Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development in Afghanistan

Chapter 2: SECTOR ISSUES
Urban development, Water & Irrigation, Agriculture, Nutrition, Health, Education

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Acronyms

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AD	Agriculture Department (Provincial level)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGCHO	Afghanistan Geodesy & Cartography Head Office
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
BPHS	Basic Package for Health Facilities
CSANDS	Civil Society ANDS
CAWSS	Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage
CBS	Community Based Schools
CDC	Community Development council
CFW	Cash For Work
CHC	Comprehensive Health Centre
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DEO	District Education Office
DH	District Hospital
EC	European Commission
EIRP	Emergency Irrigation Rehabilitation Programme
EPHS	Essential Package for Hospital Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFW	Food For Work
GAA	German Agro Action
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
GWT	Global war against terror
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HR	Human Resources
HSF	Human Security Trust Fund
I-ANDS	Interim Afghanistan National development Strategy
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ID	Irrigation Department
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KRBP	Kunduz River Basin Programme
LRRD	Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development
LTERA	Land Titling and Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan
MAAH	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry
MAAHF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food
MEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MMI	Ministry of Mines and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture

MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoRR	Ministry of Refugees & Repatriation
MOT	Ministry of Transport
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MUD	Ministry of Urban Development
MUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NDF	National Development Framework
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NPP	National Priority Programme
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
PCB	Provincial Coordination Body
PED	Provincial Department of Education
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHCC	Provincial Health Coordination Committee
PND	Public Nutrition Department
PNO	Public Nutrition Officer
PPA	Partnership-based Agreement
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
PRR	Priority Reform and Restructuring
PPHD	Provincial Public Health Department
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
RAMP	Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Programme
RBA	River Basin Authority
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SFC	Supplementary feeding centre
SMC	School Management Committee
TA	Technical Assistance
TEP	Teacher Education Programme
TFC	Therapeutic Feeding Centre
TFU	Therapeutic Feeding Unit
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNEP	United Nations for Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations for Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNO	University of Nebraska at Omaha
UNOPS	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USI	Universal Salt Iodization
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WM	Water Management
WSS	Water Supply & Sanitation
WUA	Water Users Association

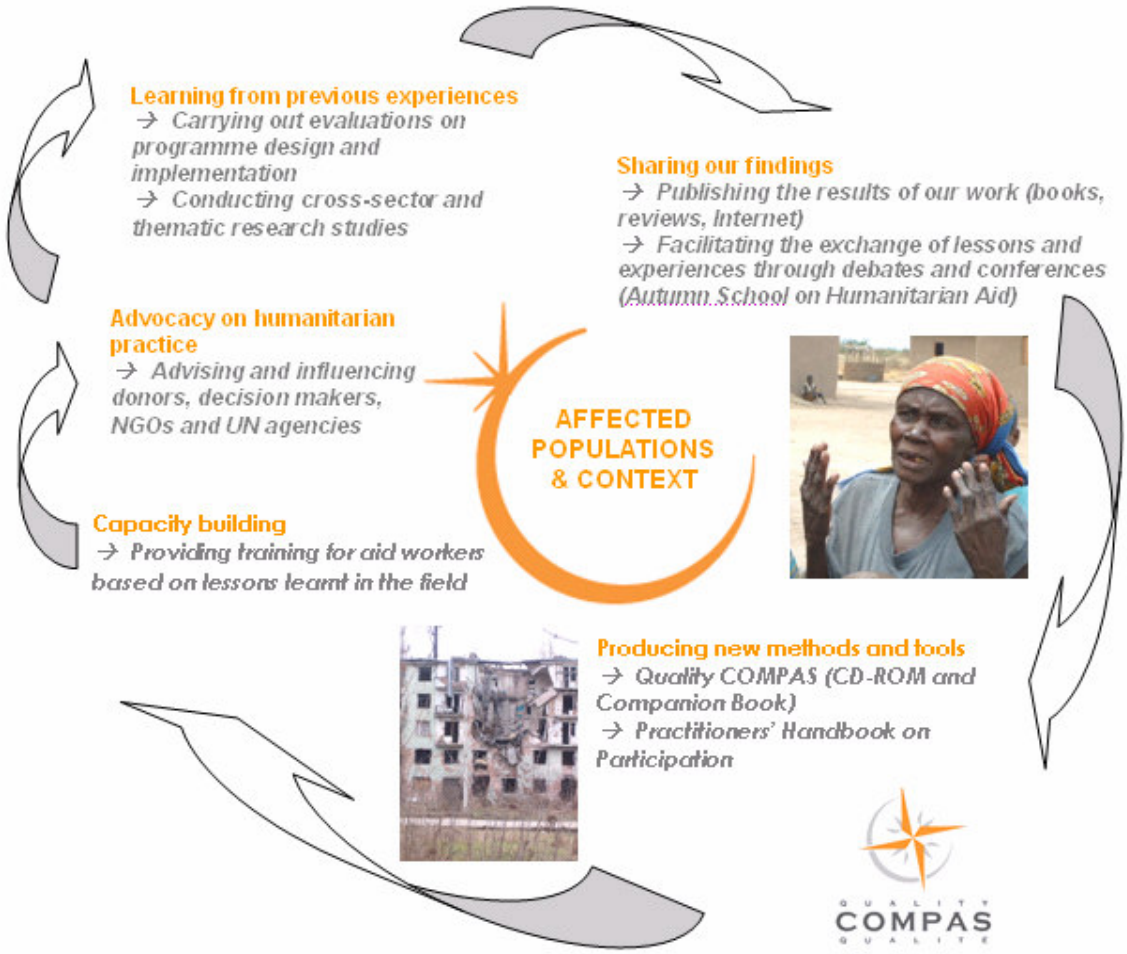
1 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Short presentation of Groupe URD

Groupe URD is a French research institute whose main goal is to: **Improve quality of humanitarian practices through debate, research, evaluation, capacity building, training and lobbying.** Groupe URD's members include numerous development and emergency relief actors, academics and training institutions.

Groupe URD's main activities are evaluation, research and training, in line with the collective learning cycle (see below).
International solidarity organisations are now fully aware of the dual responsibility they have to affected populations and donors in ensuring quality in their interventions. Groupe URD operates a collective learning cycle, which provides support for aid agencies engaged in this quality assurance exercise. The overall objective of these activities is to ensure continuous improvement of the aid delivered to affected populations.

Figure 1: The learning cycle – Groupe URD



1.2 A brief presentation of the LRRD programme

One of Groupe URD's main programmes in Afghanistan is the two-year EC funded "Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development" programme.
The objective of this programme is to draw lessons from current experience to inform policies and programmes for NGOs, donors, international agencies and governmental institutions.

The LRRD programme focuses on six sectors:

- Urban Development
- Water / Irrigation
- Agriculture
- Nutrition
- Health
- Education

1.2.1 Research, Evaluation and Training

The programme has three main components:

1- Learning and sharing lessons through iterative multi-sector reviews. This component includes (i) an in-depth review for each sector, which are currently under completion, and (ii) this report, which is based on a three-week multi sector field review.

The process of "learning and sharing lessons" started with the Quality Project missions (supported by ECHO, the French Government and Swiss Development Committee). In July-August 2002, January-February 2003 and August 2003, a group of experts from Groupe URD came to Afghanistan to conduct multi-sector reviews in the aforementioned sectors, except for the water sector which was introduced in 2005 and the education sector which was introduced in 2006. These field missions enabled Groupe URD to closely monitor the evolution of the aid sector in Afghanistan and improve its understanding of current trends taking place within the humanitarian aid system.

2- Increasing knowledge and experience by carrying out applied research in urban and rural settings in specific fields (including food and economic security).
Applied research usually focuses on key issues identified during the learning and sharing lessons process.
Junior experts from Groupe URD conducted five-month research in Afghanistan on:
Five different agrarian systems throughout Afghanistan;
One small city, Bamiyan; one middle-sized city, Jalalabad; and one large city, Kabul.
These studies provided Groupe URD with a good picture of Afghanistan's urban and rural sectors. They were carried out in partnership with NGOs who had shown interest in incorporating applied research into their programmes from the outset.

3- Contributing to the capacity building efforts of relevant ministries and national NGOs through training on farming diagnosis methods and quality assurance.
The main findings of these components are regularly presented in workshops and conferences. In this way, Groupe URD hopes to share and discuss the information collected with the widest range of stakeholders possible.

1.2.2 The team

The LRRD team consists of the following members

- Four specialists from Groupe URD in charge of the Agriculture, Nutrition, Urban Development and Education sectors
- Two independent consultants for the Health and Water sectors
- Three junior experts for the urban development sector and seven junior experts in the rural development sector
- A project coordinator permanently based in Kabul
- Two translators and one logistician
- Backstopping support and guidance from Groupe URD's headquarters in France

1.3 The multi sector review

During the three-week mission, the LRRD team travelled extensively in different provinces.

1.3.1 Objectives and methodology

Main objectives of this three-week field mission were to:

- Develop a thorough understanding of the evolution of aid interventions and strategies; (see report on cross cutting issues)
- Identify common trends and relevant issues and analyse them from a cross sector perspective; (see report on cross cutting issues)
- Identify the current opportunities and challenges pertaining to each sector; (presented in this report)
- Stimulate debate with agencies and key stakeholders through a workshop organised at Groupe URD's office in Kabul on 24 April 2006.

Data collection was based on a qualitative approach:

- Before the mission, each expert reviewed relevant available documents;
- A common analysis framework was elaborated prior to the field trip
- Regular meetings gathering all team members took place during the field trip to crosscheck information and share preliminary findings, and to analyse cross-cutting issues and multi-sector comparisons
- Interviews with national and local authorities, donors, aid workers from local and international NGOs, representatives from the UN, ICRC and the private sector were conducted in Kabul and the different provinces visited; ensuring a balanced representation of the different stakeholders;
- Visits to a number of projects took place enabling the team to make their observations.

1.3.2 The itinerary

It is important to take into account the limitations the team had to cope with during the mission. It was clear from the beginning that it would be difficult to take into account many specificities of Afghanistan due to:

- Time constraints: The three-week time frame was too short for such a large scale mission. This meant that the team had, in some instances, to adjust field visits.
- Access constraints: The mission took place in April, with persisting difficulties to access certain areas due to snow and unopened roads.
- Security constraints: Given the instability prevailing in a number of provinces, the review did not capture the reality of the southern part of the country.

The selection for the provinces took into account the following criteria: Diversity in terms of culture, geographical situation, landscape and economy. Most of these provinces were visited during previous field missions in 2002 and 2003 which allowed the team to get a comprehensive understanding of the evolutions.

The provinces visited were the following (see map 1)

- Kabul
- Bamiyan
- Samangan
- Balkh
- Baghlan
- Kunduz
- Takhar
- Nangahar
- Wardak
- Ghazni

Figure 2: Itinerary of the field mission

1.4 Afghanistan 2006: hopes and fears

In April 2006 when the multi-sector mission was underway, the political situation was full of contrasts. Many processes that are being implemented simultaneously are indeed driving the country in opposite directions.

1.4.1 Achievements and positive processes

There are very positive processes:

- Successful presidential and parliamentary elections showed the rest of the world that commitment to building democracy is not in vain. The Afghan people, men and women alike, walked for hours in harsh terrain to cast their ballot papers, despite Taliban threats. The numerous assassinations and damage inflicted on voting stations did not succeed in breaking the will of the population to express their views on the future.

- The end of the Bonn Process and start of the London process mark the end of a first phase of International Community commitment. The scope of renewed pledges and the rapidity with which decisions were made at the London Afghanistan Compact meeting are indications that Afghanistan has not yet been relegated to budgetary history. The still resolute engagement of the International Community to support the security sector shows how important the stabilisation of Afghanistan is at the highest strategic level.

- In many sectors, there are clear indications of an increased capacity of the Afghan authorities. This is the result of both a sustained commitment to capacity building by many international actors, and a strong desire by Afghan authorities for ownership of institutions and policy-making. Yet, this improvement is not advancing at an equal pace in all sectors and at all levels. It is a phenomenon that remains largely restricted to Kabul as a result of the presence of many expatriate consultants with advisory roles at high levels in ministries. It has only recently begun to percolate down to the lower levels of central administration and to the provinces. In rural areas, especially at the district level, capacity in general and related absorption capacity are often very limited.

1.4.2 Negatives trends and concerns

However, there are a certain number of negative trends which are a cause for great concern:

- While large parts of the South and East remain grey zones largely uncontrolled by the Kabul government, growing insecurity is progressively encroaching on areas that were previously calm: The North is becoming increasingly affected by this worrying phenomenon and areas between Baghlan and Jawzjan are now regularly plunged into the high insecurity syndrome, with roadside bombs, attacks on UN Convoys, physical eliminations of visible political figures and assassinations of NGO staff. Kabul itself is becoming more unstable and the risk of suicide bombers is on the rise. Are these time-bound distinctive processes or metastases from the GWT (Global War against Terror)? Only history will tell, but agencies have already raised their levels of vigilance.

- The ‘poppy issue’ remains a difficult problem. Is Afghanistan on the road to becoming a ‘narco-state’, as certain observers have declared? Or do opportunities exist to control poppy production and eliminate the traders and the transformers, who appear to so deeply-rooted in Taliban circles and the Central Asian mafia? The fact is that draconian measures, such as airborne spraying of herbicide or violent repressive interventions at the field level, run the inherent risk of sending the population straight into the net of military opponents.

- With the growing insecurity, the humanitarian space in which aid agencies (humanitarian and reconstruction work) are able to work is shrinking dramatically. There are areas where agencies are simply not prepared to work, unless they accept to pay a high price in terms of human life, or to bunker down (armed convoys, armoured vehicles, high protection zones, etc.). For some stakeholders, a solution for the growing pressure on humanitarian space is the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), where armed forces carry out humanitarian and reconstruction work. In contrast to the PRT school of thought, there are those who claim that this solution is more dangerous than the problem itself because it increases the confusion between the different stakeholders and their mandates. These stakeholders believe that the increasingly blurred distinction between armed forces and humanitarian actors is indeed one of the sources of high insecurity currently facing NGOs.

- While the international community applauded the election process that led to the creation of the Afghan parliament, Afghan civil society is raising many questions about the net outcome of these parliamentary elections. Indeed, although the political process may have intended to install “pro-government” forces at the provincial level, it actually enabled many former warlords to be elected, resulting in widespread disappointment: those who were guilty of causing so much trouble are now back in power.

This picture of contrasts provides an important starting point for the final year of the LRRD programme in its current form.

The new security situation will oblige Groupe URD teams to review their working methods and the way in which field research will be conducted.

After the shift from emergency to rehabilitation and development, we may well see the reverse process occurring. Is Afghanistan entering into the Fragile States category with the risk that negative trends may overcome positive ones? How will the aid sector adjust to these changes, especially to the impact on operational procedures (security, etc.)? These elements will require careful studying.

2 URBAN DEVELOPMENT

By Béatrice Boyer (bboyer@urd.org)

Five years after the massive deployment of international aid in Afghanistan, the challenges facing stakeholders involved in the reconstruction process are most keenly felt in urban contexts. Although people are still lacking basic necessities in rural contexts, the convergence of large numbers of people in towns and cities have resulted in worrying situations with the risk of social, economic and environmental imbalance. Urban centres have undergone several waves of destabilisation. Entire urban districts became important stakes in the war game and incurred considerable physical damage. Spatial disorganisation has now reached a critical point. This situation is partly the consequence of successive waves of people seeking refuge, settling spontaneously and spreading extensively in the proximity of urban centres. These new urban settlers include internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, refugees and landless families. Another key issue facing the urban sector is that because over time urban authorities gradually found their responsibilities being taken away from them, the administrative system is now completely overwhelmed as it does not have the necessary expertise to deal with these new spatial, social and economic contexts.

It is in this urban chaos that different stakeholders are trying to embark on reconstruction efforts: Afghan institutions, United Nations agencies, international donor agencies, non government organisations (NGOs), other international organisations and the emergence of the private sector.

Despite a relative stability, which was put to the test in Kabul in May 2006, the need for emergency relief is giving way to development issues. The institutional framework for urban issues is gradually being set up and is confronted with difficulties at numerous levels: organisational, economic, insufficient skills, legal or technical. Administrative frameworks are in the process of being designed but this is taking time.

This review presents the role of humanitarian agencies in urban areas during the transition period from emergency relief to the beginnings of urban reconstruction. In 2005, a law was passed regulating NGO activities with a view to clearing the aura of suspicion surrounding their interventions. The “NGO Law” has obliged organisations working in the construction industry to change their modes of operation. NGOs who were accustomed to managing all the processes within aid programmes now have to operate and reposition themselves within a complex system. During the field survey, different urban reconstruction programmes were examined and this helped (i) determine which phases and factors are responsible for inducing change, and (ii) identify new horizons.

Our interviews with institutional stakeholders and humanitarian actors highlighted the fact that there is a lack of overall vision and information on splintered and poorly understood urban sector. One of the issues that cropped up again and again was the uncertainty and conflict surrounding land tenure. This review examines the impact that these issues may have on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts and on intervention modalities, looking in particular at the spatial dimension. An in-depth urban sector review carried out for the LRRD research programme completes the information provided in this multi- and cross-sector review.

Finally this review with its insight from different actors, including managers of urban programmes, looks at opportunities for developing alternative approaches for reconstruction aid within the urban sector.

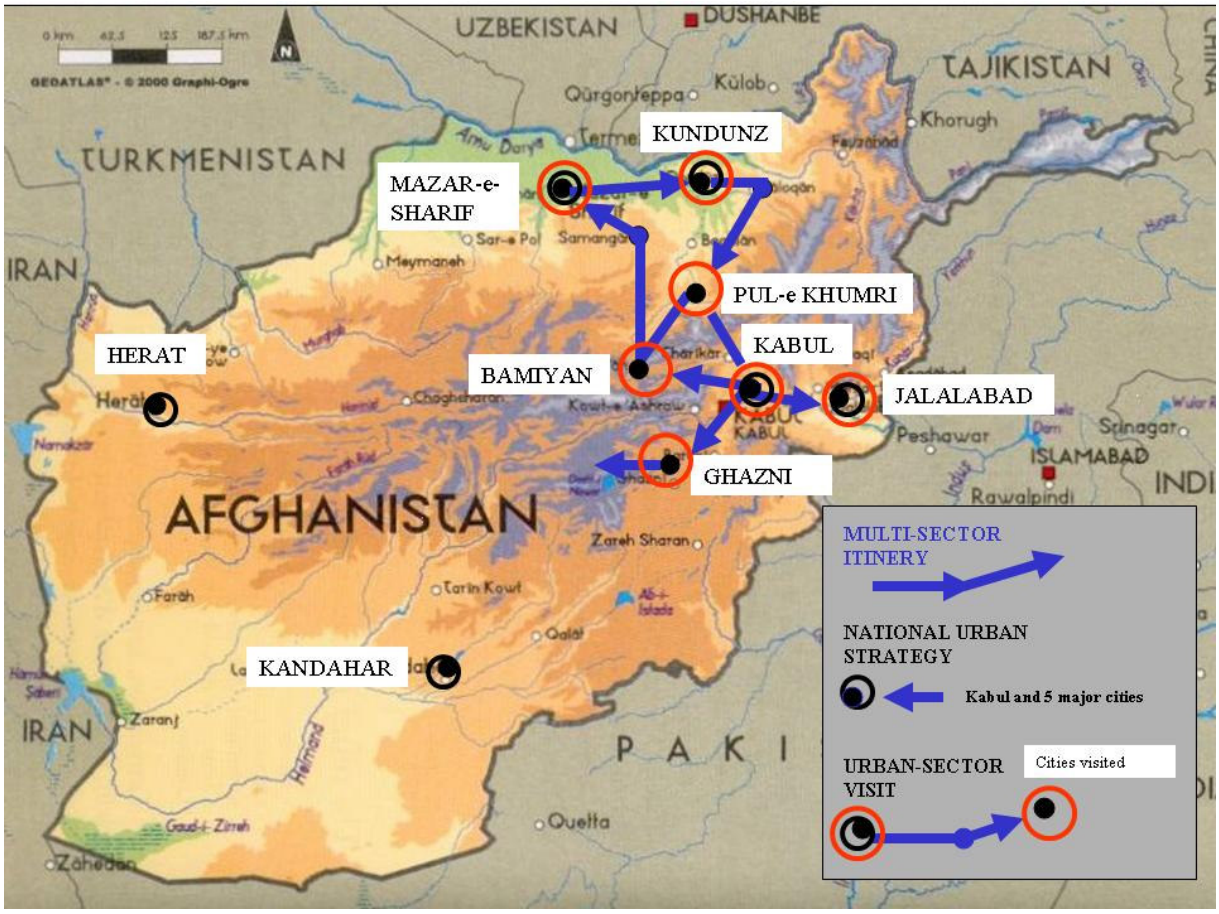
Itinerary of the field mission

The multi-sector research carried out for this review covered seven towns with diverse urban characteristics, in terms of strategic importance, demography, history, physical constraints, local stakes and national urban development strategies. The research team visited four towns, out of a total of six selected by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) for the national priority programme (NPP): Kabul, the capital and international metropolis, Mazar-e Sharif and Kunduz in the north and Jalalabad in the east. Time constraints meant that it was not possible to visit the other towns included in the national urban development strategy: Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south where insecurity is still high due to Taliban incursions. Bamiyan, which is predominantly a rural administrative territory rather than a town as such, has become the focus of international interest following the demolition of the statues of Buddha by the Taliban. Finally two middle-sized towns three hours drive to the north and south of Kabul, Pul-e Khumri and Ghazni, were chosen for their diversity in terms of physical and historical characteristics

Conditions meant that it was particularly difficult to access Bamiyan from Kabul and depart for Pul-e Khumri, and the mountain diversion between Kabul and Jalalabad increased travelling time. Since our visit, rehabilitation work on the direct route between Kabul and Jalalabad should have been completed with European Commission (EC) funding. Similarly, road networks between the other more easily accessible cities and Kabul have recently been restored with the help of international aid.

Presentation of cities visited

Figure 3: Cities visited during the multi-sector itinerary



Source: Groupe URD

Box 1: Towns visited during the multi-sector review

Kabul
Contact was made with numerous organisations working in the urban sector both at national, provincial and local levels: national authorities and national technical administration from the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH); Central Authority for Water Supply and Sanitation (CAWSS); Administration of Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO); Cadastral Department; Heads of international donor agencies World Bank (WB), European Commission (EC); Heads of UN agencies (UN-HABITAT, UNDP, UNESCO, UNAMA and UNOPS); several NGOs and international aid organisations such as the ICRC; private companies including Emergency Market Group (EMG). Kabul has already been subject to in-depth research as part of the LRRD project.

Bamiyan
Bamiyan, situated in a valley in the central mountainous region of Afghanistan, is reached following ten hours of driving along potholed dirt tracks. Bamiyan includes highly dispersed and disparate villages, some of which are old, others are recent refugee settlements. What unites these villages and new settlements is a large bazaar at the foot of Buddha sculptures. This territory presents no urban characteristics as such but a pressing need for coherent development. Spurred on by international interest, there are several issues at stake in Bamiyan's development involving numerous actors at different levels, according to an international survey on the Bamiyan Valley Master Plan[1]. A previous study carried out in 2005 as part of the LRRD research programme raised the following question about the urban development which is so sought after by local authorities in Bamiyan "*Is building a city an adequate response to Bamiyan's low level of development*?[2]". The field visit to Bamiyan focused on updating information on urban development issues that had already been identified in the 2005 study.

Mazar-e Sharif
The city of Mazar-e Sharif, centred around the Shrine, an imposing blue mosque, did not suffer any direct destruction. However its reputation as a highly respected religious centre attracted large numbers of refugees during the conflict period causing a demographic explosion. Spatial expansion within the administrative limits was encouraged by its location on a flat plain, and resulted in a situation of uncontrolled urban development. Almost 70% of the population does not have access to basic services: water electricity, etc. The ICRC, with its programme to provide drinking water networks and UN-HABITAT with national urban solidarity programmes are the main actors involved in urban rehabilitation besides projects for specific buildings.

Kunduz
Kunduz is a small provincial city situated at the centre of a fertile agricultural plain. Its position is strategic given its proximity to Tajikistan. Possibilities for developing bilateral commercial relations are closely monitored by local authorities and the private sector, as well as certain development organisations such as ACTED. However, basic services (water supply) are a long time coming to new settlements in the south. German Agro Action (GAA) is working with medium-sized towns in the region, long since overlooked by national strategies.

Pul–e Khumri
The city was built sixty years ago in a narrow valley on industrial activities using water from the river which runs the length of the valley. The Salang pass (2,900m) separates the town from the north of Kabul, protecting it from direct hits during the conflict. However

[1] UNESCO, *Bamiyan Valley Master Plan,* survey by RTWH University (Aachen in Germany).
[2] Groupe URD, *LRRD Project: survey, article and presentation* by Claire Mariani, Conference at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal husbandry and Food on 13 December 2005.

large numbers of people migrated to Pul-e Khumri seeking refuge from the insecurity, and the city has suffered from the indirect consequences of disorganisation of its urban infrastructure and major river pollution. The field visit focused on the development of a new town 15km north of Pul-e Khumri which is being built to house 7,000 refugee or IDP families.

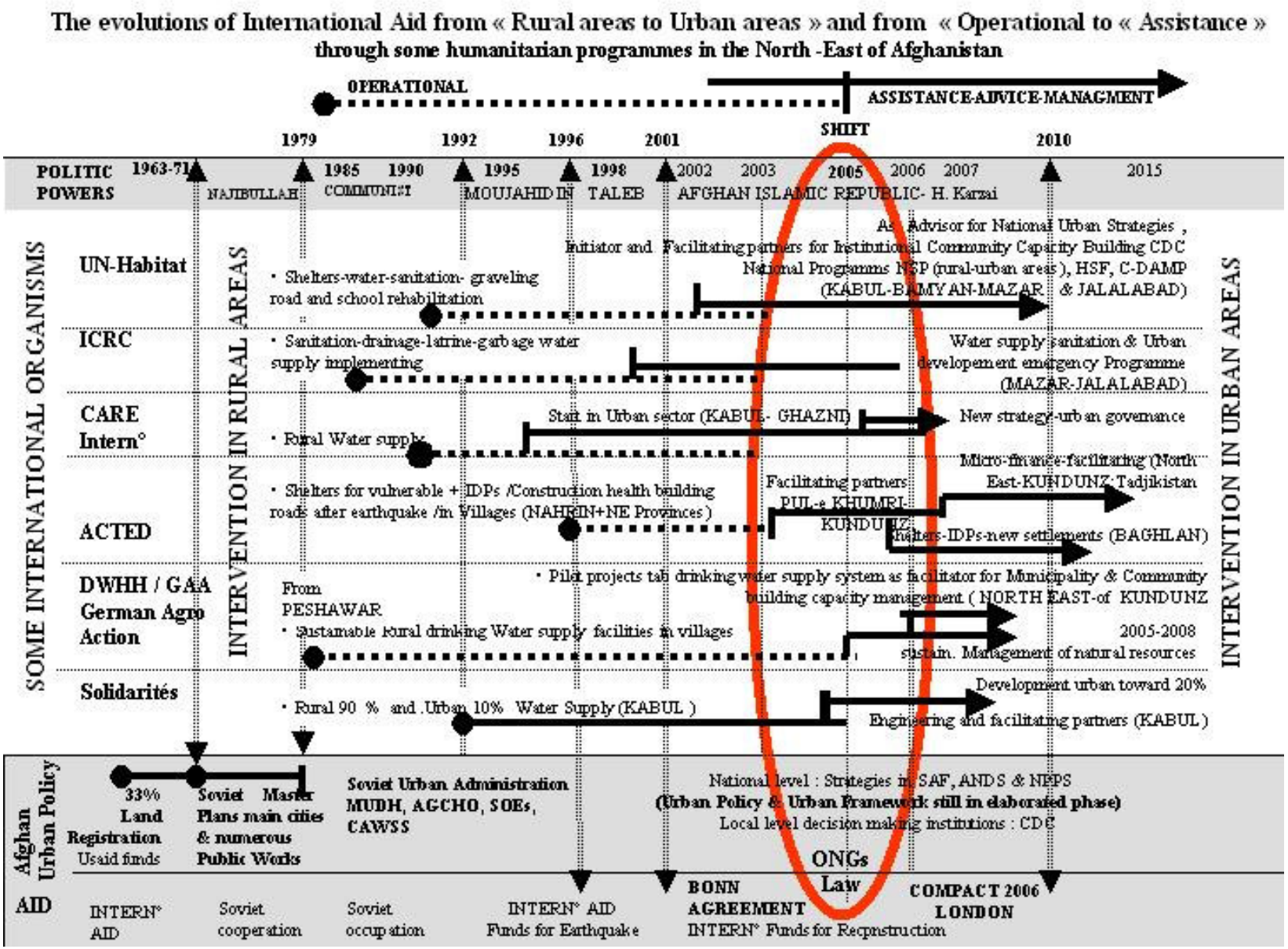
Ghazni
Situated south of Kabul, Ghazni, once the capital of an empire, is now a small provincial city with its citadel in ruins. Urban development has stagnated due to insufficient resources and lack of skills in the public sector, and overzealous investment by the private sector in certain areas of the city's development strategy. Despite rehabilitation work and building of water networks by the NGO CARE International, the municipality believes that it has not truly benefited from the positive impact of international aid.

Jalalabad
The fact that all traffic travelling between Pakistan, Kabul and the north of Afghanistan has to pass through Jalalabad and this proximity to Pakistan gives the city strategic importance. A research project on urban development in Jalalabad is currently being carried out as part of the LRRD programme.

2.1 The main evolution in humanitarian reconstruction programmes

The interviews conducted over the course of the multi-sector field itinerary shed light on how reconstruction programmes have evolved over time (see Figure 4). The sector underwent a significant number of changes over the course of 2005 and programmes were subsequently diversified. Several factors contributed to these sector changes.

Figure 4: Evolution in international aid in the urban sector



2.1.1 Diminishing habitat funds

Two factors prompted the drying up of funds for shelter programmes: widespread development of traditional self build projects and dislocation of needs towards cities with population migration.

2.1.1.1 Decrease in need for emergency shelter programmes

In 1991, the majority of habitat programmes were carried out in rural areas (e.g. UN-HABITAT) where many villages were raised to the ground during the past 25 years of war. Aid programmes peaked again after the 1996 earthquake in northeastern Afghanistan as international relief funding flooded in. After 2003, once the need for emergency shelter and essential rehabilitation work was reduced, aid programmes changed their focus from construction towards helping people self build. The overall objective being to provide support rather than assistance, habitat programmes helped people to (re)build themselves by providing logistical support and materials rather than a turnkey solution.

If in general, habitat programmes have ceased their rehabilitation activities, the GoA has launched a series of new housing projects with a view to absorbing or redeploying refugee or vulnerable populations. Large building sites are underway in northeastern Afghanistan and GoA has solicited the help of the international community in creating these new towns. For example, ACTED played a significant role in post-earthquake reconstruction activities with funding from ECHO, USAID, Swiss Peace Development and Turkish Government. Since ACTED has focused its activities on these new towns and has developed building expertise with large-scale programmes (e.g. assistance for building 1,000 houses in Pul-e Khumi).

2.1.1.2 Emerging needs for self build in new areas

At the same time, many cities in Afghanistan underwent a population explosion. Rural populations migrated in significant numbers towards urban areas. Years of conflict prompted internal displacement from city to city but also from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. From 2002-2003, and still to this day, refugees have been settling in the outskirts of cities. These newcomers, some of whom amassed a certain wealth during exile, have self built their homes using traditional methods which are specifically adapted to rural environments. No public works, such as electricity, water pipes, or sewage systems have been planned for these new remote suburbs and problems have arisen as a result, including pollution, insalubrity, etc. **Urgent needs for shelter have been replaced by urgent needs for creation or rehabilitation of public service systems**.

In order to respond to these needs, donor agencies and NGOs **adapted their programmes from building and rehabilitating houses to building urban services**. For example, in Mazar-e Sharif, UN-HABITAT, closed down all of its housing programmes in order to focus wholly on improving neighbourhood services.

2.1.2 Progressive winding down of water and sanitation programmes in cities

Aid programmes implemented by NGOs in urban environments were principally concerned with improving or creating drinking water supply systems and sanitation networks. However, the organisations involved are in the process of closing down their operations if they have not already done so. For example, CARE International has withdrawn from Ghazni having provided these services to certain neighbourhoods until 2003. The ICRC has had offices in Mazar-e Sharif since 1998 and was responsible for putting in place secondary water supply networks in several neighbourhoods with its *Urban Water Project.* However, ICRC HQ (Geneva) has decided to close down these operations. In Kabul, the NGO Solidarités has

been involved in digging wells and building water systems for community drinking fountains since 1995. It is continuing its efforts in water supply networks but intends to pay attention to changes in government and donor agency strategy before deciding whether to continue implementing these programmes.

These decisions are prompted by several factors:

- **Legal factors**: The application of the "NGO Law" 2005[3] has reduced NGO capacity as operations have been handed over to Afghan counterparts in accordance with the call for proposals procedure. NGOs have instead concentrated their activities upstream of project implementation and on monitoring activities, such as surveying, management and supervision. Despite this law, the lack of confidence in the capacity of Afghan businesses to successfully complete projects on time, some international organisations obtain special dispensation and continue to run their operations.
- **Economic factors**: Running or maintenance costs no longer fall with the domain of emergency relief funding.
- **Development** factors: The emergence of the private sector has introduced a risk of inappropriate competition with the humanitarian sector.
- **Institutional factors**: NGOs have had to make their position clear on government-run programmes. Now that the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development *(*MRRD) has initiated programmes dealing with rural issues under the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), some similar programmes are also being adapted and carried out in urban areas. Spurred on by the UN to reinforce democratic processes, the GoA has launched a participative democracy programme alongside regular reconstruction of buildings and public institutions. Communities are involved at all levels of project processes and NGOs are asked to limit their role to project facilitation. UN-HABITAT is testing some of these programmes in urban areas, such as the HSF[4].
- **Political factors**: Operations in so-called "informal" settlements, i.e. where public services are non-existent or needs are most pressing, are all too often being placed on hold until their status has been officially regularised. Integrating these suburbs that have been built without any sort of town planning, sometimes as a result of illegal agreements, is one of the most important tasks facing the GoA.

2.1.3 New contexts, new roles for NGOs

The reconstruction process in Afghanistan has now reached the halfway mark, according to deadlines established for international financial aid by the new agreement of London Conference (2001-2010)[5]. The context and conditions have evolved. Aid agencies implementing building projects in urban areas have had to redefine their roles as well as their programmes given that the institutional context has changed. Several different strategies can be observed.

2.1.3.1 Refocusing on project engineering expertise

Before and during the war, NGOs managed aid programmes from start to finish, from the initial decision right through to project completion, functioning like building firms with their own equipment and resources. The aforementioned "NGO Law" prohibits NGOs from undertaking operational work (withdrawal of Hard Work) and since 2005 NGOs have

[3] *NGO Law* published in the Official Gazette No. 857, 6 July 2005 (04/15/1384 HS)
[4] HSF Programmes (Human Security Trust Fund for Informal Upgrading settlements), C-Damp Programmes, Community based Disaster Awareness and Mitigation, C-Set Programmes (Civil Society Empowerment Programme)
[5] Compact 2006.

refocused on other roles, such as the “Software” components with project processes. They have reinforced their expertise in research consultancy, and social and technical engineering, carrying out the following activities:

- Supervision, organisation, planning, social monitoring;
- Technical engineering, financial management, (monitoring of works is not carried out by NGOs);
- Delegating operational work to the private sector with a call for proposals issued to private companies.

2.1.3.2 Monitoring the implementation of national policy and capacity building

This period is marked by development activities rather than emergency relief and NGOs are solicited to participate in implementing national programmes, such as NSP, and providing training. NGOs are carving out a new role for themselves with these new responsibilities:

- Facilitating Partners for Communities
- Coordinating international sector-based interventions with United Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
- Supporting training courses for managers, e.g. Technical-Management Training for the CAWSS run by the ICRC in Mazar-e Sharif and Jalalabad.
- Technical management consultancy in certain fields, e.g. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources by German Agro Action (GAA).

2.1.3.3 Initiatives in order to build capacity in municipalities

In order to develop urban planning capacity within aid processes, organisations are planning to extend programmes to other municipalities.

- UN-HABITAT has drawn up a process to assess the scope of activities of municipalities with the City Profile. This survey has already been conducted in Kandahar and Herat, and is now being carried out in Jalalabad and Mazar-e Sharif.
- CARE International is planning Urban governance building aid programmes.
- GAA plays a facilitating partner role for medium-sized municipalities and this process is currently being tested in some small towns northeast of Kunduz.

2.1.3.4 Diversifying NGO roles and programmes

NGOs are diversifying their activities and developing increasingly specific or new expertise in line with context changes and in response to the complexity of constraints.

- Drafting project proposals and sourcing funding opportunities.
- Research with an increasing number of preliminary surveys, e.g. ACF’s urban vulnerability analysis and studies on urban issues currently being carried out by Groupe URD.
- Expertise, technical and financial management.
- Technical innovation, e.g. in the domain of sustainable development, GERES’ thermal insulation, Solidarités’ automatic public taps, etc.
- Support for economic development, e.g. Micro-Finance Facilitating, or more specific development projects such as those fostering bilateral exchange, e.g. ACTED’s cross border programmes.

2.1.4 New contexts, new stakeholders

Stakeholders operating in this post-emergency phase would benefit from specific research programmes, especially on urban issues. The needs of urban populations are becoming increasingly pressing and diversified with the transition towards development modalities.

With the support of international aid funding, different types of organisation are carrying out research in relevant areas.

- Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)[6], an Afghan research centre, is conducting socio-economic research on urban issues in different cities.
- ALTAI Consulting (ALTAI), a French consultancy firm, is carrying out research on the socio-economic impact of rehabilitation operations with European Commission funding[7].
- Emergency Market Group (EMG), a US private company, is looking at ways of legalising land tenure with USAID funding and in close collaboration with Afghan administration[8].
- FKH, Geoexpert services, a private engineering company is conducting preliminary technical building studies funded by NGOs, the private sector and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT).

2.2 Change in focus from habitat to urban issues

Groupe URD first pinpointed a number of urban issues that remained unaddressed by aid agencies working in the habitat sector during its field visits in the region in 2002-03.

2.2.1 Actors failed to fully anticipate the scope of the demographic explosion

In 2002, Groupe URD had already identified that urban issues were set to become a problem over the coming months: "At present, the majority of aid projects are implemented in rural areas, in villages. However, people's needs in towns and cities are extremely pressing. UNHCR reports that large numbers of people are migrating towards cities and the need to intervene in urban contexts will soon become extremely urgent"[9]. The research team goes on to explain the extent of the pull factor that cities represent for rural populations: "UNHCR estimates that a third of the refugee and IDP population intends to migrate towards major urban agglomerations for financial reasons, and in most cities (e.g. Kabul) over 50% of buildings have been destroyed"[10].

2.2.2 Specific constraints, land tenure in particular

As the situation developed, these observations were confirmed. The following year, the research team noted: "It will be important to find ways (e.g. financial incentives) to encourage populations to settle in the provinces in order to contain uncontrolled demographic explosion in large urban centres and prevent rehabilitated houses in rural areas from being abandoned. Access to habitat projects is not enough of an incentive to convince people to stay in areas that are economically unviable. The success of habitat projects is therefore closely linked to access to land and employment"[11].

NGOs equipped solely with their humanitarian mandate have not succeeded in stemming the tide of people migrating towards urban centres. Population displacement has had an impact on land occupation giving rise to major problems such as illegal occupation, insecurity, plundering, absence of basic public services and pollution. As well as upsetting the economic balance, integrating these populations poses legal and administrative difficulties for city authorities who are attempting to ensure basic urban services. Improving the living conditions of populations in the suburbs is an integral part of controlling urban development processes. Amongst the different conditions required for ensuring urban stability, land tenure is a major

[6] Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) www.areu.org.af
[7] ALTAI Consulting, Socio economic impact of Kabul Jalalabad Road Rehabilitation, Report CE -2005
[8] Emerging Markets Group, Ltd, (EMG), *Land Titling and Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan* (LTERA) Project
[9] Groupe URD, *Projet Qualité in Afghanistan*, Field mission report 1, 20 July 2002 – 24 August 2003
[10] Groupe URD, *Quality Projet in Afghanistan*, Second field mission report, 15 January 2003 – 12 February 2003
[11] Ibid.

issue in Afghanistan. The value of land varies according to proximity to urban areas, agricultural land, green belt, river banks and road networks. The uncertainty surrounding land occupation and development projects has prompted certain aid organisations to query the relevance of their operations in certain neighbourhoods in terms of sustainability.

2.2.3 Ensuring a coherent framework for urban interventions

The first field missions carried out by Groupe URD highlighted the importance of establishing a coherent framework: "A common reconstruction policy has not yet been defined but building projects are springing up all over the place. Only the UN report *Immediate and transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People 2002* sets priorities which look further afield than the building of houses, as it explicitly addresses general housing issues and urban renewal […] The question of urban reconstruction has yet to be taken fully on board by the majority of stakeholders. UN-HABITAT and PNUD are alone in preparing an initial evaluation and recommendations based on urban recovery and reconstruction needs (Urban Recovery and Reconstruction, and Water Supply and Sanitation)[12]."

- Need for coherence in terms of deadlines

In 2006, interviews with different organisations in various cities highlight the lack of coordination between programmes and development strategies in the short term, medium term and long term. Taking the water supply system in Mazar-e Sharif as an example, a large proportion of the secondary water supply network is nearly complete (ICRC). However, it will only be possible to connect these pipes to a primary network after funds are released in 2010 in accordance with the World Bank's financial strategy for development aid. These delays are compounded by a high degree of incertitude over the running, maintenance and capacity of this water supply system.

- Administrative immobility

Stakeholders have been coordinating with urban authorities who have been crippled by 30 years of incapacity to exercise their functions and overwhelmed by the extent of recent uncontrolled land occupation. The building works currently being carried out in cities whether it be for humanitarian purposes or private interests are being carried out sporadically rather than within an integrated process of coordination.

- Lack of urban policy framework

Setting up an urban programme framework that is coherent, well thought out and widely communicated as a support for decision making and rehabilitation, reconstruction, demolition or building operations is urgent and yet too slow in coming. In 2006, certain national strategies are defined on the basis of technical or geographical sectors, but reality in the field makes their application difficult: confusion over land occupation, inadequate administrative capacity, economic weaknesses, incompetence or local issues at stake. To this day urban development is marked by sporadic uncoordinated interventions.

2.3 The urban sector: an imprecise social context

2.3.1 A change in socio-cultural equilibrium in Afghan cities

Afghanistan, with its mountainous landscape and tormented history, is dominated by the rural question. Successive occupations, invasions and trade through-routes have in turn built and destroyed Afghan cities and the most recent wars have by no means improved the situation. Afghan cities are few in number and need to establish a balance between their history and

[12] Groupe URD, *Quality Project in Afghanistan*, First field mission report, 20 July 2002 – 24 August 2003

the current situation. As well as protecting or rediscovering their cultural heritage, new populations of diverse origins need to be integrated. The mere juxtaposition of populations is not enough to ensure a coherent social structure. Social and cultural reconstruction is a major issue at stake in the reconstruction of Afghan cities which are undergoing major social upheavals. For successful social urban management, stakeholders need to have a good understanding of the situation, which in turn raises the question of collecting reliable urban data.

2.3.2 Incomplete demographic data

Urban demographics have evolved considerably over the past decades with mass migration towards cities prior to the end of the hostilities. A census has not been carried out since 1979 and there is a notable lack of reference documents presenting demographic figures. The few reference documents that do exist are incomplete, using estimates or calculations based on unofficial criteria, rendering them scientifically invalid. Access to scanty official data is not simplified by the fact that to this day the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Kabul does not have a website. The figures put forward by the heads of urban departments in the cities visited differ widely from the statistics presented in Table 1, which has been taken from an international statistics website[13].

Table 1: Population figures for Afghanistan's major cities

Main cities visited	1979 census	1988 estimate	2006 calculation
KABUL	-	1,424,400	3,120,963
KANDAHAR	178,409	225,500	401,915
MAZAR-e SHARIF	-		314,915
HERAT	140,323	-	278,209
JALALABAD	53,915	-	208,960
KUNDUNZ	53,251	-	166,824
GHAZNI	30,425	-	149,998
BAMIYAN	-	-	131,233
PUL-e KHUMRI	31,101	-	57,364

Source: www.gazetteer.de/c/c_af.htm

Variations in the different sources of information pose serious problems for stakeholders in adjusting to people's needs, demands and resources to be mobilised.

It is interesting to compare available figures and official data at the international level, for example:

- Data used for provisional planning in the National Programme 2004-2024;
- Figures used by the National 'Urban Water Supply Investment' Programme to estimate provisional funding requirements for providing drinking water in town until 2024[14];
- Data collected during interviews in the field with heads of urban departments in municipal offices or local MUDH offices (Box 2).

Box 2: Variation in information collected

Kabul. According to the Urban Planning and Policy department in the municipality, the population of Kabul exceeded 4 million inhabitants in 2005 whereas the CAWSS based its studies on figures of 3.5 million (i.e. this variation concerns 30% of the population).

[13] www.gazetteer.de/c/c_af.htm

[14] Urban Water Supply Investment Programme established by the Central Administration for Water Supply and Sanitation (CAWSS)within the MUDH

Provincial cities. The variation between data provided by local managers, mayors or engineers from technical services gives rise to almost whimsical figures. For example, the CAWSS designed its water supply strategies in **Mazar-e Sharif** on the basis of 837,800 inhabitants whereas the mayor refers to a population of 2 million citizens. The lack of reliable statistics takes on a surreal dimension when an engineer from **Kunduz** in charge of ensuring conformity with administrative building regulations within the municipality talks about a population of 1.5 million inhabitants whereas the CAWSS is providing water supplies for only 122,000 inhabitants.
Jalalabad. The mayor estimates that the city has a population of 450,000 inhabitants, the CAWSS is drawing up infrastructure plans for 250,000 people.
Finally, **Bamiyan** is indicative of the significant lack of coordination between the databases used by different actors. The CAWSS aims to provide water for 11,970 inhabitants, i.e. barely 10% of the population, whereas statistics indicate a total population of 131,233 inhabitants (see Table 1: Population figures for Afghanistan's major cities).

Source: www.gazetteer.de/c/c_af.htm, Groupe URD interviews

The above figures illustrate the lack of reliable data for urban populations, hence the need for precise assessments prior to planning programmes.

According to the head of UNAMA, UN agency for coordination in Bamiyan, a census is planned for 2007 once the elections have run smoothly. These data will have to be placed in the context of continuous rapid expansion of urban populations.

The main difficulty which the census will need to overcome is determining what boundaries will be used for counting inhabitants.

2.3.3 Urban destabilisation

Unreliable demographic data is the result of extremely rapid and uncontrolled growth in almost all major cities in Afghanistan. The ratio of rural populations against urban populations has swung over in favour of urban populations. Kabul city accommodates over 60% of the population of Kabul province and 50% of the total afghan urban population, resulting in an imbalance. This population concentration is the source of explosive situations of dissatisfaction. The untrammelled rise in urban populations is the cause of extensive urban disorder where the question of social stability and economic equilibrium has become critical.

2.4 The urban sector: disorganised administration

In the majority of cities visited, poorly equipped and seemingly abandoned neighbourhoods are situated right next to other neighbourhoods undergoing rapid expansion without any obvious urban planning. Interlocutors pointed out several illegal or informal neighbourhoods. There are many reasons for this disorder and illegality but stakeholders are unanimous about the lack of flexibility imposed by administrative boundaries defined within the Soviet Master Plan. Spontaneous settlements both within and outside of the limits designated as legal by the Master Plan have upset the balance of urban centres and made it unclear who is responsible for what.
Figure 5 (presented below) highlights the lack of correlation between how urban territories and urban responsibilities are defined. The failure to take into account the cumulative impact of these two notions, urban boundaries and urban responsibilities, explains why large parts of urban populations do not have access to public services.

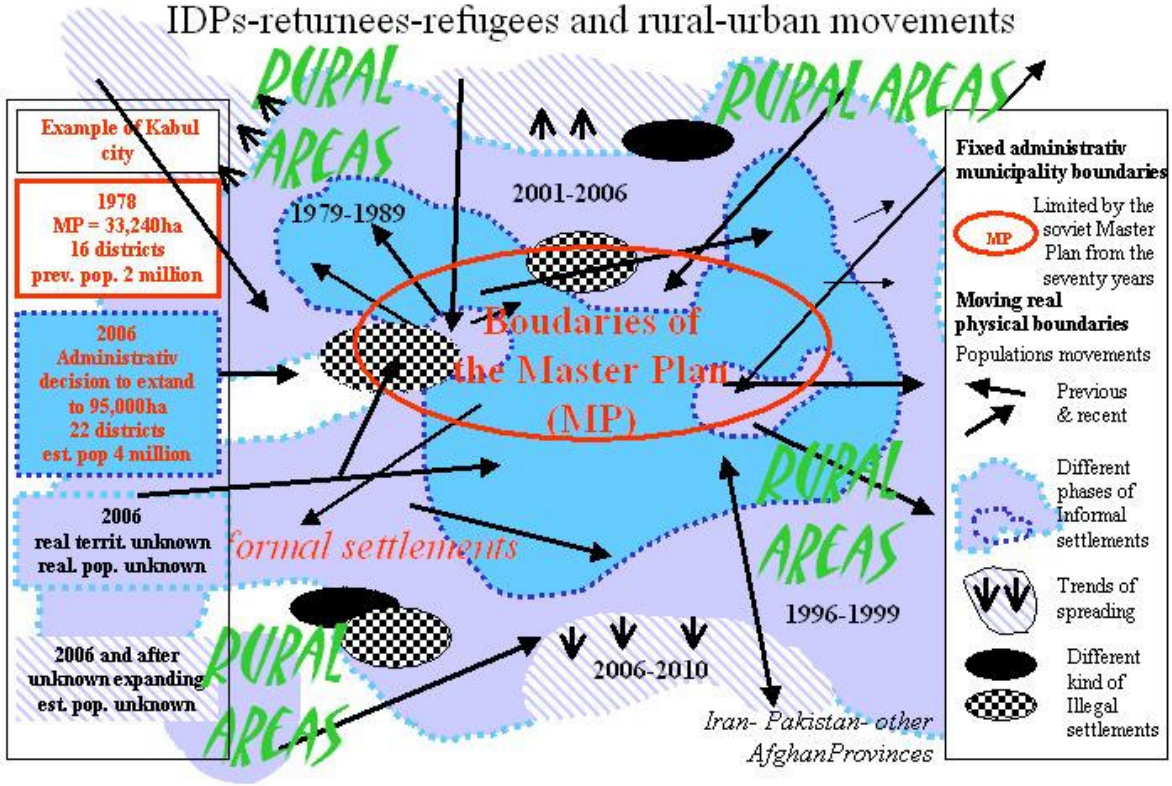
2.4.1 City boundaries in question

Figure 5 illustrates how the layout of Afghan cities today no longer corresponds to the concepts and limits defined in plans dating from the Soviet occupation, and although realities have evolved, administrative boundaries and people's mentalities have not.

These Master Plans were drawn up for all major Afghan cities between 1970 and 1978 by soviet engineers. They provided an administrative framework for cities by designating a geographic boundary (illustrated by a red oval in Figure 5) and defining settlements by zone. Although cities were administered in this way for over thirty years with regulations and directives being issued by the highly centralised Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, in the current urban situation this system no longer functions.

Urban systems and people's attitudes appear to be frozen in time. In Jalalabad and Ghazni, people seem to be stuck in 1970, and in Mazar -e Sharif and Kabul municipal administration is still using data from 1978. **The notion of what a city is, the general understanding of where city limits lie, reference data, how citizens and local authorities portray their city, administrative, legal and technical responsibilities have little bearing on present realities.** There is a high degree of distortion between the fluctuating city boundaries as lived by the inhabitants (illustrated with dotted lines in Figure 5) and the territory administered by urban development policy, determined in the Master Plan.

Figure 5: Boundaries of urban territories under question



Source: Groupe URD

2.4.1.1 Undefined urban territories as one of the main causes of lack of public services

The homeless, refugees, returnees and IDPs settle where they can find a space regardless of their original destination, resulting in a disorganised urban administrative framework and facilities. These settlements, representing between 30-70% of the total population depending on the city, are charged an 'informal settlement' tax because they lie outside the urban administrative framework, or an 'illegal settlement' tax because for example the land was seized and settled illegally. These neighbourhoods do not have access or very little access to basic public services (water supply, electricity, drainage systems for waste water, rubbish collection) and decent access routes. illustrates some of the examples of informal and illegal settlements encountered during the field mission which exist in many forms, including some which are considered 'informal' despite lying within the areas outlined in the Master Plan.

Box 3: Examples of illegal settlements

In **Mazar-e Sharif**, settlements that do not correspond to the areas outlined in the Master Plan are categorised as illegal. This One such example is a large residential neighbourhood in the southwest district, situated in the centre of the city near the Mosque. This neighbourhood, which lies within the area outlined in the Master Plan, contains several zones that were originally designated as parks in Soviet plans and were not built up. The consequence for these illegal settlements is that they have been voluntarily overlooked in terms of public services. City officials would like to see these zones turned back into parks. It is not certain whether the ICRC who has been working in Mazar-e Sharif for several years, and has built nearly all the secondary water supply systems in the rest of the city, is ready to invest resources in a neighbourhood whose future for the moment remains so uncertain.

Example of an informal settlement. In **Pul-e Khumri** it is the informal settlements on the side slopes that do not benefit from municipal services. As well as the irregularities that persist for settlements that have not been subject to urban planning, discord has emerged between the municipality and AKDN who is in the process of building water points for these informal settlements with water taken from the river and reservoirs. The municipality argues that providing water supply systems without first building drainage systems for waste water is contributing to increased river pollution. They fear that providing this type of service will encourage other people to settle in these neighbourhoods thus affecting the living conditions the other citizens who obtain their water from this same river.

Given that the legal framework for urban matters is obsolete, the situation is compounded by administrative incompatibility, the technical incapacity of municipal services and legal incompetence (to resolve land ownership disputes).

Given the limited technical capacity of municipal services in resolving problems (e.g. water supply, waste disposal, power), the situation is rendered more complicated still by the existing legal and administrative framework. Urban administrative authorities do not have the necessary powers to intervene in favour of informal and illegal settlements. Only legal authorities are capable of resolving administrative irregularities, such as the case of informal settlements. Similarly, in the case of illegal settlements, legal authorities are required to intervene to settle disputes over land tenure.

City administration as its stands is incapable of providing any services for its inhabitants. The situation is often highly confusing. International aid organisations who are trying to compensate for administrative shortages are concerned about the sustainability of their interventions in zones that might never be integrated into the city in administrative terms. Several difficulties contribute to this general level of confusion.

2.4.1.2 Shortage of documents and urban tools

There are no up-to-date urban plans defining administrative boundaries. It is precisely this lack of collective reference that gives rise to mutual incomprehension, unlawfulness, misunderstandings, even misappropriation of funds, privileges or gangland killings, as has recently been the case in Mazar-e Sharif[15]. The old Master Plans, omnipresent in municipal offices and technical administrative offices, are preventing stakeholders from developing a realistic analysis of the situation. Plans are established in Kabul and are sometimes not being shared effectively with the municipalities. For instance, there was no evidence of the new Jalalabad Master Plan drawn up in 2003 being used in the municipality. This lack of communication seriously hampered the development of any ownership.

2.4.1.3 Technical and legal difficulties in providing services for citizens

Urban laws and responsibilities do not apply to zones lying outside urban administrative boundaries.

2.4.1.4 Maintaining the status quo or fighting corruption and nepotism?

Inventories and assessments that were carried out over thirty years ago are proving to be a stumbling block for urban officials.

For example of block on status quo: The Kunduz's municipality for example has refused to recognise a residential neighbourhood close to the city centre as being legal, despite the fact that it is today completely integrated into the city. According to the 1971 Master Plan, this zone was set aside for industrial activities and so it remains an informal settlement.

Other examples of 'political abuse': in Mazar-e Sharif, land was distributed by the mayor to homeless people when they did not actually own the land. Now, the real owners are demanding that the municipality return their land. Difficult negotiations are on going to day.

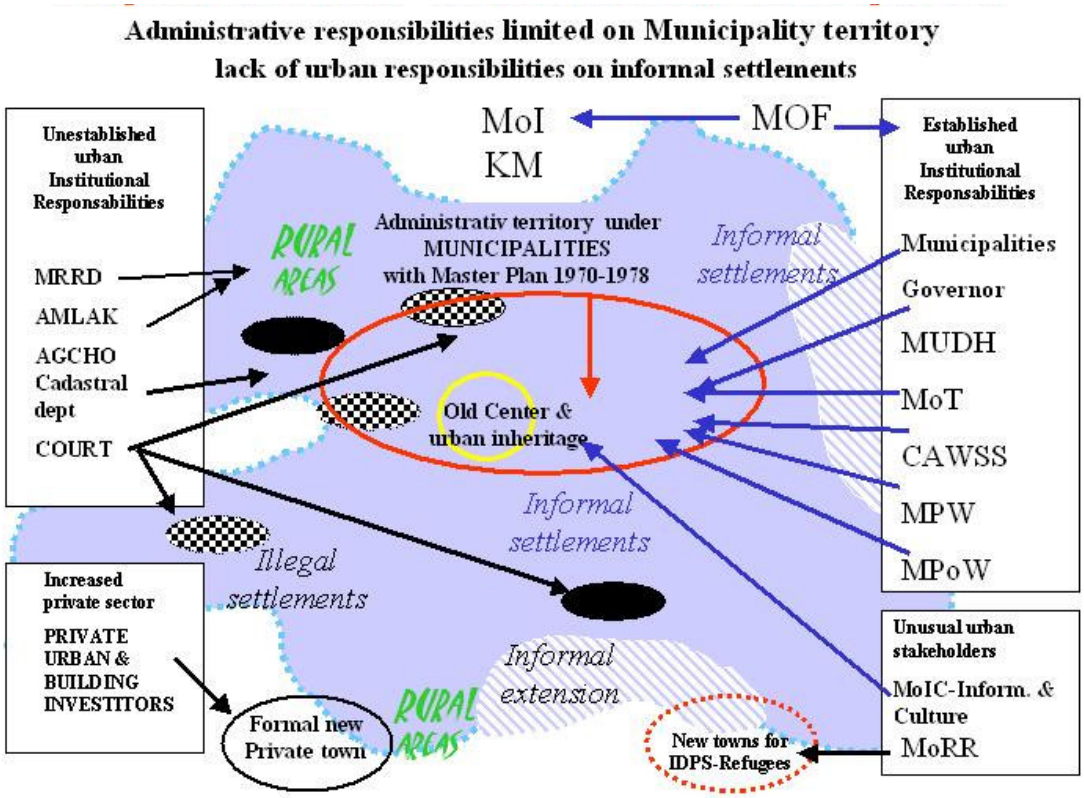
In Jalalabad, a certain lack of coherence in the spatial development of the city may be observed whereby distant suburbs are integrated into city administrative boundaries and yet more central neighbourhoods still do not have access to municipal public services. These situations may well arise as a result of local political contradictions.

2.4.2 Disconnection between urban territory and administrative responsibilities

Administrative and legal responsibilities on urban matters are determined by the boundaries laid down in the Master Plans of the 1970 and in no way reflect present day realities. As illustrated in Figure 6, urban territories no longer have coherent administrative boundaries with appropriate administrative infrastructure. This failure to unite the spatial aspect of urban planning with administrative responsibilities has given rise to urban areas where law and order has broken down and urban responsibilities have not been properly defined.

[15] According to the information collected during field interviews.

Figure 6: Responsibilities on urban territories under question



Source: Groupe URD

2.4.2.1 Urban territory divided up into distinct territorial responsibilities

Urban institutional responsibilities are exercised in a limited area of the city, which is determined by the boundaries laid down in the Master Plan.

- Political matters are the responsibility of the city mayor, the governor under the GoA, and the ministry in charge, MUDH, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Public Works (MoPW), Ministry of Mines and Industry (MMI), Ministry of Trade (MoT) and Ministry of Transportation (MT), etc.
- Administrative and technical issues are the responsibility of the ensuring conformity with administrative building regulations within the municipalities, of the engineers from MUDH district offices, and from CAWSS offices.
- Financial matters are the dual responsibility of the municipality and the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

2.4.2.2 Urban occupation with no urban responsibilities

Urban areas that lie outside the Master Plan boundary do not fall within urban jurisdiction or under urban administration. The institution that is responsible for administrative matters and ensuring law and order is directly related to the original function or properties of the area in question.

- Administrative issues are often the responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) or the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF) when the land was originally used for farming. In fact, the administrative responsibility depends on the type of land owner, for example, the Army, or the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as is the case for much of the industrial city of Pul-e-Khumri. Religious authorities also own significant proportions of land.
- Legal matters and land ownership are either the responsibility of the body in charge of registering farming land, either under the responsibility of the Cadastral department of

Afghanistan Geodesy & Cartography Head Office (AGCHO) when this structure exists at the local level.

2.4.2.3 Emergence of new stakeholders with limited expertise urban issues

Up to now, humanitarian organisations were the one in charge of providing aid to urban populations, despite the fact that they are not accustomed to the complexity of urban contexts.

- Humanitarian organisations. A certain degree of coherence between humanitarian organisations and Afghan institutions seems to have been achieved in determining domains of intervention. This is true for the case of the rehabilitation of roads linking cities, the development project in the valley of Bamiyan under UNESCO coordination, or the case of renovation work on water supply networks carried out by CARE International in Ghazni and the ICRC in Mazar-e Sharif. However, the same cannot be said for operations carried out within urban centres, such as in Jalalabad, where the UNDP and the ICRC do not appear to be coordinating the work that needs to be carried out on water supply networks.
- Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). The MoRR is set to become a key player in an emerging urbanisation process with its plans to provide an estimated 35,000 houses for refugees. It has entered into negotiations with different landowners, such as ministries, private landowners or municipalities with a view to creating new towns. Although this attempt to speed the process up is an interesting initiative, the MoRR has not taken the time to ensure that its development plans are economically viable, and has not always succeeded in acquiring the freehold, a basic requirement before embarking on development plans. An NGO was contracted to build housing on 1,000 plots of land for a new town near Pul-e Khumri, and yet in the end private landowners refused to allow the building work to go ahead for 500 of the plots.
- Law courts, district law courts or national law court (Supreme Court in Kabul). Disputes over landownership that cannot be settled through negotiation have to be commonly referred to law courts, and currently represent a major issue at stake in urban development. The American private company EMG, on USAID funds acts as a link for the different administrative parties concerned in land tenure issues in the city of Ghazni.

Finally the private sector, which includes two types of player with a true potential for playing an active role in Afghanistan's development:

- City inhabitants by definition have a dual role to play in urban development: (i) as active participants, with self build housing schemes and initiatives to stimulate the local economy (cf. the World Bank) and (ii) as end users. With UN backing and in line with new Afghan policy, these inhabitants have become stakeholders in urban issues by means of community representatives.
- Private investors. The GoA is relying on private investors to play an essential role in economic recovery and urban reconstruction. Indeed, they have rapidly undertaken highly visible building projects in city centres (e.g. Kabul, Jalalabad, Hérat, etc.) and are heavily involved in planning new neighbourhood extensions (e.g. in Khabul, Ghazni). This expansion is placing pressure on urban territory and on land prices. Taking Bamiyan as an example, where tourism has had a staggering impact on property prices, urban officials need to set up a framework for urban development and impose limitations, in order to ensure quality development that is coherent with well-balanced urban environments.

2.5 Slow progress in defining urban policy

Although strategies and priorities have been established in Afghanistan since 2002, converting strategies into coherent policies has not yet been formalised for the urban sector. To this day, clear and realistic national urban policy, enabling city administrators to govern and cope with the multitude of existing development and rehabilitation needs, has not yet emerged.

2.5.1 A key step is missing in the process of defining urban policy

Strategies are defined at ministerial level, national programmes as NSP (National Solidarity Programme) are piloted and implemented with urban communities. However, municipalities do not fully participate in this process. Alternatively, local authorities are consulted but are then excluded from assessment processes which come under the responsibility of the MUDH in Kabul. Local officials, the governor and the mayor participate in certain phases, but as urban planning and the drafting of reference documents takes place in Kabul, local authorities do not fully appropriate themselves. Furthermore, local political and technical staff turnover is high and objectives are changed frequently. Provincial towns, bastions of local warlords far removed from central government, fluctuate between a top-down power structure or one that is overly influenced by local interests (local authorities or powerful individuals).

2.5.2 Weaknesses constitutive at municipal level and lack of external counsellors

Under the soviet system, municipalities had very little autonomy, resources and expertise required for managing urban development within their territory. This administrative and financial weakness, which lends itself to a certain degree of nepotism and power abuses engendered excesses that has yet to be eradicated by coherent urban policy[16] at the benefit of public interests.

Whereas the ministries benefit from international support and expertise, no international consultants were encountered in any of the municipal offices visited. Municipal staff are looking for ways to break even and develop new power-sharing modalities with the ministry in charge, but they require immediate support and expertise in urban issues and town-planning;

2.5.3 Absence of institutional coordination

For all the different activities related to the urban sector, at ministerial, provincial and municipal levels, there is marked division of labour with little coordination and a huge lack of communication. Communication and monitoring activities are not functioning properly both horizontally and vertically.
Coordination does exist at different technical levels, such as water supply, but it is not the case for the urban development sector as a whole

During this transitory period, UN agencies are responsible for ensuring coordination roles but there is an urgent need for an organisation responsible for coordinating urban affairs at all the different levels.

[16] A new law on municipalities is under consideration.

2.6 Creating synergy in urban development

The situation in Afghanistan's cities has reached a critical point both for the inhabitants themselves, and the country's officials, who are faced with unprecedented urban expansion. The entire urban management process for town-planning is deregulated and obsolete. At all levels, officials lack the necessary expertise and urban tools which would allow them to provide for the city's inhabitants, to build and repair existing infrastructure and basic services or to work towards sustainable development. There is a considerable lack of technical capacity and absorption capacity for the new urban population. This is the negative side, an acknowledgement of failure, lack of resources and incompetence. On the other hand, an impressive amount of building work is being carried out by the private sector, but it is not subject to coordination within national strategies, nor to basic regulations. The intense traffic that surrounds city bazaars points to the beginnings of economic growth but urban traffic runs untrammelled. In order to overcome this situation of urban fragility and to engage in coordinated and effective reconstruction, it is necessary to bring about synergy between all those with potential to contribute to urban development. Some of our observations have enabled us to identify certain avenues worth exploring.

2.6.1 The need to place urban issues within an improved spatial understanding

In order to resolve the current urban crisis, it is necessary to bring together different actors' strategies and activities, and ensure that all those involved share a common understanding of where urban boundaries lie. Indeed reaching a consensus on the definition of urban spaces and on their roles remains a priority. It is here that specific urban tools are sadly lacking, such as **up-to-date urban plans that are easy to update**.

2.6.2 Developing a range of urban tools

It is necessary to compile an extensive inventory, to compare existing urban reference documents and design new ones to help in assessments, localisation and prioritising inhabitants' needs. Updated data are needed for drawing up urban proposals, proposing solutions and providing support for decision-making, negotiations, coordination, monitoring and communication tools. The latter indeed symbolise the very beginnings of exchange and partnership. Other domains within the urban sector, such as legal administrative departments (like the cadastral departments), are also affected by the lack of relevant tools.

Until Afghan staff have been fully trained in each of the subjects and relevant tools have been produced, the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) and the Municipalities would welcome support in the form of studies on various topics (environment, transport, computer assisted design (CAD), town planning). This may be an opportunity:

- for NGOs to **develop their activities**, especially those already involved in the building sector. Some NGOs have already begun developing new expertise, for example the geographic information system (GIS) for their projects.
- to **diversify aid**, developing an expertise in urban issues (socio-urban issues, development strategies, town-planning techniques, etc.).
- to **open up towards the private sector** and research consultancy, which has a valuable role to play in providing expertise in environment and social issues, urban strategies, local economy and urban development. There is a potential for establishing interesting partnerships on the basis of complementary expertise.

2.6.3 Exchange of expertise, an opportunity for all stakeholders

Afghan institutional staff working in the urban sector is severely lacking necessary expertise and are actively seeking ways to improve their knowledge base. The need for professional capacity building in urban development is present at all levels, in all technical subjects, for decision-makers and especially municipal offices. A large range of training courses, providing an opportunity for actors to share their experiences and gain experience, should be offered to Afghan officials. Demand is high for this type of exchange at intermediary levels, even though the first steps are difficult, and time and money demanding. A number of avenues should be explored:

- **Decentralised local development aid** offers great potential given the tendency for aid to remain centralised at government level. Capacity building for municipal, administrative and technical offices should foster exchange, and share knowledge and know-how in town-planning and urban management with foreign counterparts, such as district and city authorities, town or village councils, etc. Municipal offices, public facilities and social housing associations should be able to participate in these exchanges and share their expertise.
- **University exchange programmes** for students of town planning, architecture, social or technical engineering, geography, cultural heritage and other fields related to urban issues, need to gather pace. A number of foreign students are already participating in NGO programmes. Both Afghan and foreign students would benefit from university exchanges and internships in both Afghan institutions (as MUDH offices or municipal offices) as well as international organisations.
- **Urban professional exchanges**: Establishing an arena in Afghanistan for debate on urban issues would give professionals the opportunity to exchange their ideas.

2.6.4 Developing communication tools

Communication campaigns were lacking in general. Promoting better communication at several levels would give meaning to urban projects, and maybe restore people's confidence, or at least provide a platform for debate amongst populations who still have cause for concern and still feel insecure. Projects that are under consideration, building work that has been approved, development plans on hold, building work underway are all subjects that need to be communicated to people and within the urban stakeholders. The notion of public space would find an echo in this idea.

In conclusion, inhabitants need to be placed at the heart of urban administration:
"*How shall we go about identifying, accessing, establishing contacts and providing sustainable help for so-called vulnerable populations in urban areas?"* is the relevant question in humanitarian terms.
"How shall we go about resolving urban problems, providing basic services to the town's citizens and developing coherent urban evolution", is the relevant question in urban terms.

Efforts to reconcile the two notions of '**vulnerability**' and '**citizen**' should bring the beginnings of a solution and coherence in aid of improving inhabitants' living conditions. Analysing urban spatial management issues with the support of urban development expertise should provide sufficient evidence to Afghan decision-makers of the importance of integrating so-called 'informal' zones where the majority of vulnerable people live into the legal administrative framework. These inhabitants, vulnerable people transformed into legal citizens, will have rights and administrators will be under the obligation to provide them with all the services required in urban areas. Stakeholders should be looking to support these mechanisms.

Persons met during the field mission

Urban Development	
In December 5 Visit to Pul-e-Khumri	Meeting to the Municipality
	Meeting to AKDN Visit reservoir
12 to 15 march 06 Visit to Jalalabad	Meeting to the Municipality
Preparation In Kabul	Visit to AIMS Kabul (to get maps of cities to visit) Contact with Dina Amiri, customer service Assistant
22 March	Meeting with the ONG Solidarités Contact with Clément Bourse Country Director
Thursday 28 March	Meeting to European Commission in Kabul Contact with Giorgio Kirchmayr, Programme Manager, Infrastructure Sector for Jalalabad information And With Eng. Basher Ahmad, Project officer, infrastructure
	Meeting to EMG LTERA (USAID) Preparation for Ghazni , Pul-e Khumri and Kunduz Contact with André Hernandez
Friday 31 March	Team meeting: discussing the itinerary
Saturday 1 April	Literature and document review
	Consultation to ACBAR
	Meeting with UN-Habitat Contact with Suman Kr. Karna, urban Development Advisor
Sunday 2 April	Meeting to the MUDH Contact with the Deputy Minister ; M Djallalzada + different Department
Monday 3 April	Team meeting: discussing the multi sector framework
Tuesday 4 April	From Kabul to Bamiyan by road
Wednesday 5 April Thursday 6 April In Bamiyan	Meeting in UNAMA Contact with Dr Ernst Fassbender, Representative Head of Bamiyan Office
	Meeting to the provincial MUHD office Contact with Engineer …Head of the Office (the Master Plan)
	Meeting in UN-Habitat Contac with Eng. Muharmad, District Manager Contact with Mohammad Yasin Hotak, Acting Director Visit NSP in villages with M. Abd Razaq Provincial technical eng. Visit NSP in Villages with Eng. Yasin Hotak Provincial social eng.
	Contact with Solidarités: no more involved in Shelters in Bamiyan
	Contact with Geres not involved with Construction in Bamiyan
Friday 7 April	From Bamiyan to Samangan
Saturday 8 April	From Samangan to Mazar-e Sharif
Sunday 9 April Monday 10 April	Meeting in CAWSS Office Contact with Technical Head Officer
	Meeting in the MUDH Office Contact with Eng. Hamid Basharmal, in charge of upgrading projects
	Meeting with UNOPS in the Ministry of Public Works office Contact with Senior regional Mohamad Zia radyar (Ex Head of Un – Habitat in Mazar-e Sharif in 2002-2003)
In Mazar-e Sharif	Meeting in UN-Habitat Contact with Eng Islamudin Amaki ,Provincial manager (NSP) Contact with Eng. PadashMir Rahmtzai, Provincial Manager (HSF)
	Meeting to Municipality of Mazar-e Sharif Contact with His Excellency the Mayor. Mr Mohammad Yonus Moqim Contact with Eng. Mohammad Malik Rauf (ex Head of the Department of Construction Control from 2002 to 2006)
	Meeting to ICRC ; Contact with Valentin Magendo, Programme Manager
Tuesday 11 April	From Mazar-e Sharif to Kunduz
Tuesday 11 April	Meeting in Kunduz Municipality Contact with eng. Abdul Rahim The Control Construction department Director

Wednesday 12 April Thursday 13 April In Kunduz	Meeting to the MUDH Office Contact with Mr. Said Shamsudin Sadat department Representative Contact with a Eng. Architect Building Design Depart Officer
	Meeting to AGCHO, Cadastral Department of Kunduz Baghland Contact with M. Aga Mirza, Cadastral department Manager
	Meeting to CAWSS Office Contact with Dr. Azimi , Director
	Meeting to AIMS Office Contact with M. Naseer Tasmin NE Field assistant
	Meeting to German Agro Action (Welt hunger hilfe) Contact with Mr. Amjad Ali Khan, project manager
	Meeting to ACTED Contact with Eng. Ad. Qahar, area Deputy coordinator
Friday 14 April	From Kunduz to Pul-e Khumri & from Pul-e Khumri to Kabul
Saturday 15 April	Workshop preparation
Sunday 16 April	Kabul-Ghazni-Kabul
	Meeting in Ghazni Municipality Contact with the Deputy Mayor
  In Ghazni	Meeting in Ghazni Department of Engineers Contact with Eng. Ansami and Eng. Harovullah
	Meeting to EMG LTERA With Amir Khan, Ghazni Office Director
	Meeting to AGCHO Office, Cadastral Department Contact with the administrative Deputy
Monday 17 April	Meeting to the WB Contact with Jonathan Parkinson Independent consultant (waste Solid Collect Programme)
Tuesday 18 April	Meeting in AGCHO in Kabul Contact with Eng. M. Askar (Falah) , vice president
Wednesday 19 April	Meeting to CARE Afghanistan Contact with Dad Mohammad Baheer, Wat/San Programme Manager
	Meeting to ICRC With Valerie Meilhaud, Water and Habitat coordinator
Thursday 20 April	Working on presentation
Friday 21 April	Workshop preparation
Saturday 22 April	Workshop preparation
Sunday 23 April	Workshop preparation
Monday 24 April	Presenting the main findings: workshop
Wednesday 26	Meeting to the MUDH Contact with the Deputy Minister Ang. Q. Djallalzada
Thursday 27	Working on EIMS report
Saturday 29	Working on EIMS report
Sunday 30	Meeting to the MUDH Contact with M. Eberhard Kohlsdorfer , Advisor
Monday 1 May	Meeting to UNESCO Kabul office for Bamiyan Project Contact with Brendan Cassar - Cultural Programme Section

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3 WATER & IRRIGATION SECTOR

By Nicolas Rivière
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This report follows on from the Water Sector Review which was conducted for the LRRD programme in summer 2005. While the Water Sector Review provides a historical overview of the sector and global institutional analysis, this report covers operational aspects and field-level issues following three weeks of field research in spring 2006.

Since the water sector is relatively broad and complex, the table below presents the various sub-sectors which are included in the water sector.

Table 2: Water & Irrigation sub-sectors

Sub-sectors addressed in this report	Sub-sectors not addressed in this report
Rural water supply and sanitation (WSS)	Hydro-electric power
Water and environment	Urban water
Water resources management	
Irrigation	

Source: Groupe URD

Water resources management concerns the overall management of water resources at various geographical levels (national, regional, basin, sub-basin and watershed) whilst taking into account economic, social and environmental issues. Work within this area mainly consists of supporting appropriate institutions in their capacity building activities. Water resources management is a central tenet of the new institutional framework.

Irrigation involves the rehabilitation, modernisation or construction of irrigation schemes. The 'hardware' component covers infrastructure while 'software' relates to management capacity to ensure efficient and sustainable operations and irrigation scheme maintenance.

Water and environment comprises various activities within watershed areas for water protection and conservation in relation to other natural resources (soil, forestry, rangeland and other biomass).

Rural water supply and sanitation (WSS) aims at constructing water points and latrines. Software activities are mainly associated with transmitting information about how to operate and maintain water points as well as the proper use of water ('hygiene education'). This domain has been included in this report whereas it was not taken into consideration in the water sector review.

This report mainly focuses on Irrigation and WSS as they constitute the core activities in relation to livelihoods and economic development. These two sub-sectors will be dealt with separately when the institutional framework and operational issues differ significantly.

The two other domains, namely urban water and hydro-electric power have not been included in this research.

3.1 Institutional context

3.1.1 Key players

Table 3 summarises the key actors in the water sector and contains the findings from both the Water Sector Review and fieldwork. It presents the main opportunities, challenges and risks that have emerged for each group since 2001 (which marks the fall of the Taliban regime and the beginning of the increase of the massive intervention of the international community in Afghanistan).

Table 3: Actors of change in the water sector

Key players	Opportunities	Challenges and risks
GoA at central level	Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)	
	Lead role in the water sector. In charge of overall water management and institutional coordination, and irrigation and hydro-electric power Concerted efforts to carry out wide-reaching sector reform since 2001 with donor support Establishing a 'strategic policy framework', thus laying the foundations for a dynamic and effective sector	Needs to ensure that it has adequate budget given the importance of the sector Lack of capacity; HR and facilities are not adapted to new concepts and policies → PPR process required Short-term and medium-term strategy and planning Increase legitimacy Institutional reforms to be completed and implemented 'Working Together for Participatory Water Management' with all stakeholders
	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	
	One of the strongest Ministries within GoA Well-defined responsibilities within the water sector. In charge of WSS (drinking water) in rural areas	Necessary transition from Rehabilitation to Development - more comprehensive and integrated approach required for an effective WM; capacity building is required in assessment and monitoring activities Interference with the NSP in the irrigation sector; insufficient linkage with MEW/ID
	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry (MAAHF)	
	Agriculture remains the highest water consumer (99%) In charge of Natural Resources Management	Plays a secondary role within the new institutional framework limited to On-Farm WM → Current institutional power struggle within the GoA to gain control of the whole of the Irrigation section
Provincial Departments	MEW/Irrigation Department (MEW/ID)	
	ID departments are currently being re-organised	General lack of capacity and large inequality among provinces Lack of understanding of the new concepts and policies, and the MEW's new roles and responsibilities New functions of facilitation, coordination, regulation, monitoring Future role of the ID within the River Basin Authority (RBA) and the sub national levels setup is unclear
Provincial Departments (cont.)	MRRD	
	Offices are well equipped and staffing levels are good	More collaboration is needed with the ID and Agriculture Department (AD) Building technical and monitoring capacities for a proper quality control
UN agencies[17] / FAO	Experienced stakeholders in irrigation Provides Technical Assistance (TA) in the Emergency Irrigation Rehabilitation Programme (funded by WB) and other pilot irrigation projects	Participation in policy-making and capacity building Involvement for a better linkage between MEW and MAAHF, between the water and agriculture sectors

[17] UNFAO is the only UN agency referred to here. Many UN agencies (UNICEF, UNOPs, WFP, UNHCR, etc.) that played a significant role during the post-2001 transition period have now withdrawn completely (e.g. UNICEF used to be present in WSS sub-sector but is less involved now, and UNEP was involved in setting up the National Environmental Agency).

Donors	MEW World Bank, EC, ADB and German Government/GTZ Overall coordination satisfying Consensus on the institutional reforms	Coordination on capacity building efforts are needed Harmonisation of approaches for the irrigation development sub-sector More support and investment is required Improved dialogue with other donors and the MEW is required
	MRRD/WSS USAID, EC, Japan Government/JICA and UN	
	MAAHF USAID/RAMP for irrigation rehabilitation	
NGOs	Experienced stakeholders in the Afghan context and with the sector (especially WSS) Provide linkage between the community and other actors Community mobilisation and organisation promoted in the water sector, and other windows of opportunities	Scope of action reduced due to new actors, especially the private sector Improve coordination and communication at field and central levels Involvement at institutional level Specialisation and capacity building in a more demanding environment NGO image is tainted in the eyes of the community and the wider aid context Clarification (in process) between professional and less reputable NGOs
Independent consultants and international consultancy firms	Solid technical profiles and wide experience Provide Technical Assistance and capacity building for MEW and MRRD	Adaptation to the reality in the field Effectiveness and sustainability of capacity building efforts and other institutional inputs
Private sector (construction companies)	Emerging private sector has benefited from the 2005 'NGO Law', and reconstruction and development efforts Building of relevant infrastructure in the water sector	Accountability and capacity building Better registration, regulation and monitoring procedures by the State
Communities	Seen as a stakeholder with an important role to play and responsibilities in the new institutional framework	Certain degree of passiveness is the heritage of war and the humanitarian period Building trust in external aid actors and the GoA Lack of awareness on water management issues; behaviour overly oriented towards infrastructure Local governance, institutions and systems (*mirab*) disrupted by the war

3.1.2 Water and Agriculture: a difficult but essential collaboration

According to rough estimates, agriculture and irrigation together account for 99% of water usage today in Afghanistan. Despite this, the link between the MAHHF and the MEW remains problematic. Since the 1960's, the institutional and political stakes have been high in gaining control of the irrigation sub-sector. Institutional disputes between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Water Ministry date back to the early seventies when it was decided that

Agriculture and Irrigation would be separated into two distinct administrations with the creation of Irrigation Departments.

Irrigation is now officially the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy and Water and the majority of funds for irrigation are channelled through this Ministry. The 2004 water policy strategic framework states that the MAAHF is (only) entitled to manage farm water issues. The MAAHF disputes this division in tasks and roles, and claims legitimacy on irrigation as a whole and thus a wider responsibility. There is a distinct lack of clarity in the 2005 Agriculture Master Plan in terms of which institution should be responsible for addressing the different water issues. Indeed, water issues are not addressed as such, and investment in irrigation or rehabilitation requirements are not broached, except for basic food crops in the food security chapter[18].

In spring 2006, the dispute intensified with the MAAHF renaming itself as the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, setting up its own irrigation department once again.

This issue remains unresolved and has wide-reaching negative consequences. Collaboration between the MEW and the MAAHF is non-existent. The rehabilitation or modernising of irrigation schemes and the implementation of water-related operations are carried out in complete isolation from all forms of development within the agricultural sector. There is also a risk that this deadlock might hinder collaboration on other issues, such as watershed and natural resources management.

3.1.3 Water Supply and Sanitation: special highlights

The Water Supply and Sanitation sub-sector was covered in depth in last year's Water Sector Review. However some specific elements have come to light during this second phase in the LRRD research study which merit further comment and they are presented below.

3.1.3.1 WSS policy and planning

In terms of institutional responsibilities, the situation is considerably less complex than the irrigation sub-sector. The MRRD is in charge of all issues related to WSS, and NGOs represent its main interlocutor, not only at field level but also at central or institutional level. It is specifically within this sub-sector, compared with the water sector as a whole, that the role of NGOs has become sidelined. Drinking water is by nature linked to wellbeing and health and thus represented a core activity for NGOs in the past. Over the years, most NGOs have developed relevant skills and know-how on technical and sociological aspects in Afghanistan, and in other countries. The transition from Relief, Rehabilitation to Development in this sub-sector both before and after 2001 can be described as smooth. Some of the traditional stakeholders, such as NGOs and UN agencies (UNICEF), have played a significant role in ensuring this continuum. The dynamic WatSan ACBAR coordination committee has also played an important role, as it participated, albeit informally, in re-organising the sub-sector and promoting a quality and development approach even in emergency situations. These coordination efforts remained effective in the post-2001 context with bi-monthly meetings: one general meeting (hosted by MRRD) and one focusing on technical issues (hosted by DACAAR).

A simple and practical policy document developed in 2004 provides good, albeit extensive, guidelines for sub-sector stakeholders. A five year plan was drawn up at the same time.

[18] Agriculture Master Plan by the MAAHF (pg. 11)

Apart from EC and ECHO, who still provide funding to NGOs, other donors (USAID, JICA, UN agencies, etc.) direct their funding through the MRRD. In terms of project and programme implementation, NGOs act mainly as facilitating partners, in charge of overall project management, especially for software activities described below. Tripartite agreements are generally signed between the donor, the MRRD and NGOs. In some cases, the MRRD is in charge of project implementation. The construction of water points (digging of wells and boreholes) is almost exclusively carried out by the private sector.

3.1.3.2 Role of DACAAR in the WSS sub-sector

Within the WSS sub-sector, it is worth highlighting the role of the NGO, DACAAR. This organisation has been present in Afghanistan for over fifteen years working in Water Supply and Sanitation and Rural Development. Since the 1990s, DACAAR has been a prominent member of the WatSan ACBAR coordination committee, and, along with other NGOs, has actively contributed to promoting change within the WSS sub-sector, particularly in the fields of process improvement and technical innovations (see Box 4).

Box 4: Role of DACAAR in the WatSan sub-sector

In the post-2001 context, DACAAR maintained its strong position in this sub-sector, both at operational and institutional levels. As a key stakeholder, it has been helping the MRRD to develop tools and procedures, and to build a relevant institutional framework.

Similarly, DACAAR has also been engaged in the following fieldwork and project implementation activities within the WSS sub-sector:

- Design and development of a computerised Geographical Information System (GIS) as a monitoring and planning tool. The database aims to centralise information on all water points throughout the Afghan territory, and in the long run, the MRRD will take over its management.
- Setting up a ground water monitoring system in order to gather information on the evolution of the quality and level of water tables.
- Training and capacity building at MRRD (at central and provincial levels), and at Kabul University
- Chairing the WSS technical working group (monthly meetings).

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the coordination staff and some NGOs, the sub-sector has been developing an integrated and quality based approach, even during the emergency war period. Software activities, aimed at preparing communities in operating and maintaining water points and training them in the proper use of water, are now systematically provided for each water point built in order to ensure sustainability. Water committees are set up in the recipient communities prior to the construction of water points. For each project or campaign, blacksmiths are trained and they then act as referees for the maintenance of the pumps within a given area. Hygiene education is also systematically provided. Guidelines have been drafted by both MRRD and MOPH for trainers and supervisors.

Although the WSS sub-sector is well structured and has benefited significantly from the experience of NGOs, many challenges remain including:

- Assessment and design. At both NGO and MRRD levels, skills and knowledge amongst technical staff in hydrogeology remains weak. Since the identification of water point location and control of other technical parameters are not always optimal, a number water points or schemes (dry wells, water salinity ...) have fallen into disuse over time.
- Monitoring system and water quality control. Once projects are completed, a specific task and monitoring system needs to be set up at the regional level in order to check each water point on a regular basis. This is not always the case.

- Coordination and regulation. Despite the fact that mechanisms have been set up and, on the whole, the sub-sector is running smoothly, some weaknesses are still apparent. For example, there is no efficient centralisation of data and information that is required for monitoring and planning purposes. MRRD and DACAAR are finding it difficult to extract relevant information on water points from NGOs for the national database.
- Standardised and professional approach. The absence of regulatory work and documents makes it difficult for field stakeholders, i.e. NGOs and the private sector, to develop an overall understanding and uniform approach for this sub-sector.
- Planning. Unlike other water sub-sectors, such as Irrigation, WSS does benefit from national and provincial planning. However, given the difficulties experienced in gathering data and information and the absence of a monitoring system, needs assessments are not very accurate, making planning difficult.

3.1.4 Institutional framework: limited understanding and ownership at sub national level

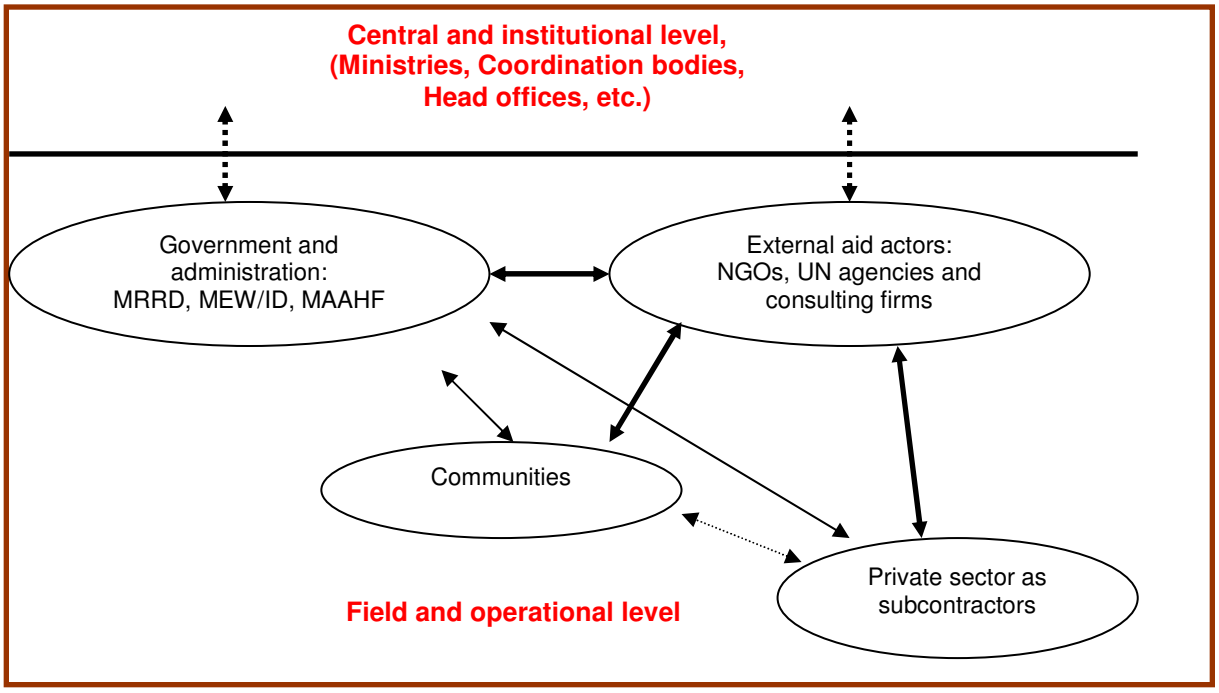
During the field trip, it was observed that field staff from administrative bodies and aid agencies, such as NGOs, do not appear to be well informed about the new water institutional framework and policies. Indeed, the Director of a provincial Irrigation Department mentioned that he had heard about the new institutional framework on the radio. Some staff are evidently ill at ease with these ideas and concepts, which appear far removed from field realities and the problems they are facing on a day-to-day basis. The concept of Integrated Water Management remains vague and abstract for a lot of staff, especially Afghan officers.

The MEW is aware that there are wide gaps between central and sub national levels, and between institutional and operational levels. Raising awareness is the first step in this overall reform process, and to this end, the MEW plans on holding workshops at the provincial level to present and discuss these issues through the GTZ advisor. It may help to define more concrete and progressive processes for the application of reforms at the river basin level and other sub levels.

3.1.4.1 Organisational framework at the sub national levels

The diagram below presents the field level organisation between the various stakeholders for the coordination and implementation of programmes (macro) and projects (micro).

Figure 7: Organisation of aid in the water sector at the sub-national level



3.2 General analysis

Since 2001, an increase in the type and number of aid stakeholders, associated with a significant division in the roles and responsibilities, has made the organisation and coordination of the overall aid sector more complex. This new situation has given rise to four main issues or concerns.

3.2.1 Improve the capacity of individual actors

The challenge facing stakeholders is ensuring that each actor fully understands and is capable of fulfilling its role. For Afghan stakeholders (GoA, communities and private sector), this implies building individual capacity and promoting accountability as they do not have the necessary experience, awareness and means to carry out new functions and tasks. For external stakeholders, this implies improving adaptability to new institutional and organisational situations and/or to the Afghan context.

3.2.2 Define leadership and improve collaboration

Working together is essential in the new institutional and operational setup and yet this is not a 'natural' asset for many of the stakeholders involved. Coordination in the field and at operational levels is achieved through general or specific, formal or informal mechanisms. Duplication is not an issue anymore, whereas it used to be a considerable problem both before and immediately after 2001. Certainly, it was never raised as an issue during the field visits. Collaboration could be more effective but, despite this, there is little evidence of conflict of culture, interests or working methods amongst the various stakeholders.

In relation to project or programme implementation, efforts are being undertaken to define a framework and conditions on which stakeholders can base their collaboration. Thanks to increasing stakeholder awareness and improved capacity, specific procedures and documents have been established for the new aid scene. This applies for both governmental macro programmes, where procedures are more developed and well formatted, and NGO projects, where they remain informal and exist in various forms, depending on the project and the implementing partner. Documents such as LoA, MoU, contacts and by-laws, etc. have become more or less systematic. During the implementation process, mechanisms exist for coordinating, exchanging information and reporting, such as steering committees, although these are not very common. Although these frameworks and mechanisms provide a useful structure, they are unlikely to resolve all the problems. Effective collaboration still also depends on individual working relationships.

3.2.3 Improve monitoring and evaluation processes

In such a new context and organisational framework, effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential. Yet many stakeholders look uneasy when certain questions are raised, such as 'Who is doing what?', 'What activities does M&E cover?', 'Who are the stakeholders involved in M&E?' and 'How do we train the staff to implement a relevant and qualitative M&E process?'. There is a real problem of capacity and experience in managing M&E procedures. Although all stakeholders concur on the importance of M&E, budgets are allocated for it and regulations governing M&E procedures have been defined for each government programme, the result on the whole is disappointing. Often, once stakeholders are deeply involved in project implementation, they show less consideration for this separate process. There are no rules and regulations for M&E in the water sector yet and each programme implemented through the donor and the Technical Assistance body defines its own system.

A body of independent staff with the necessary skills needs to be set up at central level in order to regulate and supervise the whole M&E process within the sector.

The author would like to highlight two examples where the MEW has intervened in NGO projects in the past months in relation to its regulation and monitoring functions. In the first case, the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) from the MEW visited a water flood control project in Bamiyan province. It expressed some concerns and recommendations to the NGO in relation to its implementation process and the project impact. The NGO then adjusted the project and a constructive collaboration was developed with the quoted agency. The other case refers to the construction of a large dam in Wardak province. A team of experts from the MEW Kabul detected a crack in the dam wall when carrying out the final (and unexpected) evaluation of the works. Reinforcement works were consequently planned by the NGO and the team of experts. These examples show positive signs of gradual state empowerment, and enforcement of laws, rules and regulations.

3.2.4 Increase links between central / institutional and field / operational levels

Despite the importance of ensuring solid linkage between central field levels, the present situation is not yet entirely satisfactory. In more concrete terms, the institutions undergoing development require a fuller technical and sociological understanding of the local context and would benefit from more in-depth feedback from the field by means of research studies and operational works. Generally speaking, both individually and collectively, stakeholders fail to build an effective bridge between these levels. The two following boxes (Box 5 and Box 6) illustrate this issue.

Box 5: Water mills overlooked in the revised Water Act

A Social Water Management research study carried out by two NGOs (within the KRBP) has brought to light the negative effects produced by water mills built along the canals with little regard for fair and effective water management. In some cases, water is diverted from farmland with serious consequences for irrigation and agricultural performance. A significant number of water mills were built by powerful landowners during the 1990s after the collapse of state administration and the disruption of traditional milling techniques.

The 1981 Water Act, currently under revision and adoption, stipulates in Chapter 4 that "Usage and distribution of water requires within some circumstances special authorisation through the delivery of permit and licence". However, the case of water mills is not included in the list of defined circumstances, and hence the water mill problem is overlooked.

There is a real need for NGOs and other field stakeholders to communicate this type of information to the institutional and central level, and to advocate for institutional changes or adjustments.

Field operators are not accustomed to carrying out this type of political and institutionally-oriented role, and yet the need for greater commitment is pressing. Specific efforts to capitalise on field experience and to improve communications need to be developed. The current institutional framework and stakeholders do not facilitate this process.

Box 6: Water Users Associations charter by USAID

USAID through Development Alternatives Inc. and RAMP is carrying out research on community mobilisation and water management on their Kandahar project site. The main goal is to draft a *Water Users Associations* charter which would provide a legal framework and guidance for the development of WUAs in Afghanistan.

This type of initiative, originating at field level, should be seen as a positive move. However it is regrettable that this research was not fully integrated into the institutional framework and that dialogue with the other stakeholders has not been sought, which raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the charter.

Apparently disputes have arisen within the GoA as to whether and how this charter should be amended. The reference document has been circulating informally within the water sector and amongst stakeholders but nobody really knows what position they should take. Some NGOs involved in social water management projects were wondering whether they had to consider this current charter as a reference for their own work.

3.3 Trends analysis of the main stakeholders

3.3.1 Government

The Irrigation Department (which represents the MEW at a provincial level for irrigation and water management issues) was almost nonexistent in 2001. Within the ongoing reforms, consolidating the ID offices is proving to be a slow and inequitable process. The few sector-based programmes that are being implemented have undertaken capacity building activities for ID offices, although this mainly concerns large provincial cities. Most IDs, especially those located in Central Highlands (Hazarajat) and in the South, are not fully benefiting from institutional development. In Wardak and Bamiyan provinces, ID offices appear to fulfil liaison and coordination functions rather than being fully operational actors. A large number of tasks and responsibilities are currently centralised at Kabul level. Besides the issue of accessibility, it appears to be in stakeholders' strategic interests to target areas where there is high potential for WM and irrigation development.

What will be the roles and responsibilities of ID when the *River Basin Authorities* and other institutions will be set up at sub-national levels (cf. Chapter 1)? Recent research on local WM (cf. PMIS (implemented by Groupe URD and AKDN) within the KRBP) highlights the former role of the ID in overseeing community-managed irrigation schemes, regulation issues, and conflict resolution. Within the new institutional framework, these functions will be carried out by the newly established institutions.

The facilities and operational capacity of Rural Rehabilitation Development departments have improved considerably, thanks to capacity-building efforts in the post-2001 period. The RRD network is responsible for overseeing the transition period in rural areas, and, unlike the ID, appears to be fairly well established throughout the whole of Afghanistan. NSP and drinking water programmes are being implemented in all provinces.

While local administrative offices were being set up, local authorities, i.e. provincial and district (*Uluswal*) governors, gradually relinquished control of their technical responsibilities. Before 2001, these governors were the sole interlocutors for NGOs in the field. They still play an important facilitation and coordination role, promoting dialogue between communities, aid stakeholders and line ministries.

It is worth mentioning that, except for the MAAHF, the MRRD and MEW are not represented at the district level.

3.3.2 External aid actors

As far as the water management and irrigation sub-sectors are concerned, this category includes private consulting firms, the FAO, and NGOs, whose role is minor, except within the KRBP. For the WatSan sub-sector, NGOs remain the main stakeholder as external agencies and partners of the MRRD.

From being the main, and in many areas, the unique stakeholder during the emergency relief period, NGOs have become a mere link within the overall aid chain and have lost a lot of influence in the water sector since 2001. The activities and responsibilities that used to be carried out by NGOs have now been divided up amongst other stakeholders. Initially these changes met with some resistance, due to a lack of awareness on the changing context and a strong adherence to the principle of independence. However, discussions with NGO officers and current NGO practices indicate that the shift over to government control is now complete. As far as NGOs are concerned, the new context requires substantial learning and capacity-building efforts to improve the technical capacities of their staff. Although NGOs tend to be small organisations with a high rapid reaction capacity, changes in the Afghan context have obliged them to redefine their strategy and undertake considerable internal reorganisation.

NGOs still represent the main interlocutor for local communities. They play a crucial intermediary role within the current aid system and institutional framework, providing a link between local communities, other aid agencies and local administration. Despite significant progress, high staff turnover still hampers internal capacity-building processes and their capacity to ensure sustainable and efficient management of development projects.

In order to increase their technical and financial capacity, from 2004 onwards NGOs began to build partnerships with other NGOs, or institutions, such as research institutes or universities (both national and international). This trend is particularly visible in the water sector and has been positively received by donors. Indeed, this type of partnership is a requirement for organisations participating in large, complex government programmes.

A handful of international NGOs, such as GAA and DACAAR, have decided to focus their activities on the water sector with a view to building technical capacity and expertise in this domain, and thus re-establishing their position in the new institutional framework. They intend to employ key staff at central level for better institutional coordination and backstopping. However, this process is by no means simple as it requires stable core funds.

No specific research was conducted on the role of Afghan NGOs, given their highly limited presence in the water sector (practically non-existent in the irrigation and WM sub-sectors, highly limited in WSS).

3.3.3 Communities and private sector

The 2002 National Development Framework and the current National Development Strategy, which were prepared by the GoA with donor support, both strongly emphasise the role played by the private sector and local communities as a key factor in building a sustainable and prosperous Afghanistan. Given that water is a socio-economic sector in itself, stakeholders are very much concerned by this development, which basically implies (i) a withdrawal of the state (in contrast to ideology of the 1960's and 70's) whose role will be limited to legislation, regulation and facilitation, (ii) development of construction and service delivery companies for infrastructure work, and (iii) community empowerment (water users) for overall resource management.

3.3.3.1 Communities

The degree of community involvement in WM is traditionally high in Afghanistan. State infrastructure and local administration has never completely replaced the role of communities in dealing with issues, such as natural resources management. Traditional irrigation schemes, which account for over 90% of irrigated areas, are managed by communities through the *mirab*[19] system. In rural areas, drinking water points or schemes are also operated and maintained by the users themselves. Community work, such as the maintenance of irrigation networks, is organised through the ancient *ashar*[20] system.

However, the context has changed considerably and the present water management issues and community/water user involvement are not quite so simple.

The *ashar* and *mirab* systems, and more generally local institutions and governance, have collapsed or have been highly disrupted as a result of the past 25 years of war and political instability. This has been confirmed by NGOs working in the field, as well as specific research carried out on socio-anthropology and social water management.

Moreover demand for water for irrigation purposes and other uses has increased significantly with the intensification of farming and the overall development process. There is a pressing need for a more efficient and equitable water management, as traditional and local organisation methods and management are no longer able to cope with challenges involved. Water Users Associations and other forms of water management groups need to be set up based on the strategic framework.

NGOs and other aid agency officers stressed that 'building capacity and raising awareness' on community-based water management has been the most important and difficult aspect of their work. Community empowerment first requires a certain degree of trust between the population and external aid agents. On the whole, aid stakeholders no longer enjoy the same level of trust as before 2001 and this has had a negative impact on community mobilisation processes.

Box 7: Community involvement and their relationship with NGOs

Solidarités field officer working on a water development project in the Central Highlands[21]
"*In the transitional state from emergency to development, donor and international community want to implement a democratic process, to make sure populations take part in the project and are aware of their responsibilities. But the collective work is evolving through merchandising and populations still interpret external aid as punctual and direct. We assume that development approach promoted by international community will be hard to implement given the social structure and the resentment of population..."*

"(..). the communities often do not understand NGOs' working methods. This leads to a range of resentment: disillusion, suspicion, rejection, distrust… "A lot of NGOs came, asked questions and did not do anything." (Villagers in Sum e malek and Sum e takhak)..."

"(…) *We have to consider here the massive aid following the withdrawal of Taliban. This aid was following an emergency approach with lots of means, direct gifts… "In some respect, affected people only seem to be onlookers of aid, unsure how to engage proactively with the aid community" (ALNAP, 2003). We have to take into account the current context of intervention for NGOs implementing development approach... They (NGOs) have to manage*

[19] Title and function for water master or manager within a tradition irrigation scheme
[20] "*Ashar"* means "tradition". The ashar system refers to a Communal labour, usually unpaid.
[21] Lety D., *Land development in Central Highlands of Afghanistan - Case study of Shaman plain flood control project (Bamyan Province) -Agrarian system & impact assessments*, Groupe URD, 2005

resentment coming from this background. We personally feel misunderstood from the community about our field work and its interests. The will is to change methods but the local population is still interpreting the aid as a relation donor-beneficiaries."

While this may not be the case in other sectors such as agriculture, local communities are now systematically required to contribute financially to water-related projects. Contributions are often set at 10% (based on the NSP standards for community contributions). Nevertheless many NGOs believe that this level of participation is not high enough to act as a strong incentive for community involvement in project implementation. Some NGOs and programmes apply, or plan to apply, higher contribution rates of up to 30-40%.

3.3.3.2 Private sector

After the 2005 NGO act established that NGOs should no longer engage in construction works, numerous private construction companies have emerged in Afghanistan. Indeed, in response to this new legislation, many national NGOs changed their status to private companies. This had the albeit indirect benefit of clarifying which organisations were truly functioning as NGOs and those that were more interested in profit-making construction works.

The aforementioned law and the emergence of the private sector appear to have been well accepted by external aid actors, such as NGOs. Nevertheless they are experiencing difficulties in working with this emerging and unregulated private sector on a day-to-day basis as a result of its lack of experience, professionalism and accountability. Registration procedures and regulations for the private sector have not been set up yet, and this represents a significant bottleneck within the overall aid system.

It is worth mentioning that at field level, there is a certain flexibility in the application of the 2005 NGO Act in the construction sector. In some cases, NGOs are still overseeing construction projects with strong community involvement and sharing of responsibilities.

It appears that some government programmes, such as the NSP, have failed to define a clear framework for the monitoring of private companies and their work. Similarly the role of NGOs as facilitating partners in charge of social and community mobilisation is not well defined in terms of technical and hardware issues. This aspect appears to have been delegated to ID or MRRD provincial offices although they do not have the necessary capacity to carry out effective monitoring, especially in terms of the volume of activity and the private sector's relative immaturity. The population and NGOs fear that this may result in poor performance and the quality of construction works may suffer.

Many stakeholders (Government at the different levels, communities, NGOs, donors, private sector, etc.) are playing different roles within the water sector. External aid actors are the hub of the current system while government institutions attempt to keep up the pace. Each stakeholder will be required to make many adjustments and improvements if this system is to work effectively. Greater investment in terms of time and funding is required.

Existing gaps between programme objectives and activities, and what is feasible in different contexts are having a negative impact on the water sector. Capacity building for government staff and community empowerment should be undertaken progressively within a globally coherent strategy. Donors and the international community are expecting government institutions and the population to take over the lead of the development process within a relatively short timeframe. However, capacity building goes beyond training programmes, awareness campaigns, development of water user associations and office equipment. It is also a question of education and human development.

Persons met during the field mission

Thursday 30 March	Paris – Dubai
Friday 31 March	Dubai – Kabul Team meeting: discussing the itinerary
Saturday 1 April	Meetings at MEW with Dr Thilo – Advisor for the Ministry of Energy and Water, Hans Husselman (Rodeco/GTZ) – Water sector Reform project team leader and Sayed Sharif Shobair (FAO) – EIRP Coordinator and Chief Eng.
Sunday 2 April	Theo Riedke (GAA) – Country Director Hans Huselmans
Monday 3 April	Marek Stys (People In Need) – Country Director Team work: Methodology
	Kabul – Bamiyan
Wednesday 5 April (Bamiyan)	Habib Hussaini (ICRC) – Head of Bamiyan office
	Mohammad Yasin Hotak + Eng Muharmad (UNHABITAT) – NSP program
	Eng. Saïd Anwar (MRRD/OC) – NSP programme
	Jeff (Global Partner) - Head of Bamiyan office
Thursday 6 April (Bamiyan)	Sylvain (Solidarités Yakawlang) – EU funded programme Manager
	Mohammad Yasin Hotak (UNHABITAT) – NSP programme Manager
	Ing. Shafiq Ullah (MRRD) – Water and Sanitation programme
Friday 7 April	Bamiyan – Eibak (Samangan province)
Saturday 8 April (Balgh)	Eibak – Mazar-e Sharif
	Ondrej Horvath (PIN) - Water and Sanitation EU funded Programme Officer in Dare Suf district (Samangan province)
Sunday 9 April (Sare Pul)	Visit of GAA in Sare Pul province (drinking water project and NSP) - Interviews with Daniel Bronkal (GAA), Nahida Shah (GAA) - Community Health Advisor for hygiene education and Juergen Hofmeister (GAA) – NSP manager
Monday 10 April (Balgh)	Robert WILKENS (PCI Asia consultant) – ADB EIRRP-TIC team leader
	Max Kent McGowan – Consultant for ADB BRIWRM Project
	Valentino ICRC WatSan
Tuesday 11 April (Kunduz)	Mazar-e Sharif – Kunduz
	ACTED Kunduz
	GAA – Walter Osenberg – "Social Water Management" project (KRBP)
	Ing. WAHAB- Mercy Corps Kunduz – head of infrastructures department
Wednesday 12 April (Taloqan)	AKDN and Group URD - PMIS (Participative Management of Irrigated Systems) (KRBP)
	Eng. SALIM – Irrigation department Director – Taloqan province
Thursday 13 April (Kunduz)	M. Khalima AMINI – Irrigation department Director – Kunduz province
	Jelle BEEKMA – KRBP – Kunduz
Friday 14 April	Kunduz – Kabul
Saturday 15 April (Kabul)	Kabul: team work
Sunday 16 April (Kabul)	Benny Werge (DACAAR) – Rural Development Programme Manager; Didier (DACAAR) – Water and Sanitation programme advisor and Jahangir Khan (DACAAR) – Research Support Officer
	Valérie MEILHAUD (ICRC) - Water and Sanitation Coordinator
	Eng. Hashim Mayar (ACBAR) – Deputy Director
Monday 17 April (Wardak)	M. Amanullah (Solidarités Afghanistan Belgique) – Field Office Manager
	Eng. Anwar (MEW/ID) – Director
	Eng. Wali Mohammad (MRRD) – Programmes Director
	Jorgen Holmstrom (SCA) – Regional Director + Dr Wakil Ziar and Arif + Quadratullah (NSP PM)
	M. Shah Mahdan (DACAAR) – RDP regional coordinator
	Brendan Whitty (AREU) – Research support Officer
Tuesday 18 April	DACAAR team in Jeghatu district (Visits of projects; interviews with farmers and water users)

Wednesday 19 April	Visits in chak and Jalez districts
Thursday 20 April	Dr V. Haraprasad – Water supply advisor (MRRD)
	Gedlu Sima (UNHCR/MRRD)
Friday 21 April	Workshop preparation
Saturday 22 April	Workshop preparation
Sunday 23 April	Workshop preparation
Monday 24 April	Workshop
Tuesday 26 April	Dr Henri Suter (AKDN) – Rural Development Coordinator
	Hans Husselman (MEW/GTZ/RODECCO) – Water reforms Advisor
	Eng. Ramazan (MADERA) – Area Manager (Wardak province)
Wednesday 27 April	Patricia Garcia (GAA) – Programme Manager
	Leendert Vijselaar (DACAAR) – Water Supply and Sanitation Director
Monday 1St May	Kabul – Paris

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4 AGRICULTURE SECTOR

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Around 85% of the Afghan population lives in rural areas. Agriculture and raising of livestock are of great importance to the Afghan economy and are essential for rural livelihoods. In 1978, just before the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan was self sufficient in food and at the same time exported agricultural produce. During the 25 years of war that followed, much of the rural infrastructure and means of production collapsed. Opium production has tripled since 2003 and the country currently accounts for 87% of the global opium production. In many cases, farmer's strategies depend on the risks and opportunities they have to deal with. Given that climatic risks[22] as well as other kinds of hazards weigh significantly on farming systems, farmer's often orient their farming strategies towards risk reduction whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to develop coping mechanisms. The coping mechanisms used by Afghan farmers during wartime have been well documented by many authors and experts.

Three core ministries have been involved in agriculture and natural resource management – the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH), the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources, and Environment (MIWRE), and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). This report is mainly focused on the agricultural sector.

For decades, the development of the agricultural sector in Afghanistan has been mainly associated with emergency relief and rural rehabilitation. Roads, bridges and canals have been rehabilitated or built. Projects have focused on providing emergency aid such as free distributions (seeds, fertilisers, tools, etc.) or free services. Over the past two years, the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) has placed the priority on the development of the private sector which is expected to ensure rapid growth of the rural economy. The Master Plan for Agriculture, prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF) and numerous consultants, was launched in November 2005 and is composed of two sectors: livestock and the development of high value horticulture for export. It also highlights the importance of addressing food security issues and prioritises environmental issues such as reforestation, rangeland management and watershed management.

There is a wide diversity of agro-systems within Afghanistan. Agro-systems and farming systems are affected by a number of different factors such as climate, altitude, soil specificities and access to water, roads and markets. These different parameters were taken into account when designing the field mission itinerary. Other factors such as proximity to the border, the role of the private sector, NGO activities over the past years are other elements of diversity and were also taken into account. In this report, we will only address issues that are strictly related to the agricultural sector. The community mobilisation component (also called social mobilisation) will be taken into account in this report but activities related to rural infrastructure, water and sanitation, irrigation[23] and micro-finance programmes will not.

4.1 Patterns and current trends in agricultural programmes implemented by NGOs

Before presenting the achievements, constraints and keys issues or threats in the agriculture sector, it is valid to consider the context in which agricultural programmes are being implemented.

4.1.1 The MAAHF, moving towards a strategy for the agriculture sector?

Prior to 2004, the MAAHF as a whole benefited from less international support than other ministries such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). The change in government that took place in December 2004 and the nomination of a new Minister of Agriculture

[22] In Afghanistan, crop and livestock production fluctuates each year in relation to the severity and duration of droughts which range from mild to severe.

[23] For water/sanitation and irrigation see Rivière N., Water and Irrigation sector review, Groupe URD, LRRD programme, 2005

led to renewed donor interest. In January 2005, the Ministry was renamed "Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry ***and Food***", as opposed to Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry (MAAH).

The Master Plan of Agriculture aims at fixing the priorities for the development of the agricultural sector. At the time of writing (May 2006), a draft of the implementation document of the Master Plan is under discussion. This document presents the sequence of activities that should be undertaken to execute the Master Plan. It lays out in what order activities should be implemented, when, and gives a profile of each activity.

Nowadays, the MAAHF officially employs a total of 12,000 staff members at national, provincial and district levels. At provincial level, the different departments of agriculture are more or less effective depending on the province. There is little homogeneity in the level of equipment, funding availability and technical knowledge in the different provinces. In Kunduz, where the French cooperation has assisted in rehabilitation of extension and research units, the research section is active and, together with International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), MAAHF staff is involved in research activities (seed tests mainly). However, the Bamiyan office has fewer resources and the department is effectively dormant. In each case, staff request more training and more investment for research and extension work. This is certainly linked to the fact that during the 1970's the agricultural extension system functioned well and was seen as the main pillar of the ministry's activities. However, during the war period the system collapsed, and staff are now considerably older and methods are outdated.

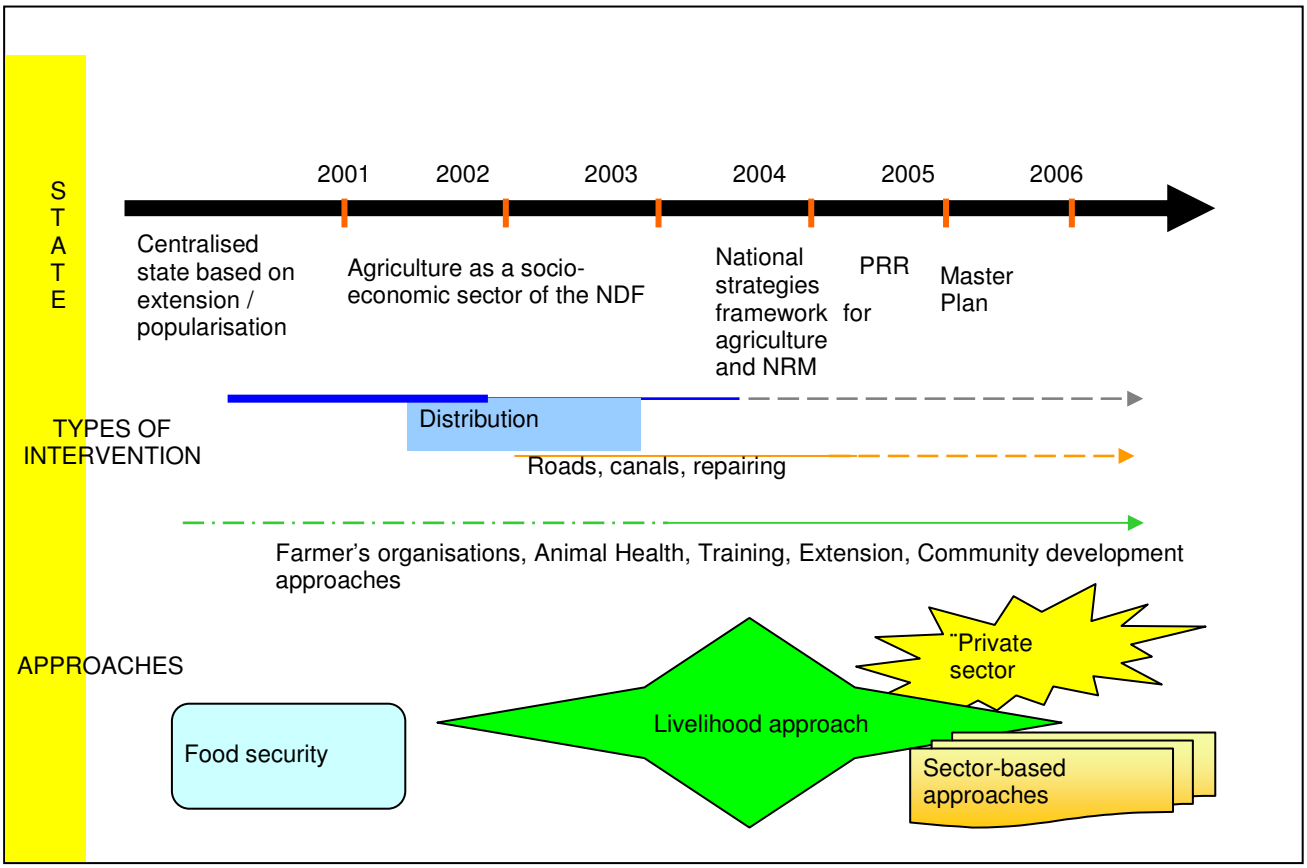
At the provincial level, the focus is often placed on re-establishing former public research and extension system. MAAHF's staff expects this system to be run by the government and inputs to be provided by the private sector. The staff's role would be to distribute inputs and run training programmes rather than provide relevant and adapted services to farmers. It is worth underlining that the intentions expressed in the Master Plan in relation to the role and responsibilities of the MAAHF are not well understood by staff at the provincial/ district level. Indeed, the Master Plan emphasises that the MAAHF is responsible for ensuring that services are provided to farmers (monitoring and evaluation task) and yet it also states that the MAAHF is not necessarily responsible for the actual delivery of services.

4.1.2 Evolution of the types of programmes in the agricultural sector

The types of programmes and approaches adopted within the agriculture sector have evolved considerably over the past years. Before 2001, although the condition of farmers was clearly affected by the war and the Taliban regime, some NGO's were already implementing development programmes.

After the withdrawal of the Taliban and the drought (1999-2001), many NGOs launched agricultural projects in Afghanistan. From 2001 until 2003 most of the programmes were oriented towards emergency and rehabilitation (distribution and reconstruction of infrastructure were quite important at that time), but some donors (like the EC, SDC) were also funding programmes with a longer term approach to enhance food security. Moreover, it is clear that since 2002-03 there has been a clear shift in the way food aid is delivered. From free food distributions and food-for-work programmes in response to acute food insecurity (related to drought, displacement, etc.), programmes have progressively shifted towards the use of food aid to support development objectives. The livelihoods concept began to spread throughout the humanitarian community from 2002-03 onwards, as stakeholders began to broaden their understanding of food security concepts. Analysing rural livelihoods beyond the borders of solely agrarian incomes undoubtedly marked the beginnings of a transition towards a development approach. Nowadays, the livelihood approach is widespread especially regarding poppy eradication.

Figure 8: The evolution of the type of interventions and approaches in the agricultural sector



Source: Groupe URD

4.1.3 Growth of the private sector

The MAAHF has defined a framework for private sector development. The Master Plan prioritises the public services that are required to fully mobilise the immense private sector potential. It guards against subsidies of any goods and services that the private sector can provide. It establishes rules and regulations that may foster private sector growth, especially in exports. The Master Plan warns that *"in Afghanistan at this stage of rehabilitation and development the private sector farmer and entrepreneurs require critical government services if they are to compete on international markets. Some of these services are purely temporary, much provided by foreign assistance and envisioned as provided outside of government institutions, to disappear when no longer needed."* The food and agricultural business sector is seen as one of the most important domains in Afghanistan's development, especially as some donors' strategies clearly include promoting their national businesses in the country. This is notably visible through the arrival of large dairy companies (Land O' Lakes, Tetra Pak, Nestlé). Furthermore, the current urbanisation rate indicates that there will be an increasing demand for commercial food products.

4.2 Main evolutions in the agricultural sector

4.2.1 Main trends

Over the past few decades, Afghanistan has undergone considerable change in its economic policy, from a semi-marked-led economy in the 1960's and 1970's, to a highly centralised system in the 1980's. The Ministry of Agriculture was marked by its lack of policy, resources and overall vision during the civil war and the Taliban period. During the war, the majority of agricultural service delivery, extension and popularisation activities were implemented by NGOs and eventually by other international organisations. The fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 and the

creation of the AIA (Afghan Interim Authority), followed by the establishment of the ITSA (Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan) in July 2002, marked the beginnings of a massive influx of aid.

The first document to outline and define the main policies and strategies for the coming years was the National Development Framework (NDF) presented in April 2002. This document provides a number of guidelines and principles for reconstruction in Afghanistan. The NDF sets the role of the government as regulator, policy/strategy maker, evaluator and promoter of entrepreneurial investment, while production and management of the economy is assigned to the private sector. This document addresses the division of responsibilities and roles between the public and private sector. Justice, security and equality, investment in human capital as well as social wellbeing remain the responsibility of the state, while it is hoped that these efforts simultaneously create an encouraging and friendly environment for the private sector.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) was seriously weakened during the two decades of war, and its capacity to deliver viable and reliable services to farmers has been dramatically reduced. The majority of qualified staff has either left the country or has joined international organisations, such as UN agencies or NGOs where salaries are ten to twenty times higher than government institutions. Consequently, in order to fulfil its new role and responsibilities, the MAL was obliged to carry out sweeping reforms, drawing up new strategies, policies and reviewing its infrastructure in line with the goals outlined in the NDF.

In 2004, “a policy and strategy framework for the rehabilitation and development of agriculture and natural resource sector in Afghanistan” was prepared by the MAL and reviewed by the major development partners.

4.2.2 Key players

The table below summarises the main opportunities, challenges and threats brought in since 2001.

Table 4: Actors of change in the agriculture sector

Key players	Opportunities	Challenges and threats
MAAHF at central level	Development of a policy for the agriculture sector (the Master Plan) Definition of responsibilities at the department level Slowly gained donor confidence Building the private sector with the support of certain sectors	Weaknesses in term of capacity Lack of comprehensive understanding of Afghan farming systems and the diversity of farmers strategies Need to develop links with NGOs for lessons and knowledge sharing The MAAHF remains responsible for addressing the needs of the poorest communities. What plans are there to address vulnerabilities in the future? Urgent need to communicate the MAAHF’s new role with MAAHF staff at different levels and the Afghan population
Provincial Agriculture Departments	Application of PRR decree has commenced to ensure that adequate salaries can be paid and encourage trained staff to stay with the PADs National plan for capacity-building with EC funding	Lack of understanding of the MAAHF’s new role and responsibilities Lack of technical knowledge and updated tools for farming system analysis Levels of corruption remain high
UNFAO	Participation in policy-making and capacity building	Ensure sustainability of their action Should UNFAO implement projects on its own? Some questions persist regarding the relevance of an emergency approach for some FAO programmes?
Donors	Willing to work with and through the MAAHF Adopted a coherent, policy-based	Need to define a common approach for certain issues (e.g. it is paradoxical to conduct free seed distributions and develop a

	approach to agriculture sector development Willing to strengthen staff capacity at the different levels	sustainable wheat seed market)
Implementing partners (IP's)	They have a good access to communities	Experience often restricted to Afghanistan with limited exposure to international debate Their knowledge is not sufficiently optimised as they rarely participate in programme definition Risk of institutionalisation Lack of quality assurance methods
NGOs	Long-term experience in providing agricultural service delivery and implementing agricultural programmes Some NGOs have an in-depth understanding of farmers' strategies, assets and constraints Agents of social change ensuring that the most vulnerable are taken into consideration They provide a good link between the state, communities and the growing private sector	Some suffer from financial vulnerability Need to strengthen their links with the MAAHF More lesson learning and sharing mechanisms are required Some have the potential to develop their advocacy roles Need to clarify their mandate and responsibilities
Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)	Quick impact projects	Blurring of the distinction between military and humanitarian action Difficult coordination with NGO methods and principles. Free distributions is often harmful Lack of understanding of national policies and MAAHF strategies

Nowadays, we can differentiate three main types of NGOs in terms of their length of involvement in Afghanistan, mandate, principles and amount of core funds.

4.2.2.1 Non specialised NGOs and 'Implementing Partners'

This category includes both national and international NGOs, many of whom began implementing projects in 2002. They started working in the country during the emergency period and were involved in different sectors (health, education, water/sanitation, agriculture, infrastructure rehabilitation). Nowadays, these NGOs are often Implementing Partners (IPs) for UN agencies or national programme (like the NSP).

Donors that favour QIP (Quick impact projects) are accustomed to working with this type of NGO because one of their main advantages is indeed their rapid response capacity and flexibility in their methods and the approaches. Their strategies are partly based on a high programme implementing rate and a high visibility.

Their methods and programmes are often carried out in emergency mode. They are mainly used to implementing short term programmes based on distribution of agricultural inputs. The assessment phase before implementation is very weak, sometimes practically inexistent. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) processes are always based on quantitative data that are often analysed at the Kabul level by people with a very limited understanding of the context. They are often seen as a means of implementing programmes which have been designed by others. In many cases, it appears that stakeholders do not value their advice or ideas very highly. They are often just informed of programme modalities and the area of implementation without any wider consultation or involvement in defining the implementation strategy. The head of a National NGO in Mazar-e Sharif complained that his organisation was not involved in the selection of the areas nor the beneficiaries, *"We surely have a better access to the field, we know farmers' needs, we should be the ones in charge of assessment and methodology. At least we could advise them. But our role is*

limited to deliver aid, and that's it." With regards to an emergency programme that was implemented last year, *"It was an emergency programme, we did not have time to discuss but the results were not good. Part of the wheat did not germinate because the seeds were not adapted to the area".* In some cases these NGOs have a good knowledge of the area (social networks, farmers' expectations) and should be consulted more during project design.

However, one of their main limitations is a lack of understanding of some concepts, such as the livelihood framework and participative tools.

4.2.2.2 NGOs with a long involvement in Afghanistan

Another category is composed of NGOs (mainly international but also national NGOs) which have been involved in Afghanistan for many years. Some of them began their work during the Russian occupation. They have generally maintained the same areas of intervention over the years and have built up a strong relationship with the population. These NGOs are highly appreciated locally since they have proved their commitment to the communities. Nowadays they are involved in providing training programmes for farmers, improved seed programmes (with demonstration plots, wheat seed enterprise development) and animal health. Most of them are aiming to maintain their focus on the most vulnerable people. However, these NGOs are also looking at ways of developing the private sector and adapting their approaches to help support private initiatives.

NGOs in this category have developed different community approaches and some of them are now involved in NSP projects. They have understood the need to shift from emergency methods towards a development mode and are aware that they must avoid creating artificial service delivery mechanisms. Many NGO staff members encountered during the mission and then in Kabul pointed out that they are aware of the need to invest more time, money and energy in an in-depth assessment before implementing a project. They also underlined the fact that they should develop an M&E system based on quality. Certain NGOs have already set up a branch dedicated to research and evaluation. They have often invested considerable amounts of time and energy in building staff capacity, yet the need to recruit higher numbers Afghan staff for management positions is becoming increasingly apparent. Considerable changes are required if staff are to shift from the prevailing attitude of *'changing farmers' habits'* towards a strategy whereby farmers' real needs are being met and the situation is monitored regularly to ensure an appropriate response.

The three main constraints encountered by these NGOs are the following. Firstly, they are highly dependent on donor funding. Most of the time, they have no – or only very limited – core funds which limits their room for manoeuvre and capacity to implement relevant projects. Secondly, they generally have to deal with high staff turnover as the salaries they propose to local and international staff are relatively low. Often, they often find it difficult to retain staff despite capacity-building efforts over the years.

Last but not least, communication and coordination with the government at Kabul level remains weak despite having developed strong partnerships with local authorities over the years and the necessary networks.

4.2.2.3 Large NGOs with solid core funds

The NGOs in this category have spent varying amounts of time working in Afghanistan. Some have been involved in Afghanistan for at least one or two decades, others began implementing their programmes immediately after the fall of the Taliban.

During the emergency period, these NGOs were involved in distributing food and non-food items distribution. In 2003, some of them, such as AKF-A (Agha Khan Foundation for Afghanistan), moved from their initial sector-based and emergency-driven approach towards a more holistic, integrated and demand-driven rural development programme[24]. At this point, they began to wind

[24] FOCUS (the humanitarian branch of the AKDN (Agha Khan Development Network) remained in charge of the humanitarian aid.

down the free distribution programmes with a view to creating a space for a demand-driven approach. Other agencies, such as Oxfam have a wider mandate, implementing both emergency and development programmes. Since one of Oxfam's principles is to address the needs of the most vulnerable, they tend to implement more emergency-oriented programmes when necessary.

More generally, these NGOs are implementing a wide range of activities, including seed programmes, animal health, agro-business development and natural resources management. In general, they have a good communications strategy and have developed a strong network around the world (Oxfam is working in 30 different countries). These NGOs clearly state their willingness to develop an integrated approach and have been instrumental in promoting the livelihood approach for some years. In general they have developed a strong focus on community development and have their own approaches and tools. For instance, AKF-A uses the village development planning process to identify sector-based issues and opportunities at the village level.

Their main assets are good technical expertise and experienced staff at least at the Kabul and provincial levels. The integrated approach they have adopted has received much recognition and is often well appreciated by donors and partner agencies. The fact that they have core funding gives them good room for manoeuvre. Since the salaries they offer are generally among the highest within the NGO sector, they generally succeed in retaining their staff longer than other NGOs.

Another important asset is that they understand the importance of improving project quality. They plan to achieve this by increasing research activities, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to build a more solid link between the local communities and the growing private sector.

NGOs within this category also have to face a certain numbers of constraints. Although many have invested time and money in capacity-building for their staff; most positions of responsibility are held by expatriate staff. This is also linked to the fact that these NGOs often belong to a worldwide network and management staff are required to understand and apply concepts and methods that form part of the NGO's core principles. Additionally, large NGOs generally lack flexibility and their rapid-response capacity is less developed. Their overhead costs are among the highest as a result of a fairly burdensome administrative structure.

4.3 Main achievements to date

Since the election of Hamid Karzai in 2002 and the parliamentary elections of October 2004, the situation in Afghanistan has evolved on many levels. For sometime, it appeared that these changes were only taking place in Kabul. However, since 2004 the needs and expectations in the provincial departments are being addressed more effectively.

4.3.1 Securing agricultural production

As the Master Plan states: "the government and donors succeeded in rescuing the people from eminent starvation, repairing and expanding infrastructure such as rural roads, and providing some marketing facilities to assist agriculture to move forwards."

In some areas, food security issues have been addressed for most farmers. Livelihoods have been secured due to emergency, rehabilitation and development projects. The considerable efforts undertaken by a handful of NGOs to provide aid during the conflict period have had a positive impact on a certain number of households. Their contribution to turning agricultural performance around is impressive. Improved wheat seed programmes, extension and popularisation programmes, kitchen gardens projects, animal health programmes and so forth have increased farmers' coping mechanisms. Looking beyond economic factors, it is important to underline the socio-political impact that these programmes have had. The activities carried out by NGOs during the conflict period and, even to this day, have provided invaluable support to the population. They

have won the trust of local communities, giving them a significant advantage over other stakeholders.

Wheat is the main cereal and staple food and accounts for 70% of the total cultivated field crops. With an average yield of two tons per hectare, the productivity of irrigated wheat is generally considered to be between two or three times that of rain-fed wheat. The wheat seed market has evolved considerably over the past few years. Although over 50% of the wheat field crop in Afghanistan is made up of improved varieties, the quality of seeds in use remains poor. The informal sector made up of farmers' saved seeds, and both exchange and supplies from local markets account for nearly 85% of all seed used. Nevertheless, since 2001 seed control procedures have been established and a seed law has been designed by the MAAHF (assisted by FAO). Many demonstration plots have been set up throughout the country to encourage the development and use of improved wheat seed. Today, NGOs and the FAO are working actively towards setting up or strengthening the private seed market (e.g. the wheat seed enterprise programme of the FAO). However, as discussed later, the lack of common strategy regarding the seed sector is hampering progress.

Although wheat is an important crop for the Afghan population, attaining self sufficiency in wheat should not be a priority. Neighbouring countries are producing larger quantities of wheat and export some of their production to Afghanistan. It would not be possible for the GoA to adopt a protectionist policy indefinitely and in the long term internal markets could not compete with the incoming wheat from neighbouring countries.

According to Maletta, (2003) "*of the 6.5 million hectares of actually cultivable land in the country, only about four million hectares at best can be cultivated per year. This is mainly because 3.5 million hectares apt for rain-fed cultivation could not be all planted simultaneously as they only admit crops on a rotational basis; also because the remaining 3.0 million hectares of irrigated land are only partially cultivated because of various problems in the irrigation systems, ranging from destroyed infrastructure to abuse of water rights, plus the protracted effects of the recent drought on the availability of water at underground aquifers and reservoirs, both still undergoing replenishment. Some irrigated land is cropped twice a year, but most give only one crop per year."* Since population density is increasing, high value crops are becoming more and more desirable. For instance, in Baharak Valley (Badakshan province) land rents have become so expensive that cropping wheat is longer economically viable[25].

Wheat is certainly not a crop that will secure Afghan farming systems in the long term. The emphasis on livestock improvement and horticulture outlined in the Master Plan are certainly two relevant objectives. However, one has to be careful that this benefit to the poorest.

4.3.2 Rationalisation within the MAAHF

At the provincial level, salaries are now being paid on a regular basis. Duties and responsibilities are more or less assigned to the MAAHF staff. In some provinces (e.g. Balkh and Kunduz), research activities are effectively being carried out on different crops (often in partnership with ICARDA, FAO).

4.3.3 Improvement of coordination mechanisms

Coordination between the different aid stakeholders and the Department of Agriculture has improved considerably. In 2004, the government complained that it was being sidelined by the different stakeholders in terms of the types of projects being implemented. Since 2005, at the provincial level, staff acknowledge that the situation has improved. Today, the Department of Agriculture plays an important role in the assessment and choice of the type of programmes to be implemented.

[25] Duchier J.C., Pascal P., *Understand need diversity to design sustainable programmes*, www.urd.org, 2005
Duchier J.C., *Blé ou pavot? les paysans ont choisi*, www.urd.org, 2006

Provincial Coordination Body (PCB) meetings have been helpful in improving coordination and exchange of information. The ministry's strategy and policies are now shared more effectively with staff at the provincial level thanks to a series of workshops organised by the MAAHF.

4.4 Constraints / Key challenges and risks

Major changes have taken place since 2002, both at the national and provincial levels, thanks in part to large amounts of money that have been invested in rebuilding the institutional framework of the Afghan government. Still, Afghans are holding their breath. The advances made so far are fragile and challenging work lies ahead if this progress is to be consolidated.

4.4.1 The right balance between reducing vulnerability and building the private sector

Given the recent renaming of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food, one would expect a greater emphasis to be placed on food security issues, notably to counterbalance the prominence given to commercial agriculture and international trade. This is not the case, as American support to this Ministry continues to focus primarily on commercial agriculture and the development of the private sector, notably through the RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Programme).

Food aid issues, including relevance and limitations in Afghanistan, are still subject to vast debate. Some claim food aid needs have been over-estimated (Neun & Fitzherbert, 2003) even though the results of the NRVA 2003 tend to confirm that many Afghan households still suffer from acute food insecurity and will continue to rely on food aid until longer-term social security and safety nets are established. People living in mountainous areas where the winter season lasts for more than six months are partially food insecure. In Ghor, Samangan, in certain districts of Bamiyan province and in Nuristan, many families face food shortages (in terms of quality and quantity). Even though food security is no loner a nationwide problem, some Afghan families still have to cope with food shortages every year, and a great number of them will continue to do so in the case of severe droughts or flooding.

Undoubtedly, the development of the private sector will strengthen the Afghan economy as it fuels the local economy and replaces certain imported products. Nevertheless it is important that the GoA and NGOs continue to monitor the way the private sector engages, as there are potential negative impacts, for both Afghan consumers and producers. It is important that the MAAHF clarifies the strategies for targeting the most vulnerable farmers. Out of the 396 pages of the Master Plan, the word "vulnerable" appears only thirteen times. The overlying principle is basically that the development of the private sector, will, in the end, help the poorest households[26]. It is likely that this doctrine is at least partially valid for some contexts. However, it remains to be seen how long the poorest will have to wait before they begin to benefit from private sector development. For the time being, what plans are being made by the State for the most vulnerable farming households and for landless people, who represent a growing proportion of Afghan farmers? One of the most common criticisms of the current reconstruction process in Afghanistan is the risk that the 'get rich quick' class at the top will get richer while the poor who were encouraged to invest heavily in 'reconstruction' and promised prosperity will be left aside.

Addressing vulnerabilities remains a challenge for the GoA and the international community alike, and one that should not be overlooked just because some key players prefer to shift towards a model where the State would play a predominantly monitoring role.

[26] "It is the multipliers from that increase in farm incomes that will drive the rural non-farm sector and take care of the poor. Much of that increase can come soon through large increases in the production per hectare of existing orchards and vineyards. Farmers will grow wealthier just from the gradual maturing of tree and vine plantings, but the rural non-farm population will be delayed in receiving the benefits of cash income increase." Master Plan, p21

4.4.2 The fight to reduce poppy production

The GoA has made drug eradication a priority in its global strategy. A U.S.-led and DFID antidrug efforts focus on eliminating poppy cultivation at the level of individual farmers. Some NGOs believe that this approach may be harmful for individual farmers. Poppy is a very high value crop. Most stakeholders now agree that there is no single crop that can compete with poppy in terms of benefits. The eradication campaign taking place in Afghanistan impoverishes farmers and is turning millions of Afghans against their government. Many analysts are convinced that the current rise in insecurity levels in some parts of the country (Mazar-e Sharif, Baghlan, Herat) is a direct consequence of the eradication campaign. In Jalalabad, farmers have decided to grow poppy this year because, last year, they did not receive any help in developing viable alternatives when they agreed to grow other crops, despite pledges. Some NGOs, such as CARE, Mercy Corps and Oxfam, who are known for their advocacy roles, have condemned these campaigns. They argue that this strategy fails to address the problem which is not driven by the poor farmers themselves but by processors and merchants who sell the processed merchandise further up the chain.

A certain number of alternative livelihoods programmes are being implemented but only in a few targeted provinces (northeastern, and southern and eastern parts of the country). Poppy production is a direct consequence of poverty. If poppy fields are destroyed, some farmers will have no choice but to sell their lands, assets or even family members to survive. Poppy eradication will take time and should be based on a pro-poor long-term approach. NGOs have an important role to play since they have a good understanding of the factors affecting farmers' decision-making processes.

4.4.3 Concerns about the wheat seed market

For many years, improved wheat seed programmes have been a central tenet of development programmes. A total of 10,000 tons of improved variety seed (accounting for about 5% of total seed requirements) are currently being produced in the country each year. As mentioned previously, although the efforts made to strengthen the wheat market have yielded good results, it is worth raising the following issues.

4.4.3.1 Free or earned?

Firstly, the improved seed market remains mainly artificial as almost all of the seed is bought by development agencies to be distributed to farmers either for free or at very low cost[27]. Farmers are offered preferential prices, prompting them to sow wheat in their fields. For many years NGOs have been trying to set up a sustainable wheat seed market at the village level. To achieve this objective, they have established demonstration plots to test the varieties and show farmers the results. They have also set up a network of contract growers (also called seed multipliers). Although the emergency period is over, some aid stakeholders such as USAID and USDA (United State Department for Agriculture) are continuing to fund free wheat seed distribution in several provinces. When a free distribution occurs in an area, wheat seed producers encounter considerable difficulties in selling their improved seed, discouraging many from continuing the process. This also calls into question the credibility of NGOs that are trying to adopt a long-term approach.

Free wheat seed distribution undoubtedly has a highly detrimental effect on sustainability since it jeopardises the long-term approach developed by different agencies. The FAO is working on the development of wheat seed enterprise at the provincial level[28]. Certain initiatives that are aiming for a sustainable wheat seed market are being called into question by the practices and approaches of other stakeholders.

[27] A number of NGOs are proposing low price 'packages' composed by one bag of wheat and one of urea.

[28] A five-year project funded by the EC is scheduled to start in 2006, to follow on from current FAO-implemented projects (wheat seed enterprise). This new project will cover all aspects of commercialisation and privatisation of the seed business.

Free wheat seed distribution may still be relevant in certain specific contexts, but wide distribution programmes of seed and agricultural tools should be discouraged since it seriously handicaps the prospects of effective demand-driven services, which is, in theory, the overall objective of the MAAHF. For instance, it appears highly inappropriate to engage in free wheat seed distributions in Jalalabad or Kunduz provinces, where the private sector is beginning to develop and most farmers have enough cash to buy their own seed. Similarly, FFW/CFW (Food for Work, Cash for Work) processes should be avoided where emergency needs are no longer. The longer organisations continue to deliver services or inputs without any user contributions (i.e. unpaid contributions), the greater the risk of exacerbating aid dependency.

4.4.3.2 Lack of common policies

Although, many experts have argued that wheat is not a viable alternative to poppy cultivation (Pain, Favre, Duchier and Pascal) and that to curb poppy production in Afghanistan a long-term integrated approach is required, wheat seed distributions are still being carried out as part of alternative livelihood programmes. In 2004 and 2005, USAID distributed US$25 million worth of wheat and fertilisers in efforts to discourage farmers to plant poppy crops. Although these distributions were approved by the MAAHF at the national level, some departments of agriculture argued they had not been consulted. Many NGOs pointed out that they were not aware that the distributions were going to take place. In some cases, the distributed seed was not adapted to the agro-ecological environment, with a lower germination rate than one of the local varieties. NGOs also report that farmers have complained about the quality of the seed but did not protest too much because the seed was distributed for free.

There is indeed an urgent need to develop a common approach for improving crop production, food security and farming income. At present, a variety of different strategies for distributing improved wheat seed are being employed, with the risk of contradiction.

4.4.3.3 Lack of assessment

Last but not least, assessment processes need to be strengthened. In some areas (e.g. Baharak valley in Badakshan[29]), farmers grew wheat instead of trying out other cropping systems that are better adapted to their constraints, such as pressure on real estate. It appears that wheat seed programmes have had a negative impact on farmers' traditional coping strategies. The study carried out in Baharak valley[30] indicates that 80% of households are unable to ensure the sustainability of their farming systems based on wheat. When farmers are faced with land constraints (which is highly common in Afghanistan), it is in their interest to grow high value crops rather than wheat.

In certain circumstances, when it may be relevant for the aid community to engage in free seed distribution, such as drought, flooding just after sowing, locusts or other pests, or in some parts of the country, such as remote and mountainous areas, it is important that these operations are well prepared and beneficiaries are targeted carefully. In all cases, free distributions should be based on a thorough assessment and followed by an in-depth evaluation and lesson learning exercise.

4.4.4 Concerns about national programmes

Certain programmes, such as the NSP, the GAIN (Greening Afghanistan Initiative Network) or the RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program) are being implemented on a national scale. The main concern about these programmes is that stakeholders adopt the same approach in each region and pay little heed to local specificities. For instance, it would be interesting to understand why the GAIN project has decided to give 2,500 trees to each female beneficiary. The distribution of such a large number of trees might raise some problems. Of these 2,500 trees, the women are

[29] Duchier, J.C., Pascal, P., Understanding diversity to design sustainable programmes, the case of wheat seed programmes in Baharak, Badakshan province, Groupe URD, www.urd.org, 2005

[30] Duchet C, Pascal P, Why and how to improve women's programs. Enhance income generation activities and improve food quality, Groupe URD, 2005

supposed to plant 500 on their land and sell the remaining 2,000. If ten women are given 2,500 trees in a village, a total of 20,000 trees will have to be sold in the village. One of the GAIN project's implementing partners was unable to provide clear information on how they proposed to support these women in selling their trees (marketing, storage, etc.).

The two main constraints affecting the NSP programs is the enormous amount of paperwork involved and its village level approach. It is inappropriate for Community Development Councils (CDC) which are set up at the village level to manage certain resources, such as irrigation, which is traditionally managed at the canal level.

Agrarian systems in Afghanistan and farmers' strategies (constraints and opportunities) are highly diversified. It is essential that stakeholders have a thorough understanding of local specificities and are able to factor this diversity into their programmes. Programmes implemented on a national scale should be flexible enough to take into account this diversity and meet communities' needs, as well as dealing with constraints and taking advantage of opportunities as far as possible.

4.4.5 Community mobilisation: defining a common approach

The situation on the field in terms of community mobilisation is rather confusing. There are numerous different types of councils or community groups, and these have often been created with NGO support (including the CDC). In a single village, it is possible to identify at least three or four different community groups depending on the type of project and the IP or FP (Facilitating Partner). It seems that the MRRD is currently trying to harmonise these different forms of community mobilisation, an important step if the CDC is to channel efforts for developing and strengthening farmers' institutions.

4.4.6 Strengthening the development of farmers' organisations and financial services

Setting up farmers' groups or cooperatives is one of the current priorities of the MAAHF. Farmers' groups are seen as a way of strengthening private sector development and improving and rationalising farmers' organisation networks. However caution should be applied when communicating about farmers' organisations to the community. The Russian cooperative system remains firmly etched in people's minds and many farmers do not understand the advantages of forming groups. For this process to be efficient and sustainable, farmers need to be able to see how they stand to benefit (access to credit, reducing processing costs, etc.).

In Afghanistan, many farmers have reached high levels of indebtedness. Depending on the type of credit, interest rates can be extremely high, and this represents a significant constraint for farmers, limiting their capacity for investment and innovation. To combat excessive indebtedness, MISFA and USAID are funding micro-finance projects in the provinces. However, the duration of funding is not always appropriate. In Kunduz, an NGO explained that they received funding for a micro-finance project but once the twelve-month period was complete, the donor refused to extend the funding for certain reasons (new strategic priorities in Afghanistan). A twelve-month timeframe is obviously insufficient to successfully a micro-credit project, especially as this type of financing mechanism is completely new to Afghanistan. Given that community awareness and training programmes take time, micro-credit projects should be planned for at least four to six years.

4.5 Recommendations

4.5.1 The MAAHF: clarifying roles and responsibilities

Even though its precise strategy requires clarification, the overall role of the MAAHF and its responsibilities have been completely reviewed and are now relatively well defined. In the 70's and 80's, the MAAHF played a service delivery role (distribution, extension and popularisation). Its current role is mainly shaped around monitoring activities and policy-making in order to provide a stable environment for private sector development. However, this new direction in MAAHF policy has yet to be communicated at the provincial and district levels. Our interviews with members of provincial staff clearly showed that, in their eyes, the role of the MAAHF remains unchanged and their activities include agricultural inputs delivery, research, extension and popularisation. This lack of knowledge of the new MAAHF role that has been defined in Kabul is detrimental since community expectations are being raised. Several farmers complained about the MAAHF because they had not received seed or bags of fertilisers. Moreover, many NGOs highlighted the fact that provincial MAAHF staff often try to lever favours. NGOs are often asked to pay incentives for the involvement of MAAHF staff in their projects (although the payment of incentives is prohibited under the Afghan constitution).

4.5.2 From coordination towards cooperation

4.5.2.1 Keeping the momentum going

One of the key challenges ahead will be to maintain the momentum between key stakeholders at a time when donor funding is likely to start diminishing and a large number of NGOs have phased out their activities or are seeing their scope of action restricted by donor and government policies. While this shift from NGO- to government-lead initiatives is healthy and essential for the political transition in Afghanistan, the difficulty lies in ensuring that it is managed at the right pace. In some areas, NGOs have key expertise and capacity which government institutions are lacking. The prevailing negative discourse on NGOs – whose image has been tainted by the large number of NGOs that have mushroomed in order to benefit from international funds and by alleged cases of corruption – has placed NGOs in a difficult position and has probably fuelled the government's reluctance to engage with non-governmental partners. This discourse is also responsible for a growing wave of violence against NGOs (sixteen NGO members have been killed over the past six months).

It is extremely important for the GoA to make a distinction between the 'NGBs' (so-called Non-Governmental Businesses) and professional NGOs that can contribute genuine experience and added-value to the ongoing reconstruction process. In parallel, it is important for NGOs to continue learning and improving their commitment to the GoA. While some have succeeded in doing so and are proving to be genuine partners of the GoA, others have little experience in this domain and have failed to adapt from relief interventions to a more developmental approach.

4.5.2.2 Changing attitudes between the MAAHF and NGOs

Both the MAAHF and NGOs definitely need to change their attitude towards each other. The latter have in most cases realised that they should improve their links with the MAAHF and share information. The new MAAHF resource centre is a good initiative to gather information about agriculture in the country. However, the MAAFH is still demonstrating a certain degree of competitiveness in its relations with NGOs. Now that their roles have been clarified, the MAAHF and NGOs need to work together and learn from each other on a regular basis. Lesson learning and sharing exercises between different stakeholders involved in agriculture should be strengthened and based on practical experience. For example, the Working Group on Community-based Nutrition and Food Security Interventions organised by UNFAO and the MAAHF is an interesting initiative (its objectives are presented in annexe 2).

This particular type of meeting is oriented towards sharing lessons learnt, about what works and what does not. The objective is to go beyond coordination and work towards learning from each other's experience. The main constraint for this type of initiative is high staff turnover, as it takes time for newcomers to develop relevant points of views and put forward constructive recommendations. To alleviate this constraint, it would be helpful to develop an alternative system for collecting information and sharing it amongst stakeholders. In many cases, the minutes of these meetings are only distributed to those present. There is no process to capitalise on the information gathered and shared.

4.5.3 Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable needs

Many NGOs are currently reviewing their roles, mandates and strategies for the coming years. Some intend to stay in Afghanistan for a couple of years, others plan to stay for ten to fifteen years as they believe they have developed relevant skills that will enable them to play an important role in meeting people's expectations. In general, the more experienced NGOs are focusing on addressing the needs of the most vulnerable by:

- Strengthening their advocacy roles (e.g. Oxfam) and developing new approaches, such as early warning methods or disaster preparedness.
- Specialising in different sectors (depending on their comparative advantages and previous success), especially the three main sectors addressed in the Master Plan: animal health, horticulture and NRM (Natural Resource Management).
- Building M&E systems to assess the quality of their projects. Those are often the same ones to invest in short term consultancies to meet people's needs on a sustainable basis.

4.5.4 From an emergency/rehabilitation mode to a long-term development approach

4.5.4.1 Quality as a priority

For many years, NGOs have implemented relief and rehabilitation programmes in a highly unstable context (war, political changes, influence of the warlords). One of the most important roles of the humanitarian aid was to maintain hope and prevent a worsening of the crisis. Quick Impact Projects aimed at enhancing yields were favoured for many years. Nowadays, the Afghan population, the GoA and part of the international community agree that one of the major stakes they must face is quality.

4.5.4.2 The need for a comprehensive understanding of farming systems

The MAAHF wants to be able to measure the real impact of programmes implemented in the agriculture sector. Afghan farming systems are highly diversified. Failing to take into consideration and monitor inter and intra household diversity may produce a number of negative impacts (unsustainable programmes, waste of time and money, disillusioned, not to say irritated, beneficiaries). The need for qualitative assessments and research-action projects is great if government institutions are to obtain a better understanding of the diversity of farmers' strategies. New tools and methods need to be introduced and staff need to be trained in how to use them.

The farming system method, which is used to analyse the main dynamics and opportunities in an agrarian system, presents some interesting advantages compared to the livelihood framework. It is difficult to understand how a system works without considering how it has changed over time. Indeed analysing the past gives insight into the present and strengthens our capacity to predict the future. Historical trends are carefully studied thanks to interviews with the elders and this is particularly useful for assessing (i) the conditions that are required for these systems to reproduce themselves and (ii) the sustainability of the agriculture they are linked to. Just as in the livelihood framework, the farming system analysis method looks at assets and constraints but, in addition, it includes a careful examination of technical aspects (e.g. cropping calendar, cropping system, tools used, etc.).

Programmes should be based on a comprehensive understanding and monitoring of household diversity and historical trends.

4.5.4.3 Building local capacities

Last but not least, capacity building for GoA and NGO local staff should be carried out in order to improve programme design. Stakeholders should value the in-depth knowledge that local staff have of needs and constraints. In addition, staff at the provincial level need to be more involved in the design of the agriculture policy and in establishing priorities. Ultimately research should be carried out at a local level before designing a programme.

4.5.5 A step forwards for NGOs

Current development trends in Afghanistan imply that NGOs and the humanitarian sector as a whole have to find their place, review their role and limit the scope of their interventions. For many years, aid agencies have been the sole providers of agricultural support to the Afghan population and have undoubtedly developed real skills in this domain. However, the growth of the private sector means that NGOs must now concentrate on specific roles and clarify their scope of interventions.

Although the current tendency is to focus efforts on developing the private sector, a large proportion of the population is still vulnerable. As many donors are phasing out emergency programmes, the main risk is that emergency needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis without establishing a global strategy, and this may result in various negative effects. **NGOs should concentrate on services that cannot currently be delivered by the private sector**. They should focus on the most vulnerable people because until the private sector is established throughout the country, the poorest do not stand to gain any benefits.

NGOs might also have a role to play in advocacy and lobbying activities to defend the interests of the poor. The current CSANDS process is an interesting initiative which some NGOs have decided to participate in. Even though one wonders whether the aid community will be able to reach a consensus, decision makers should take NGOs views into consideration. Some NGOs are willing to be seen as a bridge between the government and the private sector and have begun to invest in the agro-business. The fact that many NGOs have gained the trust of local communities may facilitate private sector development. NGO expertise and experience should be valued and shared with the GoA and the private sector.

The long period of conflict has weakened all government institutions – buildings and equipment have been destroyed, existing staff are poorly paid ad lack appropriate technical and managerial skills, and ministries generally lack the capacity to effectively carry out their functions. Although, during our field missions we saw some signs that the organisation and definition of roles of the MAAHF are improving, much progress remains to be made to in order to improve the Afghan farmers' way of life.

The main challenges facing the development of the agriculture industry in Afghan remain institutional. Public and private institutions are ill-equipped in terms of physical infrastructure, regulatory framework and human resources. The structure of the ministries also reflects a centralised form of administration which is inconsistent with current thinking on rural development which calls for decentralisation. The emergence of the private sector, which has the backing of the international community, is an important step towards the development of a modern and competitive agricultural sector. Nevertheless, there are still many vulnerable groups in Afghanistan and Afghan farmers continue to face considerable risks (agro-climatic, politic, and economic). The present distribution of roles and responsibilities in the agricultural sector is moving increasingly in favour of private sector development. Are Afghan farmers prepared to take advantage of the emergence of the private sector as is planned? How will these changes affect the poorer members of society in the future? These questions need to be addressed and clear answers need to be provided to the Afghan population.

The success of peace-building efforts in Afghanistan is strongly linked to poverty and risk reduction. Since the beginning of the year, the security situation is worsening and areas at high risk are expanding on a daily basis. Afghans are loosing confidence in the government and loosing hope for the future day by day. In terms of the agriculture sector, the MAAHF needs to invest more time and energy in explaining to its staff and to the Afghan farmers what is planned for the future, and what they can expect and what they cannot expect from government. The GoA has an important role to play in developing a good communications policy. Finally, NGOs still have a major role to play in Afghanistan as the only stakeholders whose commitment focuses on the most vulnerable populations. Advocacy and lobbying should definitely be one of their prerogatives.

Persons met during the field mission

Agriculture		
Tuesday 4 April	Kabul-Bamiyan	
Wednesday 5 April	Bamiyan	Global Concern Dept. of Agriculture ICRC
Thursday 6 April	Bamiyan	Solidarités GERES UNFAO
Friday 7 April	Bamiyan-Eiback	
Saturday 8 April	Eiback	AAD Dept. of Agriculture BRAC
Sunday 9 April	Mazar-e Sharif	UNFAO UNHCR SCA
Monday 10 April	Mazar-e Sharif	WFP / Gain Project WFP/ GAIN IOM COAR
Tuesday 11 April	Mazar-Kunduz	Dept. of Agriculture (Kunduz)
Wednesday 12 April	Kunduz	Visit the vet clinic, the Kunduz silo and the diary farm of the FAO FAO – seed program
	Taloqan (Takhar province)	Mission East Concern
Thursday 13 April	Kunduz	Mercy corps Mercy Corps ICARDA CFA
Friday 14 April	Kabul-Kunduz	
Saturday 15 April	Kabul	Team work
Sunday 16 April	Kabul-Jalalabad	
Monday 17 April	Jalalabad	MADERA (meeting) MADERA (field visit) MADERA (vet clinic) If Hope (field visit)
Tuesday 18 April	Jalalabad	Dept. of agriculture FAO Mercy Corps GTZ/PAL project
Wednesday 19 April	Jalalabad-Kabul	
Thursday 20 April	Kabul	FAO AKDN

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5 NUTRITION

By Domitille Kauffman (dkauffmann@urd.org)

With a chronic malnutrition rate of up to 50% and a low rate of severe malnutrition, the nutrition profile in Afghanistan today is not dissimilar to that of other countries in the Middle East and South-East Asia. Determining the causes of a high malnutrition rate is no easy task as the prevalence of malnutrition is often related to a combination of many factors. In the case of Afghanistan, the following factors require a mention: low diet diversity, inappropriate hygiene practices, low birth weight as a result of poor maternal diet and micronutrient deficiency diseases.

The preliminary findings[31] of the second National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) conducted in July-September 2005 have highlighted high disparity in the prevalence of food insecurity throughout the population as a whole: disparity between rural and urban areas and disparity between provinces. Consequently, in central and southeastern provinces (Nimroz, Day Kundi and Helmand) over 46% of the population consume less than the minimum calorific requirements (adjusted for age and sex). In the central provinces of Bamiyan, Day Kundi, Ghor and the western province of Nuristan, the diet of over 60% of the population is affected by very poor food group diversity.

This chapter is organised around four sections: the first and second sections give an overview of how nutrition sector has taken shape (since 2001) and present the main trends and achievements to date. The third and fourth sections present the main challenges and risks for the future and discuss the issues at stake for the nutrition sector.

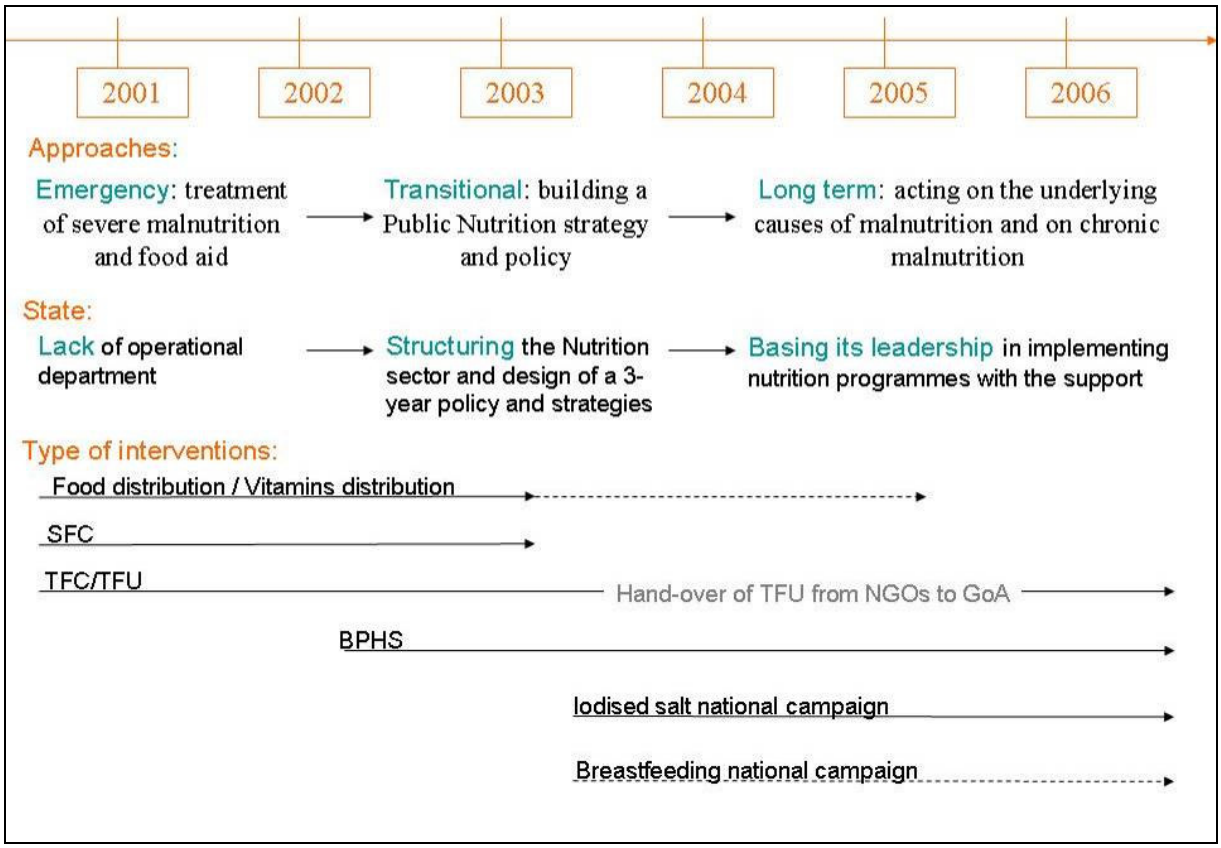
[31] Personal communication. Data are not yet published.

5.1 Patterns and current trends in nutrition programmes

5.1.1 From NGO emergency relief to long-term government policy and programmes

Figure 9 summarises the main changes that have taken place in nutrition programmes, looking at how activities and those responsible for implementing programmes have evolved in parallel.

Figure 9: Changes in nutrition approaches and interventions since 2001



NB: The Basic Package for Health Services (BPHS) is a national policy that has been developed for the health sector. BPHS activities are implemented by NGOs through a sub-contracting agreement with the GoA.

5.1.2 Key players

Table 5 summarises the main opportunities, challenges and risks that have emerged since 2001.

Table 5: Actors of change in the nutrition sector

Key players	Opportunities	Challenges and risks
Public Nutrition Department (PND) within MOPH at central level	Quick to set up a specific department for managing nutrition, the Public Nutrition Department, and define policy and strategies Benefits from donor support in implementing programmes throughout the country	Risk that nutrition becomes isolated from the other sectors
Public Nutrition Office within the Provincial Public Health Departments (PPHDs)	Have gained autonomy by promoting specific province-based programmes	Lack of capacity for implementing activities 'Province-politicised' department experiences difficulties in recognising the leadership of the GoA and the legitimacy of central-level staff Lack of transparency between line managers (PPHD or PND)
UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, FAO)	Play leading role in nutrition sector Carry out capacity building activities and implement innovative programmes in collaboration with ministries	Risk of 'government dependency' resulting from the implementation of national policies
MAAHF at central level	Supports nutrition activities by means of FAO-funded project	Lack of understanding of integrated approaches
Donors	Play lead role in prevention of malnutrition by increasing the focus on nutrition in their sector policies	No specific indicators on treatment of malnutrition Focuses on sector-based approaches at the expense of cross-cutting issues such as nutrition
Implementing partners (NGOs as contractors)	Capitalise on their experience, improving their expertise and effectiveness	Risk that nutrition is being overlooked in BPHS implementation
NGOs not involved in contract activities	Monitor nutritional impact of food security and livelihood programmes	Excluded from nutrition activities due to lack of expertise and available funds
Private sector	Develop new expertise and competitive advantage by producing supplemented food	Technical and/or financial dependency on UN-agencies for producing supplemented products

5.2 Main achievements to date

5.2.1 Building operational facilities at national and provincial levels

5.2.1.1 Setting up the Public Nutrition Department (PND) at provincial level

Soon after the war ended, the Public Nutrition Department was set up within the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and is responsible for defining national policy. The second phase focused on increasing the involvement of the Provincial Public Health Department (PPHD). The MOPH benefited early on from the Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) process and this helped in the launch of a recruitment process for Provincial Nutrition Officers (PNO), responsible for all nutrition programmes at the provincial level. PNOs are based at the PPHD and have a dual managerial line: (i) they work under the responsibility of the Provincial Health Director as part of the PPHD, and (ii) they are managed directly by the PND.

Thanks to the PRR, PNO wages have been raised to USD250 per month. Even though this salary is considerably more attractive than the salary previously offered by the government, it is lower than the standard wage offered by international or local NGOs. This increased competition over the recruitment of technical labour has in some cases slowed down the appointment process. For instance, in Bamiyan, the first PNO moved to a position with a higher salary in an international organisation leaving his post unfilled. Despite these unavoidable constraints, the ongoing recruitment process has been partly successful in strengthening the nutrition sector at Provincial level. Out of the seven provinces visited, five PNOs have already been appointed (including Balkh, Kunduz, Nangahar, Takhar and Samangan). The overall objective is to appoint at least one PNO per province.

Box 8: PNO tasks and responsibilities

PNOs are often young and recently graduated. Their tasks and duties are to:
- Monitor the implementation of the national public nutrition programmes by supervising the monitoring system and participating in surveys and assessments. For instance, in Jalalabad, the PNO in charge visits the salt factories for quality control twice a month (control on hygiene, storage, content in iodine, etc.).
- Perform surveys on nutritional issues.
- Attend the PHCC meeting every month.
- Manage TFU functioning (appointing and training medical staff, sending requests for therapeutic milk supply to UNICEF, etc.)
- Ensure coordination with other organisations.
- Establish relations between provincial departments of Agriculture Animal Husbandry and Food (AAHF) to promote community-based food security and nutrition projects (kitchen garden, vegetables growing, etc.).

5.2.1.2 Nutrition coordination at national and provincial levels

National level

The coordination bodies set up over seven thematic working groups have evolved in conjunction with the implementation of the three-year public nutrition policy. Some working groups have ceased to exist such as those dealing with supplementary feeding centres (SFC), food security and nutrition surveillance, and nutritional surveys (Groupe URD, 2005). In contrast, certain issues such as nutritional education and flour fortification are increasingly being taken into account, and are discussed during task force meetings which are chaired by MOPH and attended by UN-agencies (mainly UNICEF, FAO, WHO, WFP) and relevant ministries involved in nutrition (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food, MAAHF in particular).

Even though coordination mechanisms have been operational for several years, the main challenge is to set up a real cooperation mechanism based on lessons learnt and capitalising on previous experience. This in turn should encourage stakeholders to share responsibilities on the basis of an objective analysis of each agency's expertise and comparative advantage.

The working group on 'community-based food security and nutrition interventions' led by the MAAHF-FAO has been re-initiated over the past year. The objective of this working group is to build on different experiences and identify the main factors which affect whether a strategy is successful or not in Afghanistan. This initiative is a significant step forward as it goes beyond coordination and aims for close collaboration. The functioning of this working group is still experiencing a few teething problems: i) attendance is not always optimal, ii) there is a high turnover of participants, and iii) working methods have not yet been formalised (i.e. should meetings be organised around a specific topic or to discuss more general issues?).

Provincial level

A coordination body, the Provincial Health Coordination Committee (PHCC*)*, has been set up quite successfully. During this monthly meeting, PPHD, WHO, UNICEF and medical NGOs share information about health concerns and BPHS implementation. The PNO takes part in the PHCC.

Apart from the PHCC, there are no specific coordination bodies addressing nutritional issues and sharing information and experience at the provincial level. Task force initiatives and working groups set up at national level are not replicated at the provincial level by UN-agencies and ministerial departments. Additionally, there is no specific coordination between NGOs (involved in BPHS, food security and nutrition interventions, education), Provincial Department of Ministry of Public Health, Provincial Department of MAAHF and Provincial Department of Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA). PNOs suffer from this lack of a 'nutrition coordination body' as they would benefit from external support for carrying out their work.

Thus, the next step in coordination mechanisms is to strengthen coordination on nutrition at the provincial level. This might be addressed by setting up a 'provincial task force' chaired by the PNO (possibly co-chaired with UNICEF).

5.2.2 Implementing the public nutrition policy in Afghanistan's provinces

5.2.2.1 Setting up medical facilities for treating severe malnutrition is ongoing

Since 2003 and the withdrawal of NGOs due to the imposed phasing-out of SFCs, NGOs have also gradually phased-out their TFC activities or handed over responsibility for them to the government. The PND has progressively taken over the leadership of malnutrition treatment. This was achieved either directly by managing the TFUs based in government hospitals or indirectly by sub-contracting NGOs for the implementation of the BPHS and the functioning of district hospitals. As yet, not all provinces are equipped with TFU facilities but headway is still being made: seventeen provinces are already running a TFU and the PND plans to equip 25 provinces before 2007[32]. Amongst the visited provinces, Balkh (in Mazar-e-Sharif), Samangan (in Eibak) and Bamiyan (in Bamiyan) run a TFU whereas Takhar and Kunduz are not yet equipped.

5.2.2.2 The success story of the iodised salt campaign

As formulated in the Public Nutrition Strategy document (2003-2006), objective 2 is *"to ensure that more than 90% of households have access to iodized salt throughout the country"*. Since this statement was written, the Universal Salt Iodization (USI) campaign has been successfully implemented. UNICEF has played a key role in this campaign under the coordination of the MOPH. Three years since the launch of the USI program, it is remarkable to observe that (i) Afghan factories are producing iodised salt, (ii) iodised salt is available at the market in any province, and (iii) more than 40% of the population already consume iodised salt[33]. This good coverage rate has been achieved over a relatively short period, thanks to a strategy that combined an appropriate timeframe (the first step was to develop iodised salt production and to ensure that iodised salt is available at the market; the second step involved launching a widespread communication campaign through different media: TV, radio, posters, etc.) with effective coordination. For example, joint assessments have been carried out at provincial levels to control food safety (the iodine content in the salt sold at the market or the quality of the salt produced in the factory). Food safety issues will be important in the future.

5.3 Constraints, key challenges and risks

5.3.1 Providing provincial departments with the necessary capacity

The provincial departments are responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of national policy throughout the country. Fulfilling these tasks and duties imply (i) significant capacity and resources at provincial level, including qualified human resources, resources required for running a department, transport, etc., and (ii) a certain degree of autonomy in planning activities. These issues are particularly at stake in the nutrition sector. As mentioned above, the presence of

[32] Personal communication.
[33] Personal communication. Official data should be available at the end of 2006.

the PND has been reinforced over the past few years, but ensuring the effectiveness of PNO activities remains a key challenge. Dealing with an unclear budget allocation and a slow and centralised decision-making process that prevent PNOs from implementing any unplanned activities are seen as a real constraint. Establishing what type of support and means of intervention will be made available to PNOs and fostering ownership are currently priority issues.

Another concern that lies within PNO responsibilities is the functioning of TFU. Problems such as delays in therapeutic milk supply, unqualified and insufficient medical staff, lack of equipment and insufficient funds are commonly faced by the PNO and medical staff responsible for running the TFU, and PNOs are overwhelmed by the magnitude of work.

Similar constraints are faced by other provincial departments such as the department of women affairs. They have scarcely any resources to implement their programmes and as a result, their activities are often limited to supporting activities carried out by other departments or organisations (participating in an assessment, taking part in training sessions).

5.3.2 Gaining access to the communities, overcoming cultural and financial constraints

Raising awareness about nutritional issues in rural areas in Afghanistan with its wide cultural diversity and low levels of education is especially challenging. Actors have to cope with the remoteness of the communities and cultural differences which result in misunderstandings and misinterpretation. Although the USI campaign has up to now produced good results in term of coverage, the objective of achieving 90% coverage may be unrealistic in the short term. This uncertainty is based on the observed reluctance to adopt iodised salt in the most isolated areas, where **unfounded rumours** about iodised salt are spreading (e.g. iodised salt reduces female fertility and is more expensive than regular salt) and regular salt is still produced and available in the bazaar. The relative failure of the small-scale flour fortification projects implemented by WFP illustrates that proper access to the community is largely dependent on the application of appropriate raising awareness strategies. The **lack of appropriate communication** is one of the main factors leading to these disappointing results.

The difficulty of selecting the best site for setting up TFU is another illustration of the importance and complications involved in accessing communities. Due to socio-cultural and financial constraints (e.g. transport costs, hospital fees), it is difficult for women to stay away from their home for long. However, villages are often too distant from the district, provincial or regional hospitals where TFUs are currently set up. One of the main issues facing decision-makers is how to overcome financial and cultural barriers in order to achieve nutrition objectives.

5.3.3 Ensuring project sustainability

5.3.3.1 From donor-supply to government-supply or economic sustainability

In the present context, several nutrition programmes are grant-maintained depending on regular financial or material support from international bodies. The aforementioned USI campaign is representative of this type of programme built on the back of UNICEF financial support. Thus, since the beginning of the USI campaign, UNICEF has been the 'main project manager', providing both (i) training and capacity building for the GoA and Afghan factories (in iodised salt production, quality control, etc.), and (ii) direct material support to production lines by supplying the iodine to the Afghan factories. Thus, it is important to ask whether iodised salt production as it currently stands is sustainable. How can stakeholders prepare for the future when iodised salt will be produced without grants? Who will take over the supply of iodine from UNICEF? The GoA? Or Afghan factories themselves? In order to lay the foundations for sustainable production, it is necessary to plan how iodised salt production can become self-sustainable and economically viable without any grants. However, the question of sustainability raises the following issues: (i) people already complain about the excessive price of iodised salt (which is in principle unjustified at present because theoretically iodised salt is the same price as regular salt thanks to UNICEF's support) and we can assume that they will refuse to buy this product if its price

increases, and (ii) it might be possible to increase consumption of iodised salt by applying strict controls on imported salt at Afghan borders. However, these controls are not applied effectively at present. Accordingly, the sustainability of this programme will depend upon the state's capacity to apply strict border controls in the future.

Another great concern is the running of TFU. Although the need for TFU has been recognised and policy exists defining its roles and responsibilities, the running of the TFU has not yet been given sufficient consideration. For some TFUs, the shift from NGO management to government management saw the end of assistance from the international community and of all financial grants. The sole material support that they continue to receive is therapeutic milk supplied by UNICEF. However, the supply of therapeutic milk is increasingly dependent on the capacity of the PPHD to provide data and forecasts and UNICEF is encouraging the PPHD to be more autonomous in this activity. Thus, the questions over the running of TFUs require urgent attention.

The future of BPHS is also a great challenge and in particular, the issue of who will pay for health services currently provided by NGOs when international donors (e.g. USAID, World Bank and European Community) eventually withdraw from the country. The GoA? The population by means of a social security system? The patients? For more details, see chapter 5 on the health sector.

5.3.3.2 Short funding cycles and long-term impact

In the current Afghan context, many uncertainties persist regarding funding availability (cf. Report on Cross-Cutting Issues). Operators are often obliged to run programmes with short funding cycles that are wholly inappropriate for activities that aim for a long-term impact. This is especially true for the nutrition sector whose objective is to address the underlying causes of malnutrition and thus raise awareness and change habits within the community (increase food diversity, improve hygiene practices, improve mother and child care, etc.). Changing people's attitudes and persuading them to accept new ideas requires time. For instance, it is questionable whether an effective nutrition campaign is possible without a long funding cycle. This long-term approach needs to be taken into consideration when future nutrition programmes are being designed.

5.4 Propositions and issues for discussion

5.4.1 Strategies for improving nutrition practices within the community

Even though some initiatives (see section 2.1.2) have succeeded in strengthening lesson learning mechanisms between stakeholders, the nutrition sector still suffers from a lack of monitoring of the nutritional impact of the community-based interventions.

In parallel, whereas numerous assessments have provided practitioners with significant information on numerous nutritional topics in Afghanistan, such as nutrition habits[34], childcare, etc., other issues such as food recipes, food processing and preservation processes have not yet been studied in sufficient depth. Thus, this lack of basic information is a limiting factor in designing specific community-based interventions with real impact in term of nutrition.

Some promising small-scale projects implemented recently deserve a mention such as FAO-supported teacher training (MOPH and MAAHF supply guidelines) and pave the way for relevant community-based interventions. The principle of this project is to provide training for teachers on nutrition issues and with a long-term view to including nutrition topics either in literacy courses or at school for children.

[34] Duchet C., *Les femmes Afghanes au coeur de l'économie rurale – exemple d'une vallée dans le Nord de l'Afghanistan*, Groupe URD 2005

Improving nutrition practices within communities depends on:
- Thorough and regular monitoring and lesson-learning processes between stakeholders to understand what makes community–based interventions work.
- Being innovative and trying out new small-scale projects.
- Improving background knowledge on certain nutrition topics in Afghanistan, such as food processing, recipes and food preservation.
- Establishing a country-wide nutrition education strategy as a support for community-based interventions.

5.4.2 Maintaining the focus on nutrition

When a country enters into a phase of development and economic growth, there is a risk that nutrition issues are no longer considered a priority and are hence overlooked. The reasons for this tendency are presented in Box 9 and illustrate the need to maintain a focus on nutrition in Afghanistan.

Box 9: Ten reasons for the weak commitment into nutrition programmes

1. Malnutrition is usually invisible to malnourished families and communities.
2. Families and governments do not recognize the human and economic costs of malnutrition.
3. Governments may not know there are faster interventions for combating malnutrition than economic growth and poverty reduction or that nutrition programmes are affordable.
4. Because there are multiple organisational stakeholders in nutrition, it can fall between the tracks.
5. There is not always a consensus about how to intervene against malnutrition.
6. Adequate nutrition is seldom treated as a human right.
7. The malnourished have little voice.
8. Some politicians and managers do not care whether programmes are well implemented.
9. Governments sometimes claim they are investing in improving nutrition when the programmes they are financing have little effect on it (for example, school feeding).
10. A vicious circle: lack of commitment into nutrition leads to underinvestment in nutrition, which leads to weak impact, which reinforces lack of commitment since governments believe nutrition programmes do not work.

Source: Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development – A strategy for Large-Scale Action – Overview, Abridged from Heaver (2005b)

In the current Afghan context, nutrition lies at the crossroads between health, agriculture and education. This implies that nutrition should be addressed by means of cross-sector projects.
A direct consequence of this need for a cross-sector approach is frequent changes in funding allocations. Since multilateral donors favour sector-based approaches and nutrition is no longer targeted as a sector in itself, nutrition issues are dealt with through the health sector. Consequently, excluding UNICEF and to a lesser extent other UN-agencies (FAO, WHO, UNDP), there are no multilateral donor providing specific support for nutrition programmes.

5.4.2.1 Placing an emphasis on nutrition in health programmes

If international donors such as the World Bank, which provides funds for BPHS implementation, have established nutrition as a priority in their policy paper for development (World Bank, 2006), this does not always translate into practice in the implementation of the BPHS by NGOs. This is partly due to the fact that health care facilities (CHC, DH) suffer from various problems, including:
1) Overloaded and understaffed. The scope of the BPHS is broad and medical consultations take place during opening hours from 8am to 1pm/2pm. Accordingly, the staff has to prioritise its activities and some BPHS's activities are hence neglected. This choice is often made at the expense of the nutrition activities.
2) Insufficient qualified staff for growth monitoring.
3) The effectiveness of nutrition activities are measured on the basis of a single indicator (number of under fives checked for growth monitoring) in the performance-based partnership agreement

(PPA) involving donors, NGOs and MOPH. It appears that this indicator alone is not enough for ensuring a real focus on nutrition. Adding a second indicator, such as the number of children receiving treatment, is one option that should be considered for strengthening nutrition in the BPHS.

Thus, there is a need to place nutrition as a core and common issue among the health stakeholders from donors to medical staff, in particular those in charge of growth monitoring.

5.4.2.2 Re-establishing a role for NGOs in the conceptual framework for nutrition

Another consequence of the sector-based approach is the reduction of funds allocated to food security activities. Indeed, the MAAHF in the process of changing its name to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI). Animal husbandry has now been included within agriculture as a whole and it is not immediately clear which ministry will be responsible for heading food issues. These amendments are indicative of changing priorities in national policy.

If this tendency is normal within the LRRD framework, stakeholders need to ensure that the most vulnerable people who are still dealing with food insecurity problems are not overlooked. The MAAHF Master Plan is reassuring as food security constitutes one of the three main pillars. It remains to be seen how effectively the Master Plan will be implemented.

In agriculture and education, nutrition issues are rarely dealt with as a priority, especially in programmes which do not have any specific objectives or expected results linked to nutrition. For instance, a vegetable growing project does not always include training on nutrition issues (basic knowledge about nutrition, diet diversity, cooking methods, etc.). In this case, the nutritional benefit that might be expected from this type of intervention is often not achieved because vegetables are sold rather than consumed. Resolving this problem implies changing NGO priorities and establishing nutrition as a core issue in their interventions. NGOs should thus increase their focus on raising awareness campaigns, monitoring the impact of nutrition programmes and capitalising on successful approaches.

5.4.3 Fostering effective collaboration with sector-wide lesson learning mechanisms

The nutrition sector has undergone swift and effective changes since 2002 but implementing the designed strategies has required coordinated involvement of several bodies. The commitment of several ministries (MOPH, MAAHF, MRRD, MoWA, Ministry of trade, etc.) is thus a necessity for building strategies on the underlying causes of malnutrition (cf. the conceptual framework for malnutrition UNICEF, 1992). Although the restructuring process has evolved at different speeds in each ministry, the implementation of the Public Nutrition Strategy and Policy 2003-2006 depends on the successful collaboration between departments. The MRRD has undergone fairly rapid development and has already been involved in hygiene promotion activities within the communities for the several years now. MRRD's wide experience in public awareness campaigns from design, implementation to monitoring and evaluation (see Box 8: PNO tasks and responsibilities for more details about MRRD and NGOs hygiene promotion campaigns) undoubtedly needs to be shared with the MAAHF and the MOPH, as they are both working on the design of a nutrition education campaign. The limited capacity for sharing information demonstrated by these ministries is all the more regrettable given that hygiene education is cited as being an important strategy for reducing the prevalence of malnutrition[35].

[35] "Strategy 7: Reduce health risks associated with malnutrition, specially the control and prevention of diarrhoeal diseases", from Public Nutrition Policy and Strategy 2003-2006.

Box 10: MRRD hygiene promotion campaigns

Since 2003, the MRRD has been involved in hygiene promotion through the Hygiene Education Department. A national programme in which NGOs are the implementing partners of the national strategy for water, sanitation and hygiene promotion has been designed. Supported by an active working group on Hygiene Education, the HEWG[36], the MRRD has edited guidelines and other communication supports (picture cards, flipcharts) to support NGOs in programme implementation, and also provides 'training for trainers' for NGO staff.

The results of this type of campaign are mitigated depending on the area (level of education, level of poverty and ability to afford the necessary hygiene materials such as soap). Coordination with NGOs remains a great challenge and NGO field staff are confronted with many constraints. MRRD policy is not always fully understood by NGO staff working directly with the communities and many express reservations as to whether the strategy is well adapted to reality in the field. NGOs complain that (i) the MRRD has failed to supply them with adequate methodology in terms of what should be done and how best to manage relations with the communities and (ii) there are insufficient financial resources available for hygiene promotion activities.

These programmes would also benefit from improved monitoring and impact evaluation mechanisms. The KAP (Knowledge Attitude Practices) survey, a monitoring tool used by NGOs, is an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of hygiene promotion. However, the link between the number of people trained in hygiene and the reduction in hygiene-related health problems such as diarrhoea requires more clarification. Some NGOs have already begun working on this issue. The next phase will be to build on evidence about the impact of hygiene promotion.

The importance of setting up sharing mechanisms is also relevant for UN-agencies. UNICEF has acquired expertise in public awareness campaigns about iodised salt. Similarly, WFP implemented a number of small-scale projects on flour fortification and has planned to design a large-scale project. Mechanisms for sharing lessons learnt between UNICEF and WFP have not yet been institutionalised and this is an important issue for the future of supplemented food programmes. Some amendments have been already put in place through the development of an active task force on flour fortification. This type of initiative deserves support and implies that the institutions involved must set up formal lesson learning mechanisms.

During acute or protracted emergencies, nutrition is dealt with as a sector in itself focusing on the treatment of malnutrition. In the LRRD framework, the main feature of development programmes is the shift from curative treatment to prevention, and a focus on the underlying causes of malnutrition. As a result of the transition from short- to long-term approaches, nutrition is no longer considered as an independent sector with its own donors, NGOs and specific nutrition programmes but as a cross-cutting issue. Nutrition issues are now addressed by other sectors and, as a result, nutrition-related issues need to be fully integrated into the design of these programmes.

Public awareness campaigns are being carried out to tackle nutrition issues. The objectives of these campaigns are ambitious as they aim to change people's lifestyles and necessarily touch upon issues that are considered to be private. Since stakeholders are in the process of designing coordination mechanisms for nutrition education, it is important that the messages conveyed are uniform. A certain degree of standardisation should be an objective when tools, such as training for farmers in vegetable-growing programmes, literacy training for teachers, for information during visits at health facilities, etc., are being developed.

Since 2001, the design and implementation of nutrition programmes have evolved and numerous achievements can be observed. However, if the shift from emergency to development is achieved too quickly, especially from curative to preventive treatment, it is only pertinent if the facilities provided for treating nutrition-related problems are sustainable. The future is likely to generate valuable lessons on what is the optimal pace for change and the factors that affect this pace.

[36] HEWG is an active collaboration body, composed of UN-agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR), different ministries (MRRD, MOPH, MoWA), international NGOs (ACF, AKDN, DACAAR, SCA) and local NGOs (HOW)

One of the most urgent challenges that has emerged in this rapid shift from emergency to development consists in ensuring that certain groups of people are not excluded from this growth. This was the conclusion that the working group on community-based food security and nutrition interventions reached in April 2006 and illustrates the concern shared by several stakeholders involved in food security and nutrition. To what extent will national policy address the needs of the most vulnerable who are still suffering from food insecurity and who cannot afford adequate food intake for their households? This should be established as a priority given that Afghanistan's development depends upon its capacity to share the benefits with the population as a whole.

Persons met during the field mission

Nutrition	
Thursday 29 March	Team Interview: discussing the itinerary
Monday 3 April	Team work: Methodology
Tuesday 4 April	Kabul – Bamiyan
Wednesday 5 April	Interview with Mrs. Seema Sakha, health & hygiene supervisor, AKDN, Bamiyan
	Interview with Dr Sisawo Konteh, Regional Health Programme Manager, Aga Khan Health Services, Bamiyan
	Interview with Eng. Taher Ataey, Head of department, Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food, Bamiyan
	Interview with Mrs Fatima Rosalin, nutrition & gender assistant, FAO, Bamiyan
Thursday 6 April	Interview with Amina Hassanpur, health officer, Department of Women Affairs, Bamiyan
	Visiting Women Resource Centre, Shuahada, Bamiyan
	Interview with Mr Mohammed Rahim, HIMS Officer, Provincial Health Department, Bamiyan
	Interview with Sophie Baisse, Programme officer, Solidarités, Bamiyan
Friday 7 April	Bamiyan – Eibak (Samangan province)
Saturday 8 April	Interview with, Dr Allawdin Ammar, Nutrition and TB manager AMI, Samangan
	Eibak – Mazar-e Sharif
Sunday 9 April	Interview with Dr Bahrami, health & nutrition officer, UNICEF, Mazar-e Sahrif
	Interview with Mr. Morali Mohan, Programme Manager, Save the Children UK, Mazar-e Sharif
Monday 10 April	Visiting GAIN project, WFP and BRAC, Mazar-e Sharif
	Visiting Tuberculosis male and female clinics, WFP and Lepco, Mazar-e Sharif Interview with Mr. Waheed, TB programme officer, WFP, Mazar-e Sharif
	Interview with Amed Jama, Head of Programme, WFP, Mazar-e Sharif
	Visiting TFU and children cares department, Mazar-e Sharif Regional Hospital
	Interview with Dr Mirwais Rabi, Balkh Provincial Health Director, Balkh province Interview with Dr Abdullah Noorzai, PNO, Mazar-e Sharif
Tuesday 11 April	Mazar-e Sharif - Kunduz
	Interview with Daler Javodov, NSP manager, ACTED, Kunduz
Wednesday 12 April	Visiting the veterinary clinic of GoA and a diary farm of FAO, Kunduz
	Kunduz - Taloqan
	Visiting a private mill (WFP flour fortification project, Kunduz Interview with Haji Gholam Mohaiudin, Factory director, Kunduz
	Interview with Dr Mohamed Salim, CAF Interim Deputy Director, Taloqan, Takhar Province
	Interview with Marie Sadie, Training Manager, CONCERN WORLWIDE, Taloqan, Takhar Province
	Taloqan - Kunduz
Thursday 13 April	Interview with Dr Yamar, PNO and Dr Safar, PPHD Kunduz Province
	Interview with Dr. Hedayatullah Saleh, Provincial project officer, Kunduz
	Interview with Naida, Administrator, Department of Women Affairs, Kunduz
	Interview with Nurul Haque Sarka, Agriculture Programme Manager, CFA, Kunduz
	Interview with Xaver Hagensbusch, Mercy Corps, Kunduz
Friday 14 April	Kunduz – Kabul
Saturday 15 April	Kabul: team work
Sunday 16 April	Interview with Andrew Pinney, early warning system adviser, MRRD, Kabul
	Kabul - Jalalabad
Monday 17 April	Interview with Eng. Abdul Ahad "Samoon", Eastern Field Coordinator, IRC, Jalalabad
	Interview with Dr Mashoud, Deputy Director, PPHD, Jalalabad Interview with Dr , PNO, Jalalabad Visiting the TFU, University Hospital
	Interview with Dr Abdul Wahid Wahidi, Project officer health &nutrition, UNICEF, Jalalabad
	Interview with Heimo Posamentier, Project for Alternative Livelihoods, Livelihoods Advisor, GTZ, Jalalabad
	Interview with Brishna, health & hygiene supervisor, IRC Visiting “Hygiene promotion” programmes for women, IRC, Jalalabad
Tuesday 18 April	Interview with the owner of the factory Spin Ghar, Jalalabad
	Interview with Eng. Amin, Water Program, Manager, Eng. Sharifa, Female Hygiene promoter and Eng. Ramatullah, Male Hygiene promoter ,DACAAR Jalalabad
Wednesday 19 April	Jalalabad - Kabul
	Interview with Fazila Banu Lily, HAWA Programme Manager, CARE international
	Interview with Malina Fahiz, health and hygiene coordinator, AKDN
Thursday 20 April	Interview with Dr Javed Logarwal, Hygiene Advisor, MRRD
	Attendance at the working group on *community based food-security and nutrition interventions* meeting

	Interview with Charlotte Dufour, Household, Food security and Nutrition expert, FAO, Kabul
	Interview with Maja Ulrich Hebe, Hygiene & Sanitation Coordinator, and Shakilla Assad, Women's project coordinator, DACAAR
Friday 21 April	Workshop preparation
Saturday 22 April	Workshop preparation
Sunday 23 April	Workshop preparation
Monday 24 April	Presenting the main findings: workshop
Tuesday 25 April	Interview with Kayhan Natiq, Public Health Specialist, WORLD BANK
	Interview with Maliha Dost, Donor Relation & Research Assistant, Afghanaid
Wednesday 26 April	Visiting HAWA programme: “Food processing training for women”, CARE international, Kabul district 13 Kabul – Dubai

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6 HEALTH SECTOR

By Christine Bousquet, Independent Consultant
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Within the LRRD context, this report based on three weeks of field research sets out to explore the different issues pertaining to the health sector, as well as those previously identified in the sector review[37]. For most observers, reconstruction efforts in the health sector in Afghanistan have made considerable progress over the past five years. Activities focused on providing a policy framework for implementation and gave high priority to the development of Primary Health Care (PHC) services located close to the people and to contracting with NGOs in order to enhance effective implementation. In addition, efforts to improve the quality of secondary health care included the development and introduction of an Essential Package for Hospital Services (EPHS).

6.1 The institutional context

6.1.1 Key players

Before looking at the question of achievements and dilemmas in the health sector, it is useful to consider the context in which they take place. Table 6 below summarises the main opportunities, challenges and threats that have emerged since 2001.

Table 6: Actors of change in the health sector

Key players	Opportunities	Challenges and threats
MOPH at central level	Openness to innovation and change Fast in adapting to the new environment Purchaser-Provider split	Changes at the Ministry level may threaten policy continuity
	Creation of the Grant and Contract Management Unit (GCMU) staffed with highly qualified national staff under World Bank funding	This type of structure does not guarantee continuity and sustainability of the project when external funding dries up
		Emergence of a cluster of skills and risk of market distortions and expectations above the norm for similar positions
		Risk of imbalanced power relations within the MoPH with one unit managing most of the resources
Provincial Public Health Departments (PPHDs)	Application of PRR decree to ensure that adequate salaries can be paid within a restructured PPHD National plan for capacity-building under EC funding	Sustainability of the reform remains an issue
		Need to make their role in the PPA model better understood
		Need to clarify and strengthen their future role in the provision of health care
UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO)	Participation in policy-making	
Donors	Willing to work with and through the GoA Adopted a coherent, policy-based approach to health sector development	In the future will contribute to a single pool of funding to support the implementation of BPHS
		Commitments to invest in this sector over the long term are uncertain, especially in relation to the EPHS
Universities	Adding to the evidence-based on new approaches Developing monitoring/evaluation tools and strategies for health care funding	

[37] The sector review was conducted in October 2005.

Implementing partners (NGOs as contractors)	Comparative advantage in health service delivery	For international NGOs: The added value of presence of expatriate staff is questioned Experience often restricted to Afghanistan with limited exposure to international debate
		For national NGOs: Risk of institutionalisation and emergence of monopolies
NGOs outside contracting	Agents of social change ensuring that issues of equity are given consideration	Financial vulnerability
		Maintaining links and working with the MoPH
Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)		The concept blurs distinction between the military and humanitarian action
		Difficult coordination with NGO projects
		Lack of understanding of national health policies
		Lack of expertise in health system development

At present, NGOs involved in Performance-based Partnership Agreements (PPAs) have managerial authority over staff. They follow the MoPH technical protocols and guidelines, adhere to the health information system and reporting requirements, and coordinate and report through the provincial authorities. They have also invested in technical and management training, and established standards and protocols. The few NGOs who opted out of the process initially have engaged in urban healthcare, and in programmes targeting vulnerable groups, such as street children or people living with HIV/AIDS.

The trend over the past few years for international NGOs has been to hand over decision-making to national staff. This transfer has been swift and today most key positions are held by Afghan staff. Although this handover is commendable, the presence of international staff can be of added value, especially for bringing in skills that are lacking in Afghanistan. The mushrooming of national NGOs, who form a heterogeneous group, has accentuated many challenges, including financial sustainability, transparency and accountability. The legitimacy of some, the so-called "business NGOs", has been contested, contributing to the controversy about the role of NGOs in Afghanistan. The tendency has also been to employ large numbers of staff, leading to a plethora of organisations with the risk of inefficiency and inflexibility.

To date, the most obvious challenge facing NGOs is the vulnerable financial situation. A second cycle of funding in relation to PPAs is anticipated but the key question is whether NGOs will continue to deliver BPHS beyond that round. There is no easy answer and still limited evidence on whether NGOs perform better than the government in delivering health services. A step towards handing responsibility over to the state in order to ensure health service provision has been discussed but many respondents have mixed feelings. On the one hand they would like to see the MoPH taking back a direct role in the provision of health services; on the other, their confidence in the government system to carry out this task is low. In particular a considerable degree of scepticism was expressed about the prevailing political culture and poor governance which may act in favour of those with power without necessarily serving people's best interests.

6.1.2 Targeting to ensure effective services for the rural population

In the Afghan context, the concept of contracting out the basic package of health services to NGOs[38] on a nation-wide scale has been viewed as an effective and desirable way of expanding coverage. The approach is largely supply-led with the assumption that, by allocating more funding

[38] Known as Performance Based Partnership Agreement (PPA).

to the services included under the Basic Package for Health Services (BPHS), resources will be channelled to those most in need.

Evidence suggests that this strategy has succeeded in: (i) expanding funding for PHC and allocating these resources to the facilities used by the rural poor; and (ii) in improving accessibility of health facilities in areas where few or no services existed. However, in insecure provinces, such as Uruzgan or Zabul, funding for the BPHS has not always been completely spent. The remaining gaps in coverage, especially in very remote and difficult areas, are to be addressed gradually. For example, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan will implement the BPHS in Nuristan.

As far as the Essential Package for Hospital Services (EPHS) is concerned, field interviews and visits did not supply any further information to the issues highlighted in the health sector review. Since then, no radical changes have taken place and the complexity of the provincial and regional hospital system renders implementation a sensitive and difficult endeavour.

6.1.3 Redefining the role of the provincial Ministry of Public Health

In the early days, changes at the central MoPH in Kabul were introduced rapidly but insufficient attention has been paid to the provincial level. Firstly the wider political agenda has placed considerable pressure on the health system, notably with regard to the timing of interventions. Because both donors and the MoPH focused on increasing visible health service delivery outputs, acceleration in the policy process was unavoidable. Secondly translating policy into successful achievements has been time-consuming in terms of administrative and monitoring procedures, to the detriment of capacity-building processes at provincial and district levels.

Obviously the advent of PPAs has created a new environment and has triggered new working relationships between PPHDs and NGOs. From the outset the fact that provincial authorities had limited involvement in the process created a climate of mistrust and uncertainty. Many NGOs had to diffuse tension at various points in time, to learn from experience and to change their management approaches with the assistance of the GCMU managers who played a key role in problem-solving and mediating. NGOs had to deal not only with technical and managerial aspects but also with the provincial health authorities occasionally playing off one NGO against another and the local politics. In many instances the 'politicisation' of provincial authorities and local elites, their interference in management decisions while pursuing their own interests, corruption and a significant bias towards physician-based and hospital-based care were among the factors contributing to this difficult working relationship.

To date the majority of respondents described their relationships as smoother and productive. Health coordination committees are operational in all the provinces visited, and a joint monitoring schedule of activities has been established between the PPHDs and implementing partners. Improvements in the sharing of responsibilities between the hospital management and the provincial health director are visible in a number of provinces. In addition the new system and policies do offer hope and potential for building the institutional capacity of the PPHDs. For example the Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) decree provides stakeholders with the opportunity of bringing in new skills and expertise. At central level, the General Directorate for Provincial Public Health, with EC support, is also developing an implementing plan for capacity-building.

Nevertheless although the PPHDs have been given greater responsibilities in overseeing BPHS development, they still have limited autonomy. In a number of developing countries, the district level has been designated as the managerial focus, and provincial and district health authorities have gained full responsibility for the delivery of health services, recruitment and management of personnel, health planning and budgeting and importantly, mobilising additional resources and deciding their allocation. This is still far from reality in Afghanistan where complex political dynamics means that state institutions are still highly-centralised. For Evans et al (2004), Afghanistan can be categorised under the typology of deconcentration, the most limited form of

decentralisation where some form of authority is given to lower levels of government, but the periphery remains subordinate to central government.

Although contracting often suggests a degree of decentralisation of resource allocation, the limited range of choices granted to provincial authorities by the central MoPH and the current model of contracting leaves them little room to assert their authority and to be responsive to local needs. The district health level has an even more limited capacity in this respect, and represents the greatest challenge if they are to be revived.

In addition, most provincial health departments depend on NGOs for building their institutional capacity and for resources. This situation creates certain ambiguities in the purchaser-provider relationship at provincial level and it also raises questions about the contracting model in terms of the role PPHDs should play in PPA management.

The Cambodian experience of contracting demonstrated the importance of establishing solid institutional capacity to effectively run the delivery of health services at peripheral level. In this context, provincial health authorities in particular required the necessary management tools to function within a competitive market. Leadership, ownership and a clear separation between purchasing and provision of health services were also identified as critical to success.

Health Net TPO, the Dutch NGO, has long debated the possibility that PPHDs could become funding and planning agencies with a strong regulation role. Although this prospect is attractive, the concept may be premature in the Afghan context, as it will require greater effort in implementing a decentralisation policy, which presently appears to be low given the existence of politically fragmenting forces.

6.1.4 Links between health facilities and the local community

Considerable progress has been made in training mid-level staff, including Community Health Workers (CHWs). Given the fact that the CHWs only receive a basic ten-week training, doctors have questioned the relevance of CHW clinical services which prompted the revision of the CHW job description. According to most respondents, the CHWs undoubtedly contribute to the increase in preventive activities and have played an instrumental role in family planning. Nevertheless, drop-out rates are of particular concern. Valid arguments are made both for and against their work on a volunteer basis but some NGOs are already attempting to develop mechanisms for compensation in order to retain them.

Within the international community, the value of Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) training is a controversial issue. The justification for this investment is that a large proportion of births are attended by TBAs, especially in rural areas where access to maternity care providers, such as doctors and midwives, is limited. Opponents argue the following: (i) training TBAs is a stopgap measure, as they cannot address many problems; (ii) it has shown to be ineffective in terms of impact on pregnancy outcomes. It has also been said that the training is not cost-effective because most TBAs have a low caseload.

To date, international studies indicate that it may be difficult to justify the time and expense associated with TBA training as compared with other possible health investments. Indeed Afghan policy-makers have chosen to improve access to health facilities that can provide timely, emergency obstetric care and to train skilled staff such as community midwifes. Nevertheless the fact that access is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future has been used by a few NGOs working outside contracting to justify the investment in TBA training. Even though aid workers should be realistic in their expectations, in the Afghan context, TBAs may still represent the strongest link between women and the health facilities and may represent a valuable resource in referral to functioning facilities. In particular the indicators related to institutional deliveries and caesarean section, which is an area in need of improvement, may call for different strategies and increased ways of working with existing resources at community level, including TBAs.

6.2 The dilemma between achieving results and improving quality of care

6.2.1 Expanding the scope of BPHS

Since its initial introduction, the BPHS has been reviewed to address the gaps in the scope of services provided. For example mental health and disability components have been added, and BHCs should now be staffed with a doctor and health posts with a community supervisor. In the fast-paced implementation environment, these changes have placed an extra burden on NGOs and health providers who are, at the same time, facing the challenge of providing a wide range of health services while meeting targets via output and process indicators. Observations show that the ability of the Comprehensive Health Centres (CHCs) and district hospitals to cope with the increasing healthcare demands, especially at the Out Patient Department (OPD), is often limited. This raises questions about the absorption capacity of health facilities and compromises the quality of care.

The fact that users bypass the first level of healthcare may partly explain why services providers are experiencing patient overload. Some NGOs have suggested that either new facilities should be built or more staff should be trained in order to meet demands but these solutions may not be enough. Perhaps an alternative response would be to open the health facilities in the afternoons. Most public health facilities are open from 8am to 1pm/2pm only. Assuming a physician spends about ten minutes with each patient[39], this works out at about 36 patients a day. This scenario is incompatible with the increase in the number of consultations that is required if targets are to be met.

6.2.2 Ensuring quality

Evaluating the quality of care was not one of the objectives of these field visits. Nevertheless positive changes were obvious particularly at the facility level: medication prices were advertised at the entrance; drugs and equipment were available; and a number of female providers, including health professionals from Tajikistan, were present.

By contrast there seems no marked change in terms of clinical care, the time spent in service or interpersonal relations between providers and users. This has been confirmed by health facility assessments carried out by the MoPH and the John Hopkins University.

Clinical practice and the number of patients are likely to have a significant bearing on the quality of healthcare. Having too many patients to see in the mornings has several implications: consultations are poorly performed and the monotony of the work has a negative impact on health worker motivation. In addition, the direct outcome of spending less time on clinical diagnosis is that doctors can see more patients, a situation that is all too common.

Several tools for monitoring and evaluating the performance and quality of health services have been introduced but appear to have little influence on health staff practices. As a matter of fact the environment and the structure in which the health staff work have not changed fundamentally despite an increase in NGO salary scales. In addition the fact that health professionals often run a private healthcare service after official hours means that they have little incentive to improve the quality of their work with NGOs.

[39] According to the Balanced Score Card as developed by the John Hopkins University and the Indian Institute of Health Management Research, the time spent with patients (> 9.1 minutes) is one of the indicators to assess the quality of service provision.

6.3 The need to take the private-for-profit sector seriously

6.3.1 What do we know about the private-for-profit sector in Afghanistan?

International experience illustrates that the users of health services often seek care at both public and private providers, depending upon circumstances and the perceived advantages of single or several sources. In the Afghan context, different categories of private providers exist, including traditional healers, midwives and doctors, but little is known about them. Although anecdotal evidence indicates that private services are widely used, their significance is yet to be fully understood. Likewise no research has been carried out to explain their popularity in terms of cost or access. Studies examining the efficiency and quality of private care are also lacking, which means that there is little information available on the benefits and constraints of private healthcare for rural populations in relation to that of the public sector.

6.3.2 The blurred line between public and private work

One key element to bear in mind is that the arrangement whereby government health professionals are allowed to conduct private practice has received wide support. While private healthcare services are officially recognised in the Afghan Constitution, authorities do not object if health workers open private clinics, laboratories or pharmacies and accept that health workers may try to supplement their salary by seeking alternative sources of income.

The delivery of an essential package does not require health staff not to engage in private practice. It does, however, need them to devote sufficient time to delivering the basic package service at a reasonable level of quality. But this is threatened because:

- A 'grey zone' exists between official fees and unofficial co-payments;
- The price of health services may be more difficult to monitor;
- The cost raises serious implications in terms of equity;
- It makes professional practices less amenable to change;
- Although health workers know standard treatment procedures, they may still apply the wrong treatment for financial gain or due to patient pressure;
- Private medical care is essentially concerned with the provision of symptomatic relief through curative care but has little role in addressing the root causes through preventive interventions;
- There is no consumer protection or regulation to ensure the quality of these services.

6.3.3 The need for regulation and enforcement

While such entrenched practices cannot be changed overnight, the impetus to fundamentally change this informal system is weak. The widespread growth of the private sector and the lack of effective mechanisms to address these problems could make the health sector increasingly vulnerable to market failure problems, including information asymmetry, resulting in a costly yet unsatisfactory overall performance. It is, therefore, argued that the government, health-related UN agencies and NGOs have an important role in setting up processes and mechanisms to ensure that the private sector provides safe and appropriate health services.

6.3.4 Do opportunities for cooperation exist?

International debate on the role of the private sector has primarily focused on issues of cost and quality. However, more recently the comparative advantages of private practitioners have been brought to our attention, including their proximity to the patients; the confidence patients have in them and patients' acceptance of their services despite the costs.

In Afghanistan, one well-documented example relating to cooperation with private providers comes from WHO. In the capital city of Paktia province, WHO is working with private pharmacies in order

to address the negative aspects of their Tuberculosis (TB) related practices, which includes disregard for recommended drug protocols, inaction with regard to defaulters and lack of minimum essential records.

This example suggests that it is in policy-makers' and aid organisations' interests to try to harness the potential benefits of the private sector while also addressing its failings.

6.4 Addressing demand-related issues

The development of the BPHS in Afghanistan is primarily a supply-led approach. In the early days, policy-makers made the implicit assumption that public health facilities, offering a standardised package of activities, would respond to people's healthcare needs. However, although services are becoming increasingly available to the general population, there is limited information on the system's capacity to respond to patient demands, reactions and requests. There is a dawning realisation within the GCMU and the World Bank in particular that expanding health services is not enough but that a better understanding of the demand side is required.

Cultural realities in Afghanistan highlight a number of factors that affect demand and access. Access to health services is dependent on distance, security and availability of female staff, amongst others. Other factors influencing the feasibility of the health system, including social barriers related to health beliefs, provider practices, social restrictions on women's mobility, may also affect utilisation of health services. It is also possible that the opportunity cost and difficult access have a joint impact on PHC utilisation rates. Furthermore patients may not be willing to pay for treatment they consider to be less effective, convenient or accessible than that obtainable from other sources. For example, a pre-test survey in Ningarhar province showed that annual health expenditure, which represented approximately US$59 per capita, not only formed a substantial share of total of out-of-pocket payment but was mostly spent outside public health facilities (Gibson *et al,* 2005).

Finally users may lack the requisite knowledge to make appropriate choices in the health service market with a high demand on curative health care. Attempts to communicate wider messages about health services and quality use – particularly the appropriate use of medication and knowledge of the referral chain – is currently very limited. This would require increasing public awareness of, and trust in, the new services.

6.5 Summary of issues for debate

The opinions presented above were shared and discussed during a workshop held on 24 April 2006. Most of the suggestions presented below are a result of these discussions:

6.5.1 The BPHS: a careful development

A structured PHC system is functional with an increased level of activities and coverage of underserved and remote areas. Despite these considerable achievements, it is important that the questions outlined below in Box 11 should not be overlooked.

Box 11: Main questions regarding the BPHS

How to maintain focus on results without compromising quality?
Policy-makers should treat this issue as a serious concern and expand the scope of BPHS carefully taking into account not only cost-effectiveness and efficacy of interventions but also the capacity of the health facilities to cope with increasing range of activities and demands.

How to better understand demand-related issues?
More in-depth research on factors affecting utilisation of public health facilities will provide essential background material. This should help the MoPH and its partners to better understand the physical, financial, organisational, cognitive and socio-cultural barriers affecting utilisation and promote more appropriate health-seeking behaviour and health service utilisation.

In the future what is desirable: competition or cooperation?
Contracting can take various forms depending on the purpose of the contract. Exposure to other contracting arrangements, including contract binding the state to local authorities or contracting-in, should be encouraged to reflect the reality of the PPHDs and possibly of the districts so that both administrations become active actors and managers of the process. For their part, donors need to reinforce their assistance in a way that builds the capacities of provincial and district health administrations.

6.5.2 Tackling limitations: the unregulated private-for-profit sector

The private-for-profit sector does have an important role to play but:

- There is a need for studies to be carried out on the efficiency and quality of private care;
- It has a limited role in preventive interventions;
- Consumers lack protection and regulation;
- NGOs have little influence over the practices of health staff;
- There is possible negative impact on the quality of care and on ethics and professional values.

Until now, there have been few calls for the government to further regulate private healthcare providers with the aim of improving the quality of care and ensuring that all citizens have access to healthcare. If equity is not to be compromised and the private-for-profit sector is to be seen as complementary to public services, it is necessary to consider it as an integral part of the health system. The government and NGOs have an important role in setting up processes and mechanisms to ensure that the private sector provides safe and appropriate health services.

Policy-makers and providers need to make a concerted effort to address these issues and develop appropriate strategies. The government has a key role in developing a coherent policy on the legislation, regulation and control of private sector health services. NGOs, as providers, should advocate for regulation and enforcement, investigate the potential for building partnerships, search for alternative mechanisms, such as linking salary supplements to staff performance, career opportunities or peer pressure, and educate consumers to improve health-promoting behaviour.

6.5.3 Strengthening inter-sector cooperation

The crucial question is how best to achieve sustainable improvement in the health of the Afghan population. Cross-sector improvements on security, roads and education are among the multiple factors likely to have an impact on health. But it is common knowledge that the epidemiological transition, from predominantly communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases, has largely been attributable to economic development leading to improved education, nutrition and sanitation rather than to effective healthcare provision either by public or private sectors. Indeed healthcare should not be reduced to doctors, medicine, health centres and hospitals.

The limits of healthcare provision highlight the importance of factors that lie outside the medical domain, such as balanced diet, safe drinking water and hygiene. The need to invest in other sectors, such as water and sanitation and education, is critical and will require stronger inter-sector collaboration between Ministries.

6.5.4 The unresolved issue of sustainability

In the current competitive and resource-constrained environment, one key concern is the sustainability of the BPHS through the PPA strategy. The system, which includes both MoPH and NGO providers, is still very precarious. Even though cost-sharing schemes, as currently piloted, bring additional revenues into the system, they are unlikely to cover the BPHS which is estimated, on an annual basis, at US$140 million.

While donors have advocated for government to increase its expenditure in the health sector over the next few years, they also increasingly consider the MoPH to be a credible partner. Experience thus suggests that some donor agencies are prepared to pool their resources in areas where the MoPH has been able to articulate convincing strategies, provided that the government remains reassuringly competent.

Comparing the picture that emerged from Groupe URD's first Quality Project mission in August 2002 with the prevailing situation in 2006, there has been significant progress. Nevertheless the development of the health sector remains highly context-dependent and is subject to continuing changes in an unstable environment.

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7 EDUCATION

By Agnès De Geoffroy, assisted by Amélie Banzet (adegeoffroy@urd.org, abanzet@urd.org)

7.1 Main issues related to the education sector

In order to gain a better understanding of the education sector in Afghanistan, it is important to highlight some of the general features characterising the sector as a whole before discussing the impact of reforms and opportunities for future development.

As far as Western-style education is concerned (i.e. excluding Islamic education), the **current enrolment rate** is the highest in Afghan history with more than half of the children in the 7-13 age bracket enrolled in schools, of which 35-40% are girls (see Table 7).

Table 7: Education figures

Year	School age population (million)	Number of schools	Number of children enrolled	Number of teachers	Enrolment growth (compared to 1978)	Growth in no. of schools (compared to 1978)
1978	2.8	3,352	995,000	29,900	-	-
1980	2.8	3,824	1,115,000	35,300	+12%	+14%
1985-90	4.0	586[1]	622,000	15,100	-62%	-83%
1991-2001	4-4.5	2,200-3,000	5-700,000	15-20,000	?[2]	?
2002	4.5	6,784	2,900,000	73,000	+291%	+202%
2003	-	>8,000	3,700,000	80,600	-	+240%

[1] Schools supported by government, mainly in cities. Schools supported by communities, local commanders and NGOs (est. 1,500 schools) are not included in this figure.
[2] In 1992-96, civil war was raging and no data is available for this period. During the Taliban regime, there was no differentiation between *madrasas*[40] and schools, so again data is unavailable.

Source: Ministry of Education, 2003

In 2004, even though an impressive 4.3 million children were enrolled in schools from grades 1 to 12[41], another 2.5 million children of school age (7–18 yrs old) were still not enrolled, despite the fact that the Constitution of Afghanistan established that education up to grade 9 is compulsory. It is likely that the current enrolment rate is even higher but up-to-date reliable statistics are scarce. Certain respondents put forward figures of more than 5 million children attending school in 2006 and around 105,000 teachers. Enrolment rates and teacher recruitment have increased considerably over the past few years and will continue to rise. The rehabilitation of pre-war facilities is still problematic for the sector and investment of financial and human resources in the education sector remains inadequate. The fact that the overwhelming majority are students are concentrated in the first grades adds to the challenge.

The **weak urbanisation level** in Afghanistan is a factor affecting school enrolment and delivery of education services. Large numbers of small communities continue to live in remote rural areas and addressing their needs requires both resources and commitment from local authorities.

There is a **high regional diversity** in terms of existing education delivery and constraints for its development:

- Extent of infrastructure destruction during the war. In front line areas, most facilities were raised to the ground and rehabilitation or reconstruction efforts are thus essential.
- Geographical constraints. In mountainous regions, such as Bamiyan province, the local landscape represents a considerable constraint. Access to remote villages in order to provide education can be extremely challenging.
- Security is also an important obstacle. Difficult or very risky access may discourage the government or NGOs from providing education, especially for girls (e.g. in Zabul, Helmand, Khost).

[40] Madrasas are Islamic schools.
[41] *Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishment and the Strategic Path Forward* (Technical Annex/ Education), Kabul: TISA and International Agencies, 2004

- Girls' enrolment is still problematic in many regions. At the national level, an estimated 35% of girls are enrolled but this figure varies dramatically depending on the region. For example, in Herat and Kabul provinces, female enrolment rates can exceed 50% but in other provinces such as Zabul (3%), Helmand (5%) or Khost (7%) figures are much lower. Girls' enrolment is intricately related to the security situation, cultural factors, and geographic and economic constraints. Parents are reluctant to let their girls walk long distances to school, both for cultural and security reasons.

The **high population diversity** should also be highlighted as an important constraint for the education sector. Years of war have resulted in large numbers of **over aged children**, who have special education needs and require specific teaching methods. One of the strategies being implemented to tackle this problem is the accelerated learning process, which it is hoped will succeed in reintegrating these children in the formal system within two to three years. Another strategy is to provide them with basic literacy education, even if it fails to cover the whole curriculum. The high illiteracy rates are also an important challenge. One objective is to ensure that 50% of adult women are literate by 2008.

Population migration poses a dual problem for the education sector. Many former teachers emigrated and some refugees received their teaching diplomas abroad. Reintegrating returnee teaching staff can be difficult (recognition or equivalence of diploma, adaptation to Afghan situation, etc.). Moreover some refugees had access to good education in camps or in neighbouring countries, such as Iran and Pakistan, compared with the population that remained within Afghanistan. This raises problems in the classroom when students have a better level of education than the teachers or they are unable to find a class at their level.

The presence of **minority groups** raises the issue of teaching languages (Uzbek, Tajik, Nuristani, etc.).

Nomadic people also represent a very specific population group with their own special needs. Responding to the education needs of nomadic families requires an inventive and flexible approach.

It is all too apparent that the regions visited for this research study have specific characteristics and are not representative of the high diversity present in Afghanistan as a whole. Bamiyan, Samangan, Balkh, Baghlan, Nangarhar and Kabul provinces have good enrolment rates with slight diversity concerning girls' enrolment. Unfortunately, the situation is very different in the southern provinces, where high insecurity levels prevented research from being carried out.

7.2 Main reforms since 2001

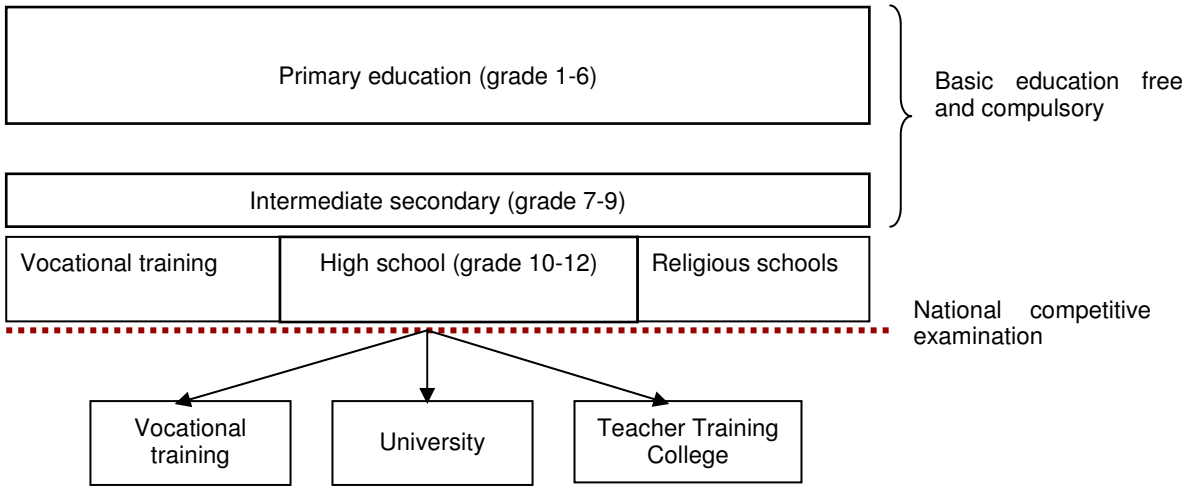
The main objective of this study has been to understand the reconstruction process and the main trends for the education sector from grades 1 to 12. The higher education sector was taken into account but was not the principal focus of this study.

7.2.1 New Constitution

The new Constitution established in 2004 states that basic education is free and compulsory: "*Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be provided up to secondary level, free of charge by the state. The State is obliged to devise and implement effective programmes for a balanced expansion of education all over Afghanistan, and to provide compulsory intermediate level education*". Art.22, Ch. 2.

In the Constitution, the state is responsible for establishing policies and setting up programmes in order to provide basic education for children, to improve access to education for women and nomadic groups, as well as to reduce illiteracy in Afghanistan.

Figure 10: Education sector framework



7.2.2 New curriculum and textbooks

The most major reform affecting the education sector since 2001 is the drawing up of the new curriculum and new textbooks. Before 2001, textbooks dated from the 1980s. Learning and teaching methods were largely based on outdated curricula and pedagogy, which placed an emphasis on learning by rote. Some of the textbooks used before 2001 in Afghanistan (and for Afghan refugees, particularly in Pakistan) were developed with the support of the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), with USAID funding. Since then, a new curriculum has been drawn up by the government, with the support of UNESCO and UNICEF, and financial support from international donors. An Independent High Commission of Education for Afghanistan was set with the support of UNESCO to design 'objectives, policy and strategies' for the education sector. Textbooks are still being written for grades 3 and 6. Textbooks for grades 1 and 4 have been distributed and have been completed but not yet distributed for grades 2 and 5.

7.2.3 Priority Reform and Restructuring

All government institutions are undergoing a Priority Reform and Restructuring process (PRR). For the education sector, the PRR process should improve efficiency within the Ministry of Education (MoE) by the recruitment of better qualified civil servants. Indeed, the MoE, with its 105,000 teachers, has the highest number of employees and it will need to hire more as the demand for teachers continues to rise. In order to manage its staff correctly, administration must be run efficiently at both the national and the provincial levels. Moreover, as the provincial level is responsible for evaluation and monitoring, and supplying bottom up information, competent staff with the necessary skills are required.

The supply of qualified teachers is one of the main issues at stake in the education sector. An accreditation system (salary will be based on skills and experience) should be implemented to enhance teacher recognition and the PRR process will provide a base for its implementation. In fact, one of the major factors affecting quality teaching and education is salary levels. The PRR process should enable the MoE to select the necessary qualified staff, whilst also improving administration, monitoring and supervision procedures, and allocation of salaries.

For the MoE, the first step in the reform process is complete. A committee has been formed within the MoE that is responsible for drawing up a new organisational framework. However, the recommendations put forward by this committee have yet to be implemented and the reform process appears to have reached a deadlock. A new PRR process will be launched with the arrival of the new Minister. In Baghlan for example), an evaluation and monitoring team was sent from

Kabul to the Provincial Education Department (PED to test the skills of local state employees and dismiss staff that did not meet the necessary standards.

7.3 Centralised delivery of education services

7.3.1 Highly centralised Ministry of Education

The MoE is a highly centralised ministry with very little decision-making powers being delegated to local administration. The central Ministry insists on receiving all information from the provincial education departments but top down communication appears to be poor. However, the overall capacity of the MoE has improved. For example, teachers' salaries were a major issue at the end of 2004, whereas today, teachers are paid on a much more regular basis. Nevertheless, high turnover among ministers and their assistants is proving to be a hurdle in efforts to improve MoE efficiency, and a considerable constraint for all aid workers. Donors have to renegotiate with new Ministerial teams, explaining their strategies and objectives, in order to reach a new agreement. Similarly NGOs also have to renew their discussions, and this factor is jeopardising relations between the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) and the international community.

7.3.2 Change in national policy

National policies and strategies changed since 2001. During the emergency period, the government primarily worked on the basis of UNICEF's 'back to school' campaign. From 2002 onwards, all stakeholders concentrated their efforts on access to education for both boys and girls.

The focus on access to education is still prevailing but there is an increasing tendency to look at quality in education, which means providing a better learning environment and better teaching methods and conditions. A national teacher training policy, the Teacher Education Programme (TEP), has been established which seeks to improve both teachers' knowledge and their teaching methods. For 2006, there will also be an increased focus on vocational training and education levels in religious school. In the new education system, children can commence formal vocational training or study at religious schools after grade 9. The development of vocational training and religious schools lacks structure, and funding for the latter is hard to come by. Very few donors are prepared to invest in religious schools (in terms of infrastructure, curriculum development, teacher training, etc.) which may prove to be a mistake given the sensitive nature of this issue and its importance within the overall nation building context. The formal vocational training system is still very weak and the majority of vocational training programmes are provided on an informal basis with no prerequisites. NGOs or the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are responsible for providing training to specific population groups, such as demobilised children, the disabled, and ex-combatants within the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes. To this day, vocational training is a highly fragmented sector.

7.3.3 Provincial Education Department

The PED has a key role to play in the education system but considerable investment is required. Individual capacity and motivation levels are very unequal at the provincial level and resources are insufficient. Nevertheless, local administration is responsible for the key functions of assessment, monitoring and evaluation, but even if staff were motivated, they lack the necessary resources and skills to fulfil this role. In particular, the lack of means of transport is seen as a major constraint.

7.4 Donors as key actors in strategy implementation

7.4.1 High dependence on donor funding

The MoE is highly dependent on donor funding despite its weak absorption capacity. The following trends can be observed in the education sector:

- From 2004 onwards, USAID has become by far the main donor in the education sector with contributions of US$100 million per year, prompting the withdrawal of the EC from education programmes.
- UNICEF is reducing its funding for the education sector and is gradually cutting back on the number of programmes it supports in Afghanistan. The massive 'back to school' campaign launched in 2002 now mainly focuses on girls. Supply of materials in primary education is still ongoing for girls from grades 1 to 6 but only for 1st grader boys.
- The World Bank (WB) is the second most important donor, playing an increasing role in education sector.

Both for the ordinary budget (recurring costs) and for the development budget, the GoA is highly dependent on donor funding. The education sector employs the largest number of staff in government (105,000 teachers) and teachers' salaries represent 60% of the ordinary budget. This is a heavy burden in view of the state's weak financial capacity. Donor commitment is essential for the education development budget which focused on two priorities of education infrastructure and teacher training in 2004. Nevertheless, donors committed only US$77 million compared to GoA's estimated budget of US$250 million for education development for the March 2003-March 2004 period), leaving a huge funding gap[42].

On top of this, the government's absorption capacity is still weak, even though it has improved over the years. USAID is channelling funds through the Strategic Objective Agreement, whilst maintaining a degree of control on funds management. The WB finally set up a Grant Management Unit inside the MoE with a view to reducing disbursement delays which have arisen as a result of weak administration.

7.4.2 Evolution of donor strategy

After these general observations, it is appropriate to examine changes in USAID's and the WB's strategy since 2001.

- Initially, USAID launched the Accelerated Primary Education Program, which aimed at "creating conditions for stability" and responding to the most urgent needs: school building, textbook printing, teacher training and accelerated learning for over-aged children. Since, this programme evolved into the Accelerated Basic Education Program, whose objective is to improve "access to quality education". This new strategy aims at improving quality and access to education, covering a wider Afghan population: children, youth, but also adults. One aspect of USAID strategy has had a major impact on Afghan NGOs. In order to benefit from USAID funds, NGOs are required to set up a consortium between an American NGO and Afghan NGOs. As a consequence, several Afghan NGOs have had to scale up their activities, budget, staff and geographical coverage under the pressure of considerable funds.
- The WB changed its focus from the Emergency Education Rehabilitation and Development Project to Education QUality Improvement Programme, and is promoting community participation and ownership amongst district and provincial authorities. The WB is encouraging the decentralisation process, defending the idea that a centralised MoE is not compatible with sustainability of the education sector[43].

[42] World Bank, *Technical annex for a proposed grant in the amount of US$ 35 Million to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for an Education QUality Improvement Program ("EQUIP"),* July 2004

[43] *Investing in Afghanistan's Future*, A strategy note on the education system in Afghanistan, Keiko Miwa, February 2005.

7.4.3 Unfamiliar concepts and difficult coordination

These nationwide programmes that have been introduced under donor influence are often built upon exogenous development schemes and concepts which are not always fully understood by Afghan authorities and the population. For example, the WB is trying to promote administrative, and to a lesser extent, political decentralisation, placing the school at the top of the system.

In the WB programme, District Education Officers (DEO) and PED are asked to play a decision-making role in the process (community's choice endorsement). As the role of DEO is still unclear, and the relationship between MoE and local levels remains highly centralised, this process is creating tension, and local administration may not have the capacity to play the role envisaged by the WB. People working in the MoE at the central level are sceptical about decentralisation, and are unaware of how to implement it and of its consequences. Aid stakeholders facilitating WB's programme have to comply with modalities that are not always efficient.

Government ownership of national strategies and programmes is sometimes questionable. The objectives set by donors for development schemes are often too ambitious, as illustrated by the Teacher Education Programme (TEP). In the short term, the objectives are probably unattainable. Coordination efforts at national level between donors, the MoE and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) have not always been successful. The Education Coordination Group, encompassing MoE, MoHE, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs, Academic of Science and the main donors, consists of different technical groups including: construction, formal education, non-formal education, vocational training, teacher training, curriculum, etc. However, in the case of USAID, funds are channelled through an outside budget and, in this case, real coordination with the MoE appears to be very poor. The TEP seems to be an exception as the different donors pooled their funds under the authority of the MoE.

7.5 Synchronisation of aid agencies with national policy

7.5.1 UN agencies supporting government policy design and implementation

UN agencies, mainly UNESCO and UNICEF, have been supporting the GoA in policy design and implementation. For example, UNESCO supported the creation of the Independent High Commission of Education for Afghanistan and the writing of its final report about the "Revival and development of Education in Afghanistan" published at the end of 2003. UNICEF and UNESCO have been supporting the writing of the curriculum and textbooks for several years (textbooks are now being written for grades 4 and 6 and for intermediate and secondary education). UNICEF and UNESCO also worked on capacity building for government institutions. UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, UNIFEM and FAO have recently launched a joint programme 'integrated functional literacy', which provides support for the government's literacy campaign. Its objective is to increase women's literacy rate in Afghanistan up to 50%, given that estimates place current literacy rates at only 14%. UNICEF and WFP are responsible for literacy courses while UNIFEM, FAO and UNESCO will take care of the post literacy phase. This programme will be implemented in areas where the government has very little capacity for literacy. UNICEF has also an office in the literacy department of the MoE which provides support for coordination and management aspects.

7.5.2 Better synchronisation between NGO projects and national policies

Projects implemented by international NGOs (INGOs) are increasingly becoming in line with national policies. The major NGOs working in education signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the GoA, which establishes a set of criteria for selection and intervention modalities, and guarantees better coordination between the MoE and NGOs, and between NGOs themselves. It should also improve harmonisation of aid practices. Institution building within the education sector has meant that it is more important than ever for aid workers to coordinate with MoE.

At the same time, NGOs that have been involved in Afghanistan for many years have successfully handed over the schools they supported to the GoA. Under the Taliban, NGOs often carried out the state's role, providing service delivery, running schools, paying salaries and supplying materials. Some even ran low profile girls' schools. With the transitional GoA and the election of the new government, the MoE progressively took back its responsibilities, even though it does not yet have the necessary capacity to support all the schools. NGOs were therefore required to make a transition over to new types of projects and activities. For example, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is no longer responsible for paying salaries in the 414 schools they have handed over to the government. SCA now provides support for some 'model schools', twin school programmes, secondary schools and Community Based Schools (CBS). Most INGOs shifted their focus to quality in basic education, access to education with CBS and promoting learning and literacy.

7.5.3 Diversity among NGOs working in education sector

Two major criteria appear to be decisive for the strategy and the identity of the NGOs working in the education sector in Afghanistan: the time they have spent in Afghanistan and the type of funding they receive. The history of the NGO's involvement in Afghanistan is decisive. Obviously the need for adjusting to the new reality is not the same for an NGO just arriving in the new post war context or for an NGO working in Afghanistan for decades, having run project in very harsh conditions, and accountable to the population for education delivery in some extent.

The nature of the funding they receive is also an important factor. Some NGOs are acting as implementing or facilitating partners, receiving funds from the major donors and implementing their global strategy. NGOs working on project funded by the WB have very limited room of manoeuvre. In the case of the WB, room for manoeuvre is thin for NGOs working with the WB funding. The NGOs implementing the project *Cash Grant for School Development* have many procedures and project implementation instructions to comply with (facilitate community decision making process, work with PED, etc). Other NGOs, working with other types of funds (bilateral, own funds) have more freedom in terms of design and selection of their project and location. In this case they don't have to fit into the global programmes. They can explore windows of opportunities, work with marginalised groups, such as street working children, disabled, etc; and have more autonomy in running the project.

7.5.4 Coordination at the provincial level

Stakeholders have improved coordination at the national level by establishing Memorandums of Understanding, even though it is not always apparent just how effective these working groups are. At the provincial level, some forms of coordination exist, either hosted by UN agencies, NGOs or the PED. A more systematic initiative has been set up with the Provincial Coordination Body and the sector working groups.

However, collaboration at the provincial level could be more productive if there were more substantial investment in financial resources and staff capacity for the provincial education department. The PED is responsible for carrying out need assessments and monitoring both in the schools and local communities, and in theory has ample opportunity for sharing information.

7.6 Community participation

Community participation is an important issue for all development sectors in Afghanistan, although in education projects, participation levels appear to have improved.

The involvement of the local community and families is key to limiting the impact of security problems and reducing drop out rates. Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) have been set

up to raise community awareness about school enrolment, the problem of student drop outs and teacher absenteeism which continue to represent major problems in schools.

School Management Committees have also been set up some schools, bringing together teachers and headmasters in order to improve the running of the schools and to resolve disputes. However local communities may represent the best source of protection against those who remain hostile to schooling, in particular to girls' enrolment. In some areas, schools are becoming targeted with attacks on more than 80 schools in between February and May 2006. In many cases, raising community awareness is the most effective means of fighting intolerance.

Even though the new Constitution states that basic education is free and compulsory, contributions in kind or in cash are sometimes requested. For the CBSs, the community is supposed to pay contributions for a place at school, recruiting a teacher and sometimes even supplementing teachers' salaries. It remains to be seen how relevant these financial contributions are in terms of project sustainability. In both cases, whether NGOs pay teachers' salaries or the community pays, the sustainability of CBSs remains questionable, especially as in most cases, even if requested, local communities are unable to pay. However, it is worth bearing in mind that CBSs were designed as temporary facilities in order to fill gaps left by the national education system.
In other cases, at the school level, the local community is responsible for implementing the project (carrying out need assessments, contracting and monitoring) with NGOs as facilitating partners. This is the case for the WB's Cash Grant for School Development project. In the province of Badakhshan, this project was launched under a pilot form with the Provincial Education Department playing the role of the facilitating partner. The question is whether the community is the right stakeholder to define its own real needs (as discussed in chapter 1: cross cutting issues). In the second phase of this project, entitled Education QUality Improvement Project (EQUIP), the WB divided the Cash Grant into two parts: one part is related to infrastructure and the other to quality improvement. Indeed the WB, under their first programme 'Emergency Education Rehabilitation Project', noticed that communities tended to request facility improvement or construction, and that education quality was only partially improved as a result.

7.7 Other issues for debate and recommendations

7.7.1 Coordination amongst donors and MoE ownership

Promoting MoE ownership of education projects could be attained by improving coordination between donors. Coordination bodies should be strengthened, and effective coordination and dialogue must be established between donors and the MoE, not only for the implementation of strategy and policies but also for their design. Current efforts to carry out a census (number of schools, students, teachers, etc.) and to set up an Education Management Information System should facilitate planning and coordination.

7.7.2 Capacity of the state to manage the education system in the future

There are several concerns regarding the state's capacity to manage the education system:

- Coping with the high influx of students. Given the CBS strategy and improved access to education, a large rise in the number of students in schools is expected in the coming year.
- Integrating newly-created schools in the system. Some of the CBSs are destined to become formal GoA schools. New schools are also under construction or are in the planning phase. Given the difficulties encountered by the MoE in managing existing schools, and the present teaching staff and students, the consequence of integrating new schools and new students in the national education system may well be beyond MoE limits.
- Rationalising the teaching profession (numbers of staff, quality, certification, salary levels). Although considerable efforts are being undertaken to improve the teaching environment and the quality of education delivered, some significant challenges remain, including the MoE's capacity to rationalise a very disparate staff, to bring skills and teaching methods up to the

same level and improve salaries. Currently, one of the major factors affecting teacher recruitment is low salary levels.

7.7.3 Quality in education

After the emergency phase where the major concern was ensuring access to education, stakeholders are now focusing on 'quality' in education. For some, quality can be attained by establishing model schools that are well equipped and serve as an example for the MoE and local education authorities. For others, quality means creating best practices in education, building capacity and raising awareness among the authorities. The TEP is a national attempt to improve teacher training mechanisms, teacher knowledge and teaching methods. However whereas in some areas, children still do not have access to education, in others, schools are equipped with computers. Quality should by no means be compromised because of weaknesses within the national education system, but in several regions of Afghanistan urgent needs are still not being met.

7.7.4 Outcomes and benefits of basic education

Improved access to education and the quality of education are key issues, but the outcomes and benefits of basic education must not be overlooked. There is an urgent need to develop vocational training programmes which correspond to branches of industry within Afghanistan, and access to higher education must be streamlined. Many graduates are reportedly failing to find work in their chosen field of study and instead accept positions that do not require such high levels of education. It is not surprising then that many families query the pertinence of education. The current system of selective admission to higher education (grade 12 onwards), which is based on a rating system, may not be wholly appropriate. Children with high scores can apply to study medicine and those with lower scores can become teachers. This is probably not the best way either to promote self esteem amongst teaching staff nor the value of the teaching profession in general.

7.7.5 Capacity building at provincial level

Local education authorities at the provincial level are responsible for carrying out need assessments and monitoring, and provide a valuable link between the field level and the national level. Schools and communities are central to the education sector and decisions should be taken according to the situation in the field. However, local authorities do not always have the necessary skills to collect valid information at field level (though evaluations, monitoring and need assessments) and transmit this data coherently to the central level. Although it is not the role of NGOs to provide local administration with the necessary skills, nevertheless, better cooperation would improve efficiency within the system and could boost transfer of skills. NGOs should increase capacity building activities at provincial and district levels on issues such as need assessment and monitoring.

7.7.6 Improve coordination at the school level

Coordination should be improved at the school level. Some schools have received the support of several NGOs over the past few years, for example one NGO provides equipment for the laboratory, another provides tents, another builds classrooms and another provides training for teachers and the headmaster, etc. Better coordination should not only reduce the risk of overlap but also ensure that support is provided where it is needed most. The risk of focusing on easy-to-reach schools or communities continues to exist and efforts must be made to limit this problem. Good coordination is also a means of reducing gaps in humanitarian support and of harmonising the approaches adopted by different aid agencies. For instance, in some areas, organisations are distributing food to promote school enrolment while others are encouraging community participation with the same objective. In this case, projects are discredited by the lack of coordination.

In addition to these sector specific observations, the core issue for the rebuilding of the state and for the education sector is aiming for clear and common political and technical views and objectives among the Afghan elite. ‘Ownership’ is a concept employed by the West in order to give legitimacy to their interventions, but for the Afghan people the common will to rebuild their nation and to found an underlying vision of society is what really matters. Education is an important and highly sensitive sector that gives form and provides the foundations for a country and its society. Although foreign support is necessary, the highest attention and priorities must be placed on Afghan needs, expectations and demands.

Persons met during the field mission

Education	
Thursday 23 March	Arrival in Kabul
Wednesday 29 March	Meeting in the University of Kabul with Mr. Habib Soughadgar; Head of the French Department in the University
Thursday 31 March	Meeting in Kabul with Mr. Habib Rahman, Assistant Education Manager for AKDN
	Meeting in Kabul with Mr. Abdul Raziq Azizi, Education Deputy Programme Manager for Care International
	Meeting in Kabul with Mr. Gul Habib, Education Technical Advisor for IRC
Sunday 2 April	Meeting in Kabul with Dr. Ahmad Khalid Fahim, Tech Advisor for Primary education for SCA
	Meeting in Kabul with Dr. Suman Kr. Karna, urban development Advisor for UN Habitat
	Meeting in Kabul with Mrs. Shahnaz Hakim, Education Programme Management Specialist for USAID
Monday 3 April	Preparation for the field surveys and the departure
Tuesday 4 April	Kabul – Bamiyan
Wednesday 5 April	Meeting in Bamiyan with Mr. Ezatullah Arman, Regional Education Officer for AKDN; Visit of Mother Literacy courses, adult literacy courses and rehabilitated schools in Shibar District
	Meeting in Bamiyan with Mr. Jumaddin, Master teacher trainer for Care International
Thursday 6 April	Meeting with Mr. Waseq, Head of the PED of Bamiyan
	Visit of a school supported by Care International through the CGSD project funded by USAID
	Meeting in Bamiyan with Mr. Noor Mahamad, Admin/Data manager officer for SC Norway/Sweden
Friday 7 April	Bamiyan – Eybak
Saturday 8 April	Meeting in Eybak with Mr. Kader, Regional Programme Manager for BRAC Visits of Schools from BEOC project with BRAC
	Meeting with Mr. Yahre Nazar head of the PED of Samangan Visits of governmental schools supported by USAID and AKDN
	Eybak – Mazar-e Sharif
Sunday 9 April	Meeting in Mazar-e Sharif with Eng. Ahmad Shah Azizar, Education Project Officer for UNICEF
	PED Coordination Meeting in Mazar-e Sharif
	Meeting in Mazar-e Sharif with Mrs. Marketa Pohankova, Programme officer relief and development for PIN
Monday 10 April	Meeting in Mazar-e Sharif with Mr. Mustafa Muzundar, Education Programme Officer for BRAC
	Meeting with Mr. Morali Mohan, Programme Manager for SC UK in Mazar-e Sharif
	Meeting with Mr. Ahmad Jama, Head of Programme on Mazar-e Sharif for WFP
	Meeting with Mr. Abdul Rauf Qaderi , Regional Manager for ACBAR in Mazar-e Sharif
	Meeting with Mr. Ghulam Yahya Abbassy, Education Sector Acting Coordinator and Mr. Moh. Rashid Scandary, Regional Field Officer for CHA
Tuesday 11 April	Meeting in the University of Mazar-e Sharif with Mr. Fahim, Sayara Programme coordinator and journalism teacher
	Mazar-e Sharif – Pul-e-Khumri Meeting in Pul-e-Khumri with Mr. Atiqullah Ludin, regional Programme Officer in Baghlan for AKDN
Wednesday 12 April	Meeting with Education Manager for SCA in Baghlan Visit of a SCA model school in Baghlan
	Visit of the teacher training centre in Baghlan, supported by AKDN
Thursday 13 April	Meeting with Mr. Abdul Sabur, head of administration of the PED of Baghlan Visit of a governmental girl High Schools and of a governmental boys high School
Friday 14 April	Pul-e-Khumri - Kabul
Saturday 15 April	
Sunday 16 April	
Monday 17 April	Meeting in Kabul with Mr. Shahaduddin, Education Programme Manager for BRAC
	Meeting with Mr. Mansory, TEP department in Kabul
	Meeting with Mr. Karbalawi, director of Planning Department in the MoE
Tuesday 18 April	
Wednesday 19 April	Meeting with Mrs. Sherezad J. Monami Latif, Education Specialist for the World Bank and Mr. Habibullah Wajdi, Education Specialist for the World Bank.
	Meeting with Mrs. Manta Singh, Schools and Clinics Programme Support Officer for IOM and Mr. Bodgan Danila, Schools and Clinics Deputy Programme Manager for IOM

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