since the ANDS process began: actual service delivery and other tangible results.

The ANDP began in January 2010 at an opportune moment for Afghanistan: the Government had taken ownership of the ANDS process and worked with donor-provided national and international technical assistance to produce 22 Concept Notes, one for each NPP. These Concept Notes were presented at the Government-led Kabul Conference in July 2010. The ANDP project clearly contributed to the positive outcome of the “Kabul process,” in which

² See “Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project Final Project Evaluation.”

donors reacted positively to the new NPPs and Clusters and committed to align 80% of their assistance with the NPPs.

However, the ANDP project came to an early end on March 31, 2011. Despite its early termination, it has a number of accomplishments to its credit. Moreover, many elements of the ANDP – and the original ANDS process – survive. Many of the initiatives that were split between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy half-way through the ANDS project and continued under the ANDP now survive under the umbrella of a single UNDP project, Making Budgets & Aid Work. The MBAW is housed in the MoF. Nonetheless, much of the continuing post-ANDP work is actually taking place in the Strategic Implementation unit of the MoF Deputy for Policy. This unit is responsible for two monitoring functions: Output monitoring, in which it uses quantitative and qualitative information forwarded by the line ministries, and the 100 day rolling action plans, which track progress toward NPP implementation.

The remainder of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the ANDS/ANDP still is in the ANDS Monitoring & Evaluation unit of the Ministry of Economy. Its mandate includes only outcome and impact M&E. It works with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) – a partner which has had problems with its data collection capacity. This sometimes has complicated the M&E unit's efforts, since it relies on the CSO for much of its data collection. According to the Results Framework (see Annex D), technical assistance to the CSO was scheduled for later in the project, to be completed by the fourth year. So whether technical assistance is possible under the post-ANDP MBAW arrangements is ambiguous.

Whether the split between the MoF and the MoEc is a viable division of M&E responsibility remains controversial. On the one hand, there is concern about duplication as well as gaps. On the other hand, there also is the troubling fact that the MoF monitoring is done as a desk process with input from the line ministries, without field verification of outputs. Meanwhile, according to informants in the MoEc, the Director General for Design and Coordination has some 900 field staff nationwide that, they suggested, might be able to help provide on-the-ground verification of the output data. But there seems to be no provision for this under the ANDP ProDoc and/or Results Framework (Annex D) so it is unclear how there might be a post-ANDP mechanism for following through on this suggestion.

Two highly placed sources in the Ministry of Finance both proposed that however the M&E situation is resolved Afghanistan needs a National Planning Commission. Such an entity would provide oversight, guidance and monitoring to the first- and second-generation spin-offs of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. This is more important than ever as the transition process unfolds toward the 2014 withdrawal of international armed forces. Meanwhile, although the idea of a National Planning Commission merits exploring, the ANDS remains the basic blueprint for how Afghanistan is to achieve better security, governance and socio-economic development.

In understanding the ANDP it is important to note that it was a project implemented under a National Implementation Modality (NIM). This meant that it was designed to be “Afghan-owned, led and driven, with management and control over budgetary decisions and expenditures in line with MoF/GoA guidelines...[whereas] UNDP [was to] provide the functions of quality control and monitoring, expense and progress tracking as reported by the ANDS Secretariat and support as required for recruitment, procurement and provision of technical assistance” (ANDP ProDoc, p. 2).

Although the four-year project budget was to be approximately \$10,005,652, its early termination meant that it not go beyond the \$2 million UNDP contribution from its own core budget. No other donors participated in funding the ANDP.

The **overall goal** of the ANDP was to “support the Government of Afghanistan in the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy through improving capacities for effective leadership, coordination, planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation” (ProDoc, p. 11).

To recap, the ANDP came into existence because the audaciously ambitious ANDS mission remained unfinished for a variety of reasons.³ During the ANDP’s 15 months of existence, it provided support toward transforming the paper strategies of the ANDS into fully formulated development initiatives (NPPs) that could receive donor funding. But due to both internal and external factors (discussed below), the NPP process remains unfinished to this day and with it, the fulfillment of the hopes raised by the broad-based ANDS consultative process.

³ These reasons are described in “Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Project, Final Project Evaluation.”

Description of the Intervention

This final evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the ANDP is primarily intended to benefit UNDP – its sole funder – but should also be of use to those who continue to work in the ANDS process. These range from the units in the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy that still are working with surviving elements of the ANDP to the Ministries participating in the 22 NPPs that represent the implementation-oriented transformations of the original ANDS sectors, to the donors and the JCMB that assess the progress of each NPP.

The problems and issues the ANDP Project sought to address have been delineated above, as has the main rationale for the project: it was to help in the finalization of prioritized, costed initiatives – the NPPs – that would, at last, be ready for implementation and donor support, thereby fulfilling the (delayed) promise of the ANDS.

The strategy of the ANDP was to further advance the capacity of the GoA and the Secretariat specifically to deliver security, governance and economic development outcomes. It was launched in January 2010.

To carry out this strategy, the project Results Framework (see Annex D) lists four primary areas of interventions and outputs:

1. Strengthen the ANDS Secretariat to effectively implement GoA policy, strategy and practice with both technical and operational support;
2. Develop and implement a new ANDS prioritization, coupled with ministry bankable [likely to attract donor funding] programs that help realize security, governance and socioeconomic results in the short and medium term;
3. Define and implement an effective monitoring and evaluation system to measure the goals and achievements of the ANDS at all levels, and to inform national policy; and
4. Support the development of a strategic communications plan in concert with other actors that promotes the work of the ANDS (ProDoc, p. 9)

With respect to constraints and challenges to realizing the strategy, they include – but are not limited to:

1. An ongoing conflict, which while not affecting the Secretariat's ability to support ministries, does impact the capacity to implement ministerial strategies at the sub-national levels;
2. An evolving political landscape that needs to become united at the highest levels; and
3. The capacities existing within the Ministries and Secretariat which require continued support and development to realize their objectives (ProDoc, pp. 10-11).

The ANDP also was intended to fit into the overarching UN mission in Afghanistan:

- According to the Results Framework, the ANDP is linked to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Outcome, “Government capacity to deliver services to the poor and vulnerable is enhanced,” and specifically, “Opportunities for decent work and income are improved and diversified, especially for vulnerable groups.”
- It also is linked to the Country Programme Results Framework via the following Intended Outcome: “Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihoods, private sector development and public-private partnerships.”
- Additionally, it is linked to the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) via the following Output Indicator: “Enhanced capacity for formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies are in place.”
- Finally, it fits in with UNDP’s mandate. Per its Country Objectives, that “is to support the realization of the ANDS, which is the government’s mechanism to reach the MDGs” (ProDoc, p. 10).

One final point about the ANDP and its planned interventions concerns possible design weakness: Nothing was stated in the 2010 Annual Progress Report about any design weakness. The still-unfinalized Project Final Report for 2010-2011 largely repeats the 2010 information so it does not mention any design weakness either. The division of M&E functions between the MoF and the MoEc already was a fait accompli that occurred during the ANDS project. The ANDP project had to deal with the split as a given. So though no interviewee pointed to any design flaw in the ANDP itself, it inherited a problem that has affected the M&E process and, perhaps, its validity.

As things have turned out with some of the NPPs (see below), it would have been helpful if the project design had sufficient flexibility to provide early, i.e., pre-JCMB approval/pre-implementation, technical assistance to the weaker Ministries within NPP Clusters, as well as to weaker Clusters that fell behind in their attempts to operationalize their NPPs. But since the project ended 15 months into what was designed to be a 48-month effort, it is impossible to predict if such technical assistance would have been made available at this stage. The language in the Results Framework (see Annex D) situates technical assistance for the NPPs in Component 2, ANDS Prioritization and Implementation, i.e., not until the implementation phase. There, 2.2.1 states: “...source technical assistants to bankable programs.” It also states: “support cluster heads to implement plans in ministries through ongoing coordination, regular TA, M&E and budgetary support.” Would this aid have been moved up as the problem with weaker clusters and Ministries slowing NPP completion became a more evident obstacle to approval and implementation? This is unknown. And the implementation phase of the NPPs has yet to begin in a concerted manner.

Similarly, the Results Framework contemplated TA for the Central Statistics Office as part of Component 3, Monitoring and Evaluation – but later in the project (e.g., 3.2 states that the data

required to measure goals and achievements should be acquired by the fourth year of the project and 3.2.2 states: “determine technical and operational support required” to carry that out). The project never reached its fourth year and informants said that the CSO still has data collection challenges. It is unknown if the ANDP would have provided TA to the CSO sooner than proposed in 3.2.

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 ANDP 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.

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

The final review shall revolve around 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.

Many of the outputs of the project components remained unfinished due to the sudden, early termination of the project (the reasons involved resource issues but they were beyond the scope of the evaluation). The early termination precluded full assessment of outputs which had not run their course – or even been started. Therefore, two broader questions that emerged during the Rapid Appraisal also helped guide the evaluation:

- Had the ANDP helped move the ANDS process beyond where it had stood at the end of the ANDS on June 30, 2009?
- More specifically, what were the notable positive achievements and what remain as sources of concern?

Evaluation Approach and Methods

The evaluation methodology adopted for the ANDP 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 program. 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, first, knowledgeable representatives from the three major international donors to the ANDS Project were interviewed (UK/DFID, CIDA and Norway) because they continued to keep close track on the successor to the initiative they funded. But knowledgeable representatives from other international donors also were interviewed. 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 ANDP project. But their organizations had not provided direct financial support to the project (or the ANDS). Thus, they were in a position to provide a more dispassionate and objective view of events.

The insiders were of two basic types: those that had been ANDS donors – UNDP, DFID, CIDA and Norway – and those on the Government side – from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy. These were the primary insiders, but information also was obtained from key informants 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.

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 ANDP 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

The early termination of the project meant that the evaluation had to rely much more on information obtained from key informants responding to more general Rapid Appraisal topics than on a close examination of specific components and outputs from the Results Framework. This is because at the time the project ended, many activities were barely off the ground – and key informants wanted to talk about issues broader than partially done outputs.

Findings

To reiterate, due to the early termination, most of the key findings highlighted below did not come from asking informants about specific outputs while showing them a copy of the Results Framework. Rather, the main findings came from their perceptions of where the ANDS process was going and how the ANDP was helping (or not). The informants' sense of time urgency came through in a number of interviews: some concrete projects need to come out of the long ANDS-ANDP process – and they need to start showing results soon. The populace, many said, is increasingly skeptical and disappointed because they see no improvement in Government functions or service delivery, rhetoric aside.

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

The ANDP Project's **key strengths** included:

- **Some notable progress on the NPPs, spearheaded by a few well-advanced Clusters, such as education.**
- **Strong leadership from some Cluster Coordinators, that includes helping weaker Ministries in their Cluster come up to speed**
- **15 of 22 NPPs at or near JCMB endorsement**
- **Competent performance from the MoF Deputy Minister-Policy units, including Strategic Implementation General Directorate**

The Project's **key sources of concern** included:

- **Only a few pre-existing projects linked to the NPP are already in implementation** and, apparently, none of them promise immediate and major benefits to a results-starved public.
- An internal source of concern is the fact that there may be **no systematic way to bring weaker Ministries up to speed** – thereby hindering NPP approval now and raising concerns about future implementation. This is because TA prior to the phase of implementation was not included in the ANDP Results Framework (see Annex D – although, had the project survived, we cannot rule out the possibility that such an effort

might have been added when it became clear that TA might help some NPPs that were making little progress toward prioritizing, costing and JCMB approval).

Moreover, although this is an external factor and not a weakness of the project itself, the fact that the **JCMB is not meeting** until there is an IMF agreement in place **is a looming hindrance to NPP progress** just when a number of them are ready for JCMB action. Nevertheless, the impasse between the IMF and the Government of Afghanistan over bank corruption may be ending, leading to a new agreement, as discussed in footnote 4. This should clear the way for JCMB meetings – and NPP approvals – to resume.

- Here is a brief summary of the IMF/JCMB problem and the resulting – and on-going – project delays: JCMB approval is needed before full implementation of an NPP can begin. Unfortunately, the JCMB is not meeting because a dispute between the IMF and the GoA had not been settled. The dispute is described in footnote 4.⁴ The JCMB Secretariat is co-chaired by UNAMA (for the donors) and the MoF (for the Government) and the donors decided to suspend the JCMB meetings until an agreement with the IMF is reached. This current impasse illustrates the problematic context in which the project must operate and illuminates how external factors affect ongoing efforts to bring the NPPs to full implementation.
- **The split of the Monitoring & Evaluation functions between the MoF and the MoEc has led to ongoing and new causes for concern:**
 - There have been ongoing concerns about duplication and gaps between the two M&E efforts since they were split during the ANDS.
 - Now the **MoF team is monitoring Outputs** by relying on the quantitative and qualitative data sent in by the line Ministries – **with no verification on the ground**. An independent inquiry into the validity of the data seems like a good idea.
 - In addition, MoEc sources suggested that the M&E Directorate's sister entity, the MoEc General Directorate for Design and Coordination, has 900 field staff nationwide who might help verify the output claims that the line Ministries

⁴ 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 can't consider this request because, due to a controversy over the dismissal of nine lawmakers, it lacks a quorum. So the foreign aid delays continue until the IMF matter is resolved (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.

forward to the MoF M&E unit. But they are not tasked to do so under the ProDoc for ANDP and this suggestion seems to go against the present division of M&E functions between MoF and MoEc. Still, it might be looked into.

- The MoEc team is partnered to receive much of its data from the CSO, which various informants saw as capacity-challenged in data collection. Since the ANDP was terminated before the CSO was scheduled to receive technical assistance, it is not clear if this CSO issue can be addressed at this point. But it might be worth exploring.
- To some extent these issues flow from the institutional reality with which the project has to work.
- The **Strategic Communication initiative**, which was programmed to be launched by the MoF Strategic Implementation General Directorate **still remains “on the verge” of launch and may not be targeting the Afghan majority** (e.g., poor people; rural areas; illiterates; women as well as men).

* * *

In illustration of the first key strength, here are the highlights of the strong performance of those aspects of the Human Resources Cluster that are under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, as compiled from several key informants:

First, the Minister of Education – and his Ministry – has taken the lead with the other three ministries under his purview: the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Labor. Second, even before the NPPs, the Ministry of Education already had become one of the best-performing ministries; in addition to its notable leadership, it has had effective outside consultants. This has resulted in, inter alia, a system of robust statistics on education, compiled at the source (e.g., by headmasters) that make up for the lack of national-level population data while contributing to results-based management. Third, the Minister of Education has been cognizant of the extremely complex nature of both the ANDS and the NPPs-plus-Clusters and the problems that this complexity poses for weaker ministries. Fourth, therefore, he has been providing guidance to other ministries in his Cluster, particularly the Ministry of Labor.

All this has paid off: according to the July 26, 2011 Synthesis Report, of the seven NPPs categorized as “Ready to Endorse” [i.e., when the JCMB begins to meet again; only two of the 22 NPPs were approved before the meetings were suspended], three are linked to the Ministry of Education-led Cluster: an MDG-linked Education for All initiative, a higher education program, and an effort to provide training to accelerate implementation of the National Action Plan for Women. These are the respective efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Clearly, the system of working with other ministries in the Cluster has paid off for the Ministry of Education – and the NPP process.

At this point the Results Framework Components and Outputs are presented.

Afghanistan National Development Programme (ANDP): Support Project

Goals and Outputs: *The overall goal of the ANDP Support Project is to support the Government of Afghanistan in the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy through improving capacities for effective leadership, coordination, planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.*

First, the four project components are presented here, along with the short component title that appears in the Results Framework (see Annex D).

Component 1: ANDS STRUCTURAL SUPPORT

Strengthen the ANDS Secretariat to effectively implement GoA policy, strategy and practice with both technical and operational support;

Component 2: ANDS PRIORITIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Develop and implement a new ANDS prioritization, coupled with ministry bankable [likely to attract donor funding] programs that help realize security, governance and socioeconomic results in the short and medium term;

Component 3: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Define and implement an effective monitoring and evaluation system to measure the goals and achievements of the ANDS at all levels, and to inform national policy; and

Component 4: ANDS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Support the development of a strategic communications plan in concert with other actors that promotes the work of the ANDS (ProDoc, p. 9)

The specific outputs of a component will not be mentioned unless it came up in discussions with the key informants. Again, this is due to the fact that many output activities were not implemented (or had barely begun) and the people interviewed kept returning to the big picture issues highlighted in the “key strengths and weaknesses” bullet points above.

With respect to **Component 1, ANDS Structural Support**, none of the key informants claimed to be well-informed about specific details of progress in the ANDS Secretariat. Instead, they pushed on to Component 2 or Component 3, depending on their interests.

Component 2, ANDS Prioritization and Implementation, in fact, elicited the greatest amount of response. The general consensus is that things are moving but still not at the pace that is needed for visible results to be available in many of the Clusters any time soon. That is a major cause for concern.

Still, there was willingness to give the NPP process a bit more time – this was particularly the case among those who had read the fairly positive set of results in the JCMB’s Socio-Economic and Governance Standing Committees Synthesis Paper of July 26. Below, these results will be presented and analyzed in some detail.

Several of the interviewees mentioned the necessity of addressing the problem of uneven performance and capacity among the Ministries and, as a result, among the Clusters and NPPs. Unfortunately, there is nothing in Component 2 that addresses this need prior to the implementation phase. And NPPs with weaker Ministries are also the ones that are not yet in shape to be presented for JCMB approval (once it resumes meetings). With no JCMB approval, there is no implementation.

It also should be noted that the UNDP project, Making Budgets & Aid Work (MBAW), has taken over the surviving elements of the ANDP and incorporated them into its own mandate. This was not discussed extensively by most key informants but no one criticized this arrangement. There was a feeling that if the problems noted above were dealt with, the fact that “ANDS process” activities (now under the MBAW) continue represented a chance that the complex effort might finally reach fruition. If so, that would give meaning to the historic consulting process that took place in all 34 provinces and provided the content and impetus for the original Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

Component 3, on M&E, also provoked a number of responses, ranging from defense of the present system of split responsibilities by the winning entity, the MoF’s Strategic Implementation General Directorate, to worries and criticisms of duplication of efforts and/or gaps. This is a problem that merits attention sooner than later – i.e., before NPPs actually reach implementation (and funding) in significant number. By then, the demands on both parts of the divided M&E system might be much greater. They may be under pressure to stay on top of a growing number of projects. Under those circumstances, potential problems with verification may not be addressed, but, rather, left by the wayside.

Already, in fact, the M&E capacity in the MoF unit seems to be fully engaged. Their list of responsibilities is long: they track the Kabul process, ANDS reports, annual reports, MDG reports, midterm reviews, benchmarks and more.

The question arises: Is there any way of getting beyond acceptance of the quantitative and qualitative data from a line Ministry under the present bifurcated system? A small, independent study that tries to verify the output data in several randomly chosen reports might be very revealing and well worth the investment. But the stress here is on independent.

To take a hypothetical example, let's say that the Strategic Implementation M&E people receive a report from Ministry X that the "widgets"⁵ had arrived during the reporting period and were performing just fine. Many unknowns remain about this claim. First, were the widgets actually purchased? Were they of the quality and quantity called for? Was the price in line with prevailing prices for that type/quality of widget purchased in that quantity? Were they delivered on time and if not, when did they arrive? If they were late, did their tardiness cause problems with subsequent operations that were dependent on X number of good quality widgets being in place by a certain date? Were the widgets reliable or did they cause problems in subsequent operations/equipment when they failed? The number of questions is greater than would be routinely addressed in a quick report on "deliverables" by a line Ministry – or cross-checked by the M&E unit in the MoF located in central Kabul. But some spot-checking/verification system should be considered if the small study (suggested above) that would check the information in randomly selected quantitative and qualitative reports from line Ministries reveals anomalies.

Then there is the question of the 900 field staff of the MoEc's Design and Coordination General Directorate – would they actually have the time and resources to do field checking even if 100% of the M&E system had been housed in the MoEc – and the project design had been flexible enough, and had sufficient resources, to add their services to its initiative?

The reason that M&E is so important is that it is so frequently the Achilles heel of development projects – when there is no good M&E system in place, no one ever learns what worked and what did not in a given project or program, so the same errors get repeated again and again.

To turn to the context of Afghanistan, a strong focus on M&E is also necessary because the country has been beset by corruption – including Government corruption. So there are reasons to be skeptical of a system that is described as "monitoring" but acts more as a data repository and never sends anyone out to the field to verify any of the reports of "deliverables" that it processes. More generally, improving M&E might provide an opportunity to once again consult with sub-national officials, one of the most important successes of the ANDS participatory process. Consulting the officials who deal with the

⁵ "Widgets" are used in economics to stand in for any product.

on-the-ground situation in the poorer, rural areas of the nation should enhance not only M&E but also the relevance and feasibility of the NPPs. And there are ever less expensive ways of doing this, e.g., Skype and other forms of information technology.

Finally, some people did address outputs in the case of Component 3. Output 3.1 states: “The ANDS Secretariat develops and implements an effective monitoring system to measure the goals and achievements, and to inform policy.” Opinions as to whether this was being – or going to be – achieved varied. They split predictably among MoF vs. MoEc informants, with each defending their own system and expressing skepticism about the other.

Output 3.2, “The Ministry of Economy develops and implements a sound research and evaluation agenda,” had precisely the same pattern of pro and con answers as did Output 3.1. The last Output, 3.3, “the Central Statistics Office improves data collection capabilities,” did not inspire feelings of optimism among those who commented. Furthermore, as noted above, the Results Framework contemplated providing technical assistance to the CSO only late in the project: 3.2.2 states, “Data required to measure ANDS goals and achievements per indicators outlined acquired at both nation [sic] and sub-national levels by the 4th year of the project.” Since the project ended after only 15 months, the CSO’s capabilities may well remain an issue that negatively affects the work of the M&E unit in the MoEc. Might there be other mechanisms or vehicles for improving the capacity of the country’s Central Statistics Office? It would seem to be germane to many more users than the M&E people embedded in the MoEc.

Component 4, Strategic Communication, has been planned for some time but hasn’t quite gotten off the ground. During an interview with a MoF official, he noted that in the past they didn’t have capacity in communications. There were only 1-2 people working in this area, he said. But now, he added, there are signs of progress. For example, the official noted that they were on the verge of finally inaugurating the ANDS website. It was inactive for the last 2-3 years, he explained. But someone had just been hired in hopes of getting the website operating during the month of August. In addition, he noted, the Strategic Implementation Directorate of the MoF already has designed a newsletter in three languages (English, Dari, and Pashto). It will be in electronic format only and is currently set to be emailed to all Government of Afghanistan employees.

All this is good but it is not the broad dissemination one would think necessary to get the message of the ANDS and progress in the NPPs out to the length and breadth of the land, vs. primarily to government and urban elites. Their website will not be for the casual browser. It will contain recent reports, including the July 26 Synthesis Paper that is reviewed below. It’s hardly light reading for a farmer in the provinces – and how many

of them have access to the Internet? There was no mention if, aside from the proposed newsletter, the documents available on the website would be in all three languages.

The official did state, however, that they hope to expand to different audiences in the future, using TV, radio, newspapers, etc. Presumably, these would focus largely on popular audiences and would be presented in Dari and Pashto. But it remained unstated as to whether there would be a broad-based attempt to reach out beyond Kabul, to the 77% of the population that remains rural and mostly illiterate. Nor was anything said about gender-sensitive targeting and messages. Women have much higher illiteracy rates than men, especially in the rural areas, and might not be reached by a campaign that did not target them specifically with respect to both media chosen and content to be delivered. Since one of the biggest surprises – and achievements – of the consultative process undertaken during the ANDS was the high levels of female participation, an effective strategic communications strategy should not be gender-blind.

Adding up all of the preceding, we can say:

1. The NPPs are complex endeavors but they are, in fact, far more specific than the 17 ANDS sectors from which they were derived. Their Cluster Coordinators link Ministries involved in an NPP. But some Coordinators are much stronger than others and they oversee a group of Ministries that are, on average, fairly strong. The implication of the finding is that, given the complexity of the NPP/Cluster process, ways to improve the weaker Ministries and Clusters in order to facilitate getting to the implementation phase should be seriously considered. Hopefully, there will be a way to do so sooner than was contemplated in the Results Framework of the ANDP, which did not provide TA until an NPP was already being implemented.
2. The best example of Cluster strength involves Education (see Box).
3. The rolling 100 day action plans sound like a good idea but their quantitative and qualitative summaries of deliverables are sent in as fact and seem to be accepted as fact by the MoF's Strategic Implementation people. To repeat, there is no independent verification that the reports are accurate (and there may be incentive to fudge). The implication of this finding is that an independent assessment should be strongly considered.
4. The Strategic Communication plan is still not off the ground but at least it now has a webmaster. Also, there are plans for a newsletter for Government employees and to upload documents in Dari and Pashto as well as English. That's a start. But the question remains about how to make it truly Strategic Communication, i.e., more relevant and accessible to the great majority of Afghans – to rural and illiterate people, and to women as well as men.

5. Also, although this is an issue not in any component, the problem of UNDP's cumbersome bureaucracy was brought up by a number of key informants. As one put it, "the big problem is delay, delay, delay." Another stated that it was one of the major contributing factors to why it took two years to finish the ANDS. Although there were many positive comments about UNDP, the negative ones dealt mainly with bureaucratic delays.
6. And all this assumes that the external dispute between the IMF and the GoA that has led to the suspension of JCMB meetings – and NPP approvals – will soon be resolved.

The final topic in this Findings section will be the presentation of up-to-date data (July 26, 2011) on the status of the 22 NPPs. Since the NPPs are so central, a little additional background on their genesis and purpose is presented here.

As noted, the NPPs made their debut at the Kabul Conference in July 2010, during the life of the ANDP Project. Significantly, they were conceptualized against a budget ceiling figure provided by the MoF, based on expected donor inputs in the coming three years, in line with the timeline to the planned 2014 transition/international armed forces withdrawal (Synthesis Report, p. 3).

The Synthesis Report goes on to state the following:

At the Kabul Conference, donors endorsed the NPP concepts *in full or in principle*, the latter contingent on full development. The Government committed to submitting 100 day progress reports to monitor results [note: these became the raw material for the MoF M&E Output monitoring]. Donors, for their part, committed to align 80% of their funds to the NPPs within the next two years – whether on-budget through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), or off-budget. They also committed to provide 50% of these funds on-budget....Lastly, in May 2011, a workshop was [held through JCMB and the Transition Commission] to outline linkages between NPPs and Transition. Consensus was reached that NPPs lay the foundations for transformation, and as such, are the framework for socio-economic and governance transition (pp. 3-4).

In short, there is a lot riding on the NPPs, the new incarnation of the ANDS. Concomitantly, the clock is ticking on the transition – and the withdrawal of international armed forces – that is supposed to be complete in 2014. Indeed, the NPPs now are looked to as the vehicle for development. Accordingly, achievement is measured in a 100-day timeframe and the focus is on fairly narrow and manageable deliverables, not broad outcomes. Strangely, although the Synthesis Report stresses that work is needed to strengthen and deepen the accountability system, the focus is on better analysis of quantitative data: verification is not mentioned at all.

Be that as it may, the Synthesis Report divides the 22 NPPs into four categories:

- Two have been **endorsed** by the JCMB process. These are the “Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program” from the Security Cluster and the “Financial and Economic Reforms” from the Governance Cluster. That means they’re ready to get funding and get started.
- Seven more are in the limbo known as “Ready to Endorse.” Until the JCMB meets again – which it won’t until the IMF agreement is in place – they stay at the starting gate.
 - The seven include one Governance Cluster program, “Human Rights and Civic Responsibility,” and three of the six NPPs under the Human Resource Development Cluster: “Education for All,” “Expanding Opportunities for Higher Education,” and “Capacity Development to Accelerate NAPWA (National Action Plan for Women) Implementation.” They also include two of the four projects in the Infrastructure Development Cluster: “National Regional Resource Corridor Initiative” and “National Extractive Industry Excellence Program.” Finally, the seventh is the Private Sector Development Cluster’s “Integrated Trade and SME Support Facility.”
- The third category is “Consults Held/In Principle Endorsement,” and it includes six more NPPs.
- The lowest category is “First Draft Received or Still Under Development” – i.e., the back of the pack. Seven more NPPs are still in this preliminary state even after all the intensive effort that has gone into the NPPs for more than a year.

In summary, what we have here is a picture of uneven progress and no program that’s apparently targeting the weaker Ministries for urgent TA so as to get the remaining NPPs into the warm glow of “Endorsed.” (As discussed in the Box, the Minister of Education is applauded by donor key informants for his efforts to beef up the weakest partner (Labor) in his Cluster.)

Conclusions

1. There has been progress and the ANDS remains the grand blueprint even though its modality has been changed to the NPPs.
2. Still, there have been almost no NPP results (aside from some pre-existing projects). Some informants said that the situation is becoming critical – people are exasperated or worse.
3. The uneven capabilities of Ministries within a Cluster continues to hold up some NPPs – technical assistance (TA) is urgently needed – but under what project or rubric?
4. Although there is nothing in the ProDoc or workplans to require it, there seems to be no verification capacity (or sense of urgency) in the MoF M&E staff, as those 100 day reports keep rolling in – with data provided by the line Ministries. But since UNDP is supporting those efforts under the MBAW project, it might be worth it for UNDP to launch a small, independent study to make sure that the line Ministry data is valid. If the independent study shows cause for concern about data accuracy, it would seem necessary

to consider methods for checking those data. At that point, it might also be worth looking into the suggestion that there are 900 MoEc staff people all around the country who might be enlisted to help verify Output data provided by the line Ministries – as well as considering how, if at all, such assistance may be tapped by the surviving components of the ANDP now working under the MBAW umbrella.

5. Due to the early termination of the ANDP, the technical assistance that was supposed to be given to the Central Statistics Office late in the project did not take place but there apparently is a need for it in order to beef up the M&E efforts vis-à-vis Outcomes and Impact, the two tasks assigned to the MoEc M&E unit. How this might be done also should be considered.
6. It is clearly beyond the scope of the MBAW project that now houses the surviving components of the ANDP to resolve the IMF crisis. And until the IMF-Government dispute is settled, which would permit the JCMB to meet again, the seven NPPs that are now considered ready for approval cannot move forward. This represents roughly one-third of the NPPs. Considering the level of public disillusionment about the Government's ability to provide services and help to its citizens, it can only be hoped that a resolution is reached soon.
7. If the ANDP's Strategic Communications component (#4) is in fact starting to make progress (e.g., it has a webmaster), then ways to reach beyond Government employees should be explored. In particular, disseminating information about any progress in the ANDS/ANDP/NPP process in Dari and Pashto and by audiovisual means would seem to be a priority. Reaching rural and illiterate people, women as well as men, would require targeting beyond the proposed website and does seem to be something that is within the scope and mandate of the ANDP and its surviving components.

Recommendations

A. Three general recommendations:

1. It is recommended that future projects aimed at guiding development strategies and programming be less complex than the ANDP (which is only somewhat less complex than the original ANDS). This recommendation is based on the lesson learned from a half-century of development that complex projects tend to be especially problematic in countries like Afghanistan: poor, rural-majority nations with high illiteracy, ethnic heterogeneity, and conflict.
2. It is recommended that the budgets and timelines of complex projects (such as the ANDP) that rely on performance and cooperation from several Government entities that may have different interests, resources bases and levels of capacity and competence should be flexible enough to include funds and time for emergency technical assistance/remedial actions to bring lagging entities up to par before the achievements of the entire project are jeopardized.
3. It is recommended that in complex projects to be implemented in a wide range of geographic and security circumstances, such as the NPPs fostered under the ANDP, that there be frequent consultations between national-level Ministries and their Provincial counterparts, in order to assure that plans developed in Kabul offices are feasible in their areas.

B. Specific recommendations:

4. It is recommended that ways be found to provide additional technical assistance as quickly as possible to the weaker Clusters and Ministries that have fallen behind in finalizing their NPPs. Consider having successful Ministries provide a little TA from their own insider point of view on how to negotiate the NPP process.
5. It is recommended that the M&E problem receive attention in all its dimensions, from the possible duplication and gaps engendered by the splitting of M&E into MoF and MoEc units to the possible need to provide technical assistance to the CSO to buttress the MoEc M&E unit in its outcome and impact evaluations.
 - a. In the case of the output and deliverables data sent to the MoF M&E unit by the line Ministries, it is recommended that an independent field study be undertaken with a small random sample to verify the accuracy of the output and deliverables data sent to the MoF M&E unit by the line Ministries. If anomalies emerge, it is recommended that steps to check validity of data sent in by line Ministries be incorporated into the M&E system and that a wide variety of suggestions about how to do this be explored (e.g., the possible use of some MoEc field staff, etc.).
6. It is recommended that consideration be given to making the Strategic Communication unit that is just starting to function in the MoF less top-down oriented, and having it

include audiovisual outreach efforts in Dari and Pashto and, where needed, other languages – so that rural and illiterate people, and women as well as men, may be included in national dialog and get feedback at last about what their consultation process inputs have led to.

7. It is recommended that over and above the ANDS/ANDP/NPP process, a feasibility study of a National Planning Commission be carried out, as suggested by two highly placed key informants.

Lessons Learned

1. The legacy of the extremely elaborate ANDS continues to inform the ANDP/NPP process – and perhaps bedevil them because of its complexity and difficulties in operationalization; this seems to be another argument against very complex “super projects.”
2. It is especially important for complex projects to build flexibility into both their budgets and their timelines so that special technical assistance can be given to units that are falling behind.
3. This need for emergency TA for weaker units is further evidence for the notion that chains are as strong as their weakest links: the NPPs that are the most behind schedule are those that have one or more low-performing Ministries in their Cluster.
4. In the case of complex projects that are formulated in Kabul but will be implemented in far-flung sections of Afghanistan marked by highly variable geographic, security and socioeconomic conditions, it is essential to maintain frequent contact with the Provincial and other sub-national officials from each area – so that the local feasibility of each component can be taken into account and enough flexibility built into the project to handle such variation.

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 Programme and Support to
Afghanistan National Development
Strategy Projects**

Unit : Project Management

Project : ANDP

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 ANDP Support Project was a Nationally Implemented Project. It was Afghan-owned, led and driven, with management and control over budgetary decisions and expenditures in line with MoF/GoA guidelines, under the Head of Office of Deputy Minister for Policy, MoF.

The ANDP Project was the outline of a four-year program of assistance to the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in support of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The ANDS is the nation's country-wide strategy designed to promote security, governance and socio-economic development.

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

The strategy for the ANDP Support Project was to further enhance the capacity of the GoA and the Secretariat specifically to deliver security, governance and economic development outcomes. The Support Project was aimed at achieving this through continued nationalization of management efforts and strengthening the core institutions of the ANDS delivery system through provision of technical and operational support.

III. Functions / Key Results Expected

Summary of key functions:

- **Final evaluation of ANDP 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.
	At least 7 years relevant working experience with UN/UNDP or international/multilateral organizations in monitoring and

Experience:	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		
VII. Signatures- Post Description Certification			
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

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 00047111, 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 00047111, 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 ANDP

<p>UNDAF Outcome: government capacity to deliver services to the poor and vulnerable is enhanced</p> <p>Opportunities for decent work and income improved and diversified, especially for vulnerable groups</p>
<p>Intended Outcome as stated in the Country Programme Results Framework:</p> <p>Increased opportunities for income generation through the promotion of diversified livelihood, private sector development and public- private partnerships</p>
<p>Applicable MYFF Service Line:</p> <p>Goal: 1. Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty</p> <p>SL#1.1 MDG country reporting and poverty monitoring</p>
<p>Intended CPAP Output(s): Government has greater capacity to foster and enabling environment for poverty reduction and private sector development</p>
<p>CPAP Output(s) Indicator(s), baseline and benchmark</p> <p>Indicator: Enhanced capacity for formulation, Implementation of pro poor policies are in place</p>

Baseline: ANDS (2008-2013), MDG Afghanistan

ANDP SUPPORT PROJECT (ID will be assigned at a later date)				
Project outputs	Performance Indicator (baseline and benchmark)	Indicative Activities	Responsible Parties	Inputs
Component 1: ANDS STRUCTURAL SUPPORT				
1.1 ANDS Secretariat demonstrates increased capability to support IMCs/clusters, GCC and JCMB to define and achieve initiatives of the GOA	Project director and core secretariat staff capabilities are improved, as evidenced through capacity plans Budget and Aid Coordination Unit Increases capacity of DAD and ability to track donor versus core budgets, as evidenced by percentage increase in donor aid money tracked through the system M&E Unit	1.1.1 Recruit appropriate TA for support of ANDS Head	ANDS Secretariat	Technical and Financial Support in the form of Senior Technical Advisor, International TAs in key units and National program STAs
		1.1.2 Assess existing Secretariat structure and reformulate as required	ANDS Head A ANDS Head	
		1.1.3 Draw up TORs, tender for identified ANDS unit Support, recruit	A ANDS Head	
		1.1.4 Provide key unit support on Budget, etc. to deliver outputs	ANDS Head with UNDP	
		1.1.5 Submit and review quarterly results for finance advance; transfer funds	ANDS Head	
		1.1.6 Schedule required meetings for		Operational Costs for the Secretariats in the Ministries

	<p>develops national indicators, functional M&E system implemented from center to provinces, as expressed through final evaluation that tracks provincial to national indicators</p> <p>Percentage of meetings of JCMB, GCC and CEAP conducted as scheduled, with clear agendas and reports delivered in a timely fashion</p>	JCMB, GCC etc.		of Economy, Finance, JCMB and GCC
1.2 Mid-Term Review conducted and produces reputable report	<p>Mid-Term review received and widely accepted by the international community as legitimate</p> <p>Mid-Term review either endorses existing prioritization plans, or provides a blueprint for</p>	<p>1.2.1 Design tender document for firm or consultants to perform work</p> <p>1.2.2 Recruit and ensure timely arrival in country</p> <p>1.2.3 Provide operational support to enable the team to achieve goals</p> <p>1.2.4 Receive final report, and disseminate among stakeholders</p> <p>1.2.5 Define possible revisions for GCC to consider</p>	ANDS Secretariat Support by UNDP	<p>Institutional support to tender for firm or consultants</p> <p>Operational and logistical support to bring external firms into UNDP</p>

	change that is followed over the subsequent years			
1.3 Final evaluation conducted	Final Evaluation received and widely accepted as a determination of efficiency of ANDS, and recommendations and next steps for a follow –on document	<p>1.3.1 Design tender document for firm or consultants to perform work</p> <p>1.3.2 Recruit and ensure timely arrival in country</p> <p>1.3.3 Provide operational support to enable team to achieve goals</p> <p>1.3.4 Receive final report ,and disseminate among stakeholders</p> <p>1.3.5 Define possible revisions for GCC to consider</p>	ANDS Secretariat Support by UNDP	<p>Institutiona l support to tender for firm or consultants</p> <p>Operational and logistical support to bring external firms into UNDP</p>
COMPONENT 2: ANDS PRIORITIZATION and IMPLEMENTATION				

2.1 ANDS is prioritized through the clusters framework and endorsed by the new cabinet and donor community	<p>ANDS re-prioritized plan completed against cluster</p> <p>General donor endorsement of plans</p> <p>Percentage of plan funded by donors against targets set</p>	<p>2.1.1 Conduct sensitization and perform gap analysis, bankable programme analysis for prioritization plan</p> <p>2.1.1 Recruit facilitation team in -country</p> <p>2.1.1 conduct roundtables to prepare for full planning session; disseminate analysis and information</p> <p>2.1.1 Conduct offsite-planning session with cluster heads, resulting in final products</p> <p>2.1.1 Define outputs and information for transfer to president's office and strategic communications department</p>	ANDS Secretariat, with support from UND	Pro- bono consultants or staff and operational and logistical support to enable their facilitation
2.2 ANDS implementation is in line with prioritization plan, leads to more results based outcomes in the short-term and medium-term	<p>Percentage of ANDS plans per cluster that are implemented as scheduled</p> <p>Percentage of key deliverables in the short and medium term realized</p> <p>Targets set in plan, against those achieved and evaluation</p>	<p>2.2.1 work with CTAP to source technical assistants to bankable programs</p> <p>2.2.1 Support cluster heads to implement plans in ministries, through ongoing coordination, regular TA, M&E and budgetary support</p> <p>2.2.1 Conduct six month reviews against plans, with indicators and revise as needed</p>		

	results that define effectiveness at end of programme			
COMPONENT3: MONITORING and EVALUATION				
3.1 The ANDS secretariat develops and implements an effective monitoring system to measure the goals and achievements , and to inform policy	System designed and implemented by the third year of the project, as evidenced by evaluation assessments, focus discussions with provinces and ministries using the system	3.1.1 Conduct assessment needs for systems 3.1.2 Conduct roundtable to synthesize the multiple assessments 3.1.3 Develop common framework for implementation and resource by donor community 3.1.4 Determine technical or operational support required	ANDS Secretariat, MoEc specifically with DFID consultant	TBD- Technical and operation support
3.2 The Ministry of Economy develops and implements a sound research and evaluation agenda	Research and evaluation agenda developed and endorsed by donor community Evaluation of line ministries, process evaluation for results based management occurs	3.2.1 Conduct assessment to develop research and evaluation needs by consultants overseen by ANDS Head 3.2.2 Develop Common framework and resource 3.2.3 Determine technical or operation support required	ANDS Secretariat, MoEC specifically with DFID consultants	TBD- Technical and operational support

3.2 The Central Statistics Office improves data collection capabilities	Data required to measure ANDS goals and achievements per indicators outlined, acquired at both national and sub-national levels by the 4 th year of the project	3.3.1 Conduct assessment to define data collection support need 3.3.2 Determine technical and operational support required	ANDS Secretariat, MoEc specifically with DFID consultants	TBD- Technical and operational support
COMPONENT 4: ANDS STATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS				
4.1 Enhanced capacity in the ANDS Secretariat to deliver effective messages on ANDS goals and achievements	<p>Staff capacity at all levels improves over time, measured through pre- and post-assessments and evaluations</p> <p>Percentage increase in messages on ANDS achievements by GoA, using GMIC or ISAF stats when available</p> <p>Population indicates more name recognition of the ANDS over time</p>	<p>4.1.1 Conduct assessment on strategic communication needs for short term and long term within the secretariat units, and MoF/ MoEc</p> <p>4.1.2 Secure staffing and equipment needed, as well as operational support</p> <p>4.1.3 Facilitate training on key messaging and modalities</p> <p>4.1.4 Develop long terms plans and begin implementation</p>	<p>ANDS Secretariat/ UNDP</p> <p>GMIC with ANDS Secretariat</p>	<p>Financial Support for international TA 5-6</p> <p>National staff over a two year period to be phased in to core budget</p> <p>Training support costs</p>

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 and international NGOs such as CARE International. Moreover, she also has worked directly for some governments, such as Venezuela and Thailand.

ANNEX F: Additional Methodology-related Document

RAPID APPRAISAL: FAST, CHEAP AND VALID?⁶

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,

⁶ 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.

on the negative side, a random sample survey may have intrinsic methodological drawbacks for 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.⁷

⁷ 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.⁸

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.⁹)

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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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).

“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