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MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

Project Number:

AFG/I87

Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control

Report of the independent evaluation team

Thematic area:

Prevention, Treatment and Reintegration, and Alternative Development

Country:

Afghanistan

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Table of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| List of Acronyms..... | iii |
| Summary matrix of findings, supporting evidence, and recommendations | 5 |
| Executive Summary..... | 7 |
| a) Description of the project..... | 7 |
| b) Major findings of the evaluation..... | 7 |
| c) Lessons learned and best practices..... | 8 |
| d) Recommendations..... | 10 |
| I. Introduction..... | 10 |
| A. Background and Context of the Project..... | 10 |
| A.1. The AL Context in Afghanistan..... | 11 |
| A.2. UNODC’s Counterpart Ministry: An Overview of MCN and PDCN Functions and Capabilities... 14 | |
| B. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation | 17 |
| C. Evaluation Methodology | 18 |
| D. Limitations to the Evaluation | 19 |
| II. Major Findings | 20 |
| A. Capacity Building..... | 20 |
| B. The AL Database..... | 23 |
| C. CN Public Information Campaigns | 25 |
| D. Revamping the Role of UNODC’s Provincial AL Managers | 25 |
| E. Partnerships: Synergistic or at Cross-Purposes?..... | 28 |
| F. Gender Mainstreaming: Incorporating MoWA, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNESCO | 30 |
| G. Rationalizing the Internal Structure | 31 |
| G.1. CN/AL and Demand Reduction..... | 31 |
| G.2. AL and Appropriate Marketing of Production | 32 |
| H. A Moratorium on MCN Infrastructure, but Continued Building Elsewhere..... | 33 |
| I. The Overall Implementation Process..... | 34 |
| I.1. Rationalizing Procurement: UNDP-UNODC Functionality Reaches a Nadir | 34 |
| I.2. UNODC’s Provincial Coordinators..... | 36 |
| I.3. UNODC’s Provincial AL Coordinators | 36 |
| I.4. Brief Responses to the TOR’s Remaining “Implementation Process” Bulletpoints | 37 |
| J. Project Concept and Design | 39 |
| J.1. Assessing the Impact of I87: The Project Logframe | 39 |
| J.2. The Midterm Evaluation | 39 |
| J.3. I87 and UNODC’s Comparative Advantage in AL | 39 |
| J.4. I87 and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy | 40 |
| J.5. I87 and the Afghanistan Compact..... | 40 |
| J.6. I87 and the 2008 UNODC Thematic Evaluation | 41 |
| J.7. Sub-Contract Performance | 41 |
| III. Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Growth Potential..... | 42 |
| IV. Constraints that Impacted Project Delivery..... | 43 |
| V. Conclusions and Final Recommendations..... | 44 |
| Appendix A: TOR | 45 |
| Appendix B: List of People Interviewed..... | 53 |
| Appendix C: The PRR vs. the MCP..... | 56 |

List of Acronyms

ABP Afghan Border Police
ADB Asian Development Bank
ADP/E Alternative Development Program/Eastern Region (formerly ALP/E)
AKDN Aga Khan Development Network
AKF Aga Khan Foundation (a division of AKDN)
AL Alternative Livelihood(s)
ALP/E AL Program/Eastern Region (USAID)
ALWG AL Working Group
ANDS Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP Afghan National Police
ARD Associated in Rural Development
AREU Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ASI Adam Smith International (embedded in MCN)
CARD Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (DFID)
CDC Community Development Council (formed under MRRD's NSP)
CHA Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (an NGO)
CN Counter Narcotics
CNAT Counter Narcotics Advisory Team (a directorate within MCN)
CNTF Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (end date December 2008)
COAFG UNODC Country Office, Afghanistan
CRS Catholic Relief Services
DDA District Development Assembly
DEcon (Provincial) Department of Economics
DEW (Provincial) Department of Energy and Water
DFID (UK) Department for International Development
DG Director-General
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAA German Agro-Action (aka Deutsche Welthungerhilfe)
GIRA Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPI Good Performance Initiative
GTZ Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
HDI Human Development Index
IARCSC Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission
IDEA Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives (USAID)
IDLG Independent Directorate of Local Governance
GPI Good Performers Initiative
JICA Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDC Less/Lesser/Least Developed Countries
MAIL Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
MCN Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MCP Management Capacity Program (administered by the WB under IARCSC)
MEW Ministry of Energy and Water
MoWA Ministry of Women's Affairs
MPA-N Mint Producers Association - Nangarhar
MRRD Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP National Area-Based Development Programme (under MRRD)
NDCS National Drug Control Strategy (MCN, 2006)
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NRAP National Rural Access Programme (under MRRD)
NSP National Solidarity Programme (under MRRD)
NVDA Nangarhar Valley Development Authority (a MAIL directorate)
OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PAR Public Administration Reform Programme (WB)
PDAIL Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
PDC Provincial Development Council
PDCN Provincial Department of Counter Narcotics
PIC Public Information Campaign
PRR Priority Reform and Restructuring (a component of the WB's PAR)
PRRD Provincial Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
RED Rural Enterprise Development
UNAMA United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID United States Agency for International Development
WATSIP Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation Programme (under MRRD)
WB The World Bank
WFP United Nations World Food Programme

Summary matrix of findings, supporting evidence, and recommendations

| Findings: problems and issues identified | Supporting evidence | Recommendations |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. I87 is mostly efficient, with some few exceptions. | Delivery of MCN infrastructure has been accomplished; delivery of services to MCN has been made; the AL database has been set up; alternative livelihood working groups are sporadically meeting; CN public information campaigns are raising awareness and having positive impact; cooperative structures with WFP have been created, but the UNODC partner is dissatisfied. | Greater emphasis on educating and training UNODC national staff, both at Kabul and provincial levels, will yield efficiency increases; increased national staffing levels will provide better service delivery as well as gender mainstreaming; better interfacing with UN sister-agency coordinated activities is needed, such that UNODC performs as others expect. |
| 2. However, I87 has not proven to be effective in its current operational mode. | MCN is quite dysfunctional in many areas, and lacks operational mandates in the eyes of other line ministries, resulting in its not being fertile ground to accept UNODC input. The AL database is rife with errors and omissions, and cannot be considered at all useful; indeed, it is used only by top MCN officials as a statistics-generating tool, but output data cannot be labeled either as relevant or accurate. | Greater quasi-daily mentorship of MCN staff may result in gains in effectiveness, but because of high staff turnover rates once training is certified, this is not assured; the AL database at MCN needs complete revamping; UNODC, while not neglecting MCN, needs to expand its influence and cooperation with other line ministries. |
| 3. Hence, unfortunately, the overall impact of I87 must be classified as low insofar as MCN capacity building and especially for AL are concerned. | UNODC remains invisible to most of the respondents interviewed – of course, this is a self-limiting set of people who have regular interactions with MCN, and/or AL activities, but this perception exists to a limited degree even within MCN itself in Kabul (notably, though, not in the provinces). | Headcount training, where often attendees are present only to pocket the daily allowance and exit with a certificate, must end – objective testing must be instituted; UNODC and donors must cooperatively respond more adaptively to evolving circumstances, rather than remain anchored in non-functional modes; AL pilot projects, firmly attached to CN conditionality, ought to be fielded to increase UNODC’s impact, visibility, and stature in Afghanistan. |
| 4. Sustainability of I87 activities is proving to be elusive. | Limited capabilities among MCN civil servants, and the inhibitory environment in which it works, means that while I87 has created the infrastructural framework for MCN, its independently fulfilling its mandate remains a distant promise, despite the considerable capacity building efforts to-date. | Broadening I87’s working relationship with Government to include other line ministries, especially MAIL – which has a functioning AL Directorate – is imperative; extending partnerships with additional UN agencies will bolster sustainability; AL pilot projects must be designed to |

| Findings: problems and issues identified | Supporting evidence | Recommendations |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | MCN has demonstrated near-zero AL capability, not even having an AL director in place for many months. | transcend the trite and trivial (such as ineffectual training in tailoring and embroidery). |
| 5. I87's gender mainstreaming is non-existent. | Women often play a crucial role in household decision-making as to whether or not to engage in opium poppy cultivation, yet women are invisible and ignored in I87 activities. | Hiring a female national AL coordinator will help remedy this situation; one or more AL pilot projects should be specifically women-oriented. |
| 6. There is little evidence to suggest that learning from prior evaluations has taken place. | Previous evaluations of UNODC projects in Afghanistan concluded that MCN's ability to absorb "capacity building" is very limited, yet this was apparently not taken seriously into consideration when I87 was designed. | With all the personnel changes that occur in any organization, and in particular in the stressful Afghan milieu, institutional memory tends to get lost. A synopsis of findings from all evaluated projects, such as this very matrix, should be consulted prior to project development as a matter of course. |
| 7. The I87 logframe is not usable in its current form. | There are few measurable outcome indicators in the logframe, with too many instances occurring of unusable metrics such as "expedited" or "in place". | Robust logframe methods have now existed for many years, but evidently the capacity to draft logframes needs to be strengthened significantly. Training is required, and UNODC HQ, which has the requisite capacity, should offer this to staff. Training will need to be offered regularly, as well as on-demand. |
| 8. Overall, UNODC project staff have performed very well, especially in regard to the capacity building component. | Considerable efforts have been made to reach sustainable outcomes. While relatively minor internal gaps remain to be bridged, the primary hurdle for achieving durable MCN capacity is that, in the words of a major project donor, "it is like trying to fill a fast-leaking bucket." | Staff training courses must be given on a routine basis, with objective measurements of results embedded. |

Executive Summary

*'A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.'*
Winston Churchill

a) Description of the project

The I87 Project's objective is to support/enhance the implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy by strengthening and creating effective and sufficient institutional structures for drug control at provincial levels. These structures will be able to provide technical support and expertise in the field of counter narcotics to the Government of Afghanistan and international organizations.

I87's initial focus was primarily on the strengthening of the institutional and operational capability of the Provincial Directorates (PDs) of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) in terms of construction of office space in the three provinces of Balkh, Badakhshan and Nangarhar, and the renovation of provincial CN office in Herat, as well as technical trainings for MCN/UNODC provincial staff, equipping of provincial CN offices in the provinces and update of the alternative livelihood database (which was created by UNODC in 2005). Additional components were added in 2009 to meet the increased need of MCN and the enhanced role of provincial administrations in counter narcotics (CN). For that purpose, the project was expanded to cover the alternative livelihoods (AL) program of UNODC country office in Afghanistan (COAFG), in terms of field research and support to planning/ coordination of AL activities at the provincial level. The intent was to enable UNODC to maintain its lead in the strengthening of drug control capacity at provincial level, to sustain the momentum of counter narcotics efforts, and to support the ongoing and planned development assistance to ensure the mainstreaming of counter-narcotics issues and analysis into key national and provincial development plans.

b) Major findings of the evaluation

1. The evaluation mission held extensive discussions with Government, key CN donor, implementing agencies, and potential strategic partners at both Central and Provincial levels. The key issues emerging from these discussions are that the effectiveness of MCN and its provincial directorates remains low, albeit heterogeneous across the provinces, government capacity remains weak, and that UNODC remains relatively invisible on the alternative livelihood radar screen.
2. In regard to CN/AL, most entities interviewed pointed to the continued lack of coordination and aptitude at the Provincial level. While CN advocacy has improved at the community level, with the Provincial Departments of Counter Narcotics (PDCN) working well in some provinces in regard to pre-planting dissemination of public information, in other provinces the Department is dominated by and has taken a back seat to the US State Department-funded Counter Narcotics Advisory Team (CNAT). Field activities by Government Line Ministries are proceeding apace, but mostly without CN coordination from PDCN. Moreover, these field activities usually have very little to do with AL *per se*, i.e., bolstering household incomes in communities that have stopped growing opium poppy or have had their poppy fields eradicated, and are focused instead on building community assets.
3. Furthermore, geographic distribution of such projects is the primary theme of providers. Linking projects together in a coherent manner so as to provide the basis for changes to, or support of livelihoods is the exception rather than the rule. Even very large agricultural development projects, with some specific exceptions for commodities in high demand such as pomegranate, do

not seem to have developed a strategy for distribute marketing, import substitution, or sustainable export promotion for the more pedestrian products.

4. Concomitantly, agencies remain under significant pressure to show immediate results for CN success in Afghanistan, resulting in huge capital inflows for “development projects” that results in UNODC’s efforts in CN/AL being swamped. Who is most listened to at a roundtable is the person with the largest resources, and this is clearly not UNODC. UNODC should try to offer intellectual leadership on CN/AL matters, rather than try to compete with the large players. Unfortunately, most of the entities interviewed were unaware of UNODC’s activities in the CN/AL arena, bringing to the forefront the need for UNODC to raise its AL profile.
5. UNODC needs to develop a mechanism to reinforce its AL activities, one that is flexible enough to adjust itself to a heterogeneous environment while at the same time providing the support to its provincial staff, which in turn are tasked with building PDCN capacity in CN/AL. Understanding the spatially and socially variable fragility of populations who have stopped growing poppy is one aspect of an overall CN/AL strategy, but this must be aligned with a coherent demand reduction strategy to further remove the probability of a return to poppy cultivation.
6. One means by which UNODC can influence CN/AL strategies both at the provincial level as well as nationally/internationally is to begin implementing selected AL pilot projects in specific sectors and geographic locales that have, for whatever reason, “fallen through the gap” of the much larger actors in the AL sector (or alternative development, AD, as is now frequently used by several major donors). A strong CN conditionality *must* be imposed on such activities, and high visibility ensured through frequent reports on progress to all stakeholders, current and potential. Specific projects should be “marketed” to individual donors at the Kabul and home-country level as appropriate, in line with donor interest, in order to build a successful AL portfolio that UNODC can use to reinforce its CN/AL standing in Afghanistan.
7. Most entities interviewed even UNODC and MCN/PDCNs themselves, acknowledge that the capacity building component of I87 has not yet had the results that were anticipated. The way UNODC supports MCN/PDCNs has to be fundamentally restructured, such that sporadic training courses with unmeasured outcomes are substituted by training courses with objective performance measures, supplemented by routine, almost-daily mentoring activities.

c) Lessons learned and best practices

8. The fundamental lesson to be learned both by UNODC and the donor community is the need to be adaptable to prevailing circumstances. The international community entered the country in 2001 with the best intentions to rebuild, revitalize, and turn the economy to licit crop production, only to be faced with the evidence, time and again, that this country may well be unique in its circumstances.
9. To illustrate what this means requires some explication. The evaluation notes a statement made not long ago by a US military trainer in which, in exasperation, he commented that training recruits for the Afghan Army is like trying to train a class of five-year olds. While this might be dismissed by skeptics as analytically flawed and hyperbolic, it may then be more noteworthy that Richard Holbrooke recently commented on the training of the Afghan Police; after six years of effort, he noted wryly, 85% of police recruits enter the course illiterate, and leave the course illiterate. He made it a point to ask how, then, can the international community expect them to verify identification and other documents?
10. Such hurdles are hardly unique to the uniformed branch of Government. They also permeate almost all levels of civilian administration to a appreciable degree, in some cases to such a degree that the best-designed capacity-building initiatives, that is, the primary output of the I87 project, are predictably likely to fail.

11. Hence, the evaluation does not fault the I87 project for its attempts to build capacity. This is *exactly* what is needed to ensure a functioning and functional civilian administration. Where the lesson was not learned quickly enough, perhaps, and in line with Paragraph 8, is that the Project showed little adaptability. In the face of multiple avenues of evidence, and most likely constrained by explicit or implicit donor expectations, I87 did not evolve so as to be capable of delivering its outcomes in MCN, in the PDCNs, with the AL database, and for the AL objective. Only in the CN public information campaigns (PICs) can it be said that I87 has had some success, one that is largely due to the competence of UNODC's own staff.
12. The only logical conclusion in such circumstances as described in Paragraphs 9-11 would be to upgrade efforts in "capacity building" to become direct mentorship on a quasi-daily basis. Of course, the problem with this approach is that UNODC could easily fall into the trap of *becoming* the PDCNs in which staff would be effectively embedded.
13. While UNODC's provincial and Kabul-level national staff are justifiably classifiable as top-rate, this applies only if compared to the overall Afghan context. Unfortunately, their knowledge base, ability to conceptualize, and capability to understand how to conduct research remains low, due only to a lack of educational opportunities during the past three decades of war, not because of any deficiencies in intelligence. UNODC needs to institutionalize procedures that allow it to ascertain where such gaps exist and take steps to redress these, either through formal workshops or via on-line courses. Continuance of contracts can then be partially based on success in measurable knowledge- and skills-acquisition – that is, via tests and exams.
14. Vis-à-vis the desire for partnerships with other UN agencies, I87 undertook joint projects with WFP that left WFP feeling uncertain whether it would repeat such endeavours. UNODC must be able to maintain its promised role in such partnerships.
15. There is great potential for synergy when working with other UN agencies, hence the concept of collaboration should be actively pursued as a best-practice.
16. Women are often co-decision-makers as to whether or not a household grows opium poppy, and thus I87's ability to gather information from women and project a CN/AL message is severely compromised – especially given the Afghan context, once again, where social conservatism dominates – by not having a female project officer on staff. As a counterpoint, there is no shortage of female staff in other COAFG projects, so why the AL project fell by the wayside is most likely due to an absence of any female officers at MCN/PDCNs, rather than an oversight. However, if as suggested the AL project moves into field implementation mode, the presence of a woman on the team will prove invaluable.
17. The 2008 Thematic Evaluation has had minimal influence on the structure and functioning of I87. Too many of its recommendations have not been incorporated into the project plan, but this could possibly have much to do with real or perceived donor inflexibility as much as an evasion or dismissal of recommended actions. The same holds true in terms of including findings from past programme evaluations, one of which, for example, noted the failure of "capacity building" vis-à-vis MCN. Project creation and revisions may well be proceeding on the basis of memory of what has been written, rather than via a careful consideration of prior performance. A best practice would be to take the time – as a team – to review successes and failures of the past, and build from this knowledge-base.
18. However, it is not too late to effect substantial change to the way in which the project is conducted, and to reach the goals by the end-of-project in December 2010. The central tenets of this change are twofold: (1), to expand the way in which UNODC interprets and monitors AL, such that it begins to play a catalytic role in opening doors to households for durable livelihood streams, especially in those areas less-served by the immense projects undertaken by major donors. (2) The ongoing partnership with MCN and the PDCNs has to be strengthened through a

robust mentorship process, while concomitantly new avenues for AL partnerships with other GIRA Ministries should be implemented.

d) Recommendations

19. After further deliberations with various stakeholders, including, respected leaders at the community level, both male and female, it is recommended that substantial changes be made to the structure and implementation mode of the I87 project. UNODC should recast a clearly defined AL strategy for Afghanistan, and work to bring about a general acceptance of this redefinition, both intellectually and by example in field projects. This, as well as the suggested development and project refinements outlined upon below, will place UNODC where it belongs – a role where it can capitalize on its competitive advantage as a Blue Flag (i.e., UN) agency proffering intellectual, facilitative, and catalytic roles.
20. Following an in-depth review of the current issues and concerns surrounding MCN's capacity, prospective partners, and the CN/AL environment, the evaluation mission has developed a roadmap to adjust I87 activities to maximize beneficial outcomes. This series of recommendations can be summarized as follows:
 - a) Restructure the project's logframe so as to introduce measurable performance indicators.
 - b) Revamp the way capacity building is thought of and conducted.
 - c) Rethink the utility of the AL database, and restructure it accordingly.
 - d) Impose a moratorium on MCN construction but not on other buildings with AL outcomes.
 - e) Inject gender mainstreaming into project activities.
 - f) Seek additional partners and operational modalities to advance a robust AL focus, with special emphasis on implementing AL projects in the field that are well-coordinated with strong CN conditionalities.
 - g) Explicitly link AL with demand reduction needs.

This approach is elaborated upon in detail below. It is hoped that what follows addresses the general gap in AL activities, and that UNODC and donors consider those suggestions that are adopted as pilot operations that may be worthy of spinning off into stand-alone projects once proof-of-concept is established.

I. Introduction

A. Background and Context of the Project

21. The purpose of this project is to strengthen the institutional and operational capability of the Provincial Directorates (PDs) of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN). The project works closely with the staff of MCN PDs in the five target provinces (Herat, Balkh, Badakhshan, Nangarhar, Kandahar) to improve their organisation and to involve them increasingly in planning, monitoring and evaluation of drug control related issues, particularly AL development assistance. The role of provincial offices of MCN will be extended to assisting provincial administration mainstream counter narcotics strategies into their provincial development plans. This project also aims to develop the counter narcotics capacity of UNODC at the provincial level. By strengthening the UNODC Provincial Offices (POs), the project seeks to ensure the existence of an effective and sufficient institutional framework and mechanism at provincial levels, capable of providing technical support/expertise to the increasing needs of the Afghan government and aid agencies in all sectors of drug control.
22. The strengthening of drug control capacity at provincial level, for MCN with UNODC support, is needed to sustain the momentum of counter narcotics efforts, and to support the ongoing and

planned development assistance to ensure the mainstreaming of the counter-narcotics dimension and analysis into key development programmes at national and provincial levels. The project will support the establishment of coordination network and data base units in PDs to ensure the regular update of the AI database established at the MCN in Kabul. This project is currently being revised with a further extension and expansion of building, training and equipping of the PDs of MCN in all 34 provinces and the UNODC provincial offices in the five key provinces mentioned above. This revision will also include a counter narcotics information campaign to rural communities as well as farmer training and the launching of a public information campaign on AL.

A.1. The AL Context in Afghanistan

‘Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.’

Winston Churchill

23. In “It’s the economy, stupid” (April 18, 2009, page 73), The Economist underscores lessons learned by the US in jump-starting Iraqi private-sector investment. In particular, the interim American government effectively shut down Iraq’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) by restricting their access to cash, cutting employees’ pay by 60%, and barring the government from doing business with them. But a robust private sector failed to emerge, and in 2006, after unemployment and underemployment rates reached 50%, the US changed track, plowing \$100 million over the next two years into Iraq’s SOEs.
24. Coordination of US policies in Iraq and Afghanistan does not seem to be occurring, except on a military level. What was discovered to be relevant, indeed vital, in Iraq has not been implemented in Afghanistan, given the size of the USAID’s budget and priorities in Afghanistan. A case in point is the \$118 million spent on ADP/E and the further Phase I \$150 million programmed for IDEA in the Eastern Region, with a strong geographic emphasis on Nangarhar Province. Meanwhile, the SOE of the Nangarhar Valley Development Authority (NVDA), once employing 7,500 skilled and semi-skilled workers on maintaining its primary canal, 31 secondary canals, and 4 state farms (the famous olive and citrus groves of Nangarhar), lies moribund, despite Italy’s assistance in providing oil extraction machinery and a new computerized line for jarring olives and other vegetables.
25. The reason for expounding on the situation vis-à-vis SOEs is that it illustrates more than one disconnect, chief among them that there appears to be such a plethora of often divergent goals (in M&E parlance, “outputs”) among the international community that a coherent strategy (“outcome”) fails to emerge. For example, it would seem to be the case that donor policymakers do not clearly envisage what it is they want to achieve in eastern Afghanistan: Is it import substitution, and if so, how, since there appears to be no marketing strategy in USAID’s IDEA mega-project? Is it sustainable livelihoods, or just a temporary absorption of labour in order to deprive the Taliban of recruits? Will it indeed be the goal to provide alternative livelihoods or, instead, is the outcome to be community development? Is it the case that the mantra of privatization takes such precedence over rational alternatives that logical policymaking is simply drowned under the weight of dogma? Given the lessons learned in Iraq, how is it that providing permanent employment opportunities to 7,500 people plus a potentially very large cohort of out-growers across the Province appears not to be under discussion?
26. Of course, the answer lies embedded in the competing agendas of the many actors currently mobilized in Afghanistan, whether they have a CN/AL polity or instead assiduously strive to avoid the appearance of engaging in CN/AL in any way whatsoever. This evaluation recognizes that this multiplicity of actors, several of them very well endowed indeed with funds, has placed

UNODC in a very different role if compared with the dominant one the Office enjoys in Southeast Asian or South American contexts. Hence while lessons learned in those settings can (and should) be applied in Afghanistan where appropriate, it is necessary to point to the fact that as far as AL is concerned, UNODC – given its relatively meagre funding – encounters resistance from larger, better-resourced actors when the Agency has tried in the past to make its views heard. The new leadership of COAFG has a robust, coherent, and well-integrated vision for AL, one that should drive the debate on CN/AL strategies, mirroring the way in which WFP has succeeded in focusing the humanitarian community on a globally acceptable definition for “food insecurity.”

27. UNODC’s definition of AL (with minor modification by the evaluator) is that it consists of rural development targeting farming households whose illicit crop is scheduled for voluntary elimination or forced eradication, or in a worse case, whose illicit crop has already been eradicated. As a corollary, these households have a sustainable livelihood stream when they can cope with, and recover from, shocks and stresses – specifically the abrupt cessation of poppy cultivation and/or trafficking – without depletion of their natural resource base or household assets, and where they do not switch available labour to illegal off-farm activities.
28. UNODC’s definition is inherently a short-term one, even though it considers the issue of sustainability. The concept is centred on providing an immediate alternative income stream to that previously provided by poppy as a basis from which to build, through various subsequent development initiatives, a broader set of household options (be they on- or off-farm based). But even sustainability, which is usually thought of as having long duration, can have a very short-term referent. The poppy plant provides not only opium, but also edible oil and a biomass fuel for heating and cooking. In one village in Badakhshan the evaluation considered, the voluntary cessation of poppy cultivation had not just an immediate impact on food security in regard to expensive-to-replace cooking oil, but a serious adverse natural resource consequence: the stripping of bushes and trees from surrounding mountains to provide a replacement biomass fuel, and subsequent loss of topsoil, which has a cause-and-effect relationship that has induced the need for a UNODC-WFP partnership for stabilizing gully erosion in the village’s irrigated lands through the building of gabions. In another very remote village in Badakhshan the evaluation mission visited, opium was primarily own-consumed by the cultivators themselves, 50 households of a total of 150. Albeit induced by the threat of eradication, the voluntary end of poppy cultivation has resulted in a cascade of asset sales by addicted households, reducing many to begging for their daily bread from family and neighbours, since what little assistance has been provided through AKF’s implementation of the NSP has not been complemented by more than a token demand reduction treatment of three days duration.
29. International actors may have a different view of what constitutes AL. For example, USAID now refuses to use the term AL, preferring instead Alternative Development – so much so that they changed the name of a project midstream from ALP/E to ADP/E. GTZ takes a longer-term and perhaps too broad a view that AL consists of facilitating change from an opium-based economy to an alternative economic and social system.¹ But systems changes generally occur only after a tipping point is reached, a community consensus that reversion to the *status quo ante* is not going to happen. Of 17 CDCs polled (see Appendix B), only one focus group discussion this evaluation conducted in Balkh Province suggested that this tipping point is close, even if opium cultivation has ceased; communities hold in reserve the option to revert to poppy cultivation should their economic well-being remain uncertain or unimproved, even though they recognize the illegality of the act as well as its *haram* nature.² Why this level of uncertainty prevails after so many years of

¹ “Progress” has scant value in a society where change is seen as a threat. Advances have to be made in terms acceptable to people whose traditions continue to proceed unbroken over timespans of centuries, and who remain mistrustful of any proposal that could interfere with tribal rights and loyalties.

² *Haram* is anything that Muslims consider to be forbidden by Islamic law.

development interventions and CN/AL emphasis is twofold: (a) with perhaps the rare exception to-date such as CRS' integrated programme in Herat Province,³ most interventions are scattershot in nature, often prompted by the priorities set by the CDCs themselves but in a situation absent any external leadership or inputs, such that (b) the assistance delivered is seldom related to AL *per se*.

30. The fact that AL is so poorly understood conceptually by both donor nations and GIRA suggests a missed opportunity to lead the debate on UNODC's part. The MCN-chaired ALWG in Kabul deliberated over what constitutes an AL project, concluding that *any* rural development project is an AL project. Reflection should suggest that this is not the case, even if the project consists of a school or clinic; generally, these are projects at the *community* development level, which *may* have spin-off benefits to *some* household's economies after a period of several years. Inarguably, schools and clinics (and perhaps even *hammams*,⁴ which appear on CDC priority lists especially in Herat Province) have a positive effect on HDI, but such HDI improvements will have low correlations with the immediate needs that AL is meant to address.⁵ Similarly, new bridges or rehabilitated roads by themselves will have scant impact on household economies if there is no produce replacing opium to take to market; water from repaired canal systems can as readily be used to grow opium poppy as any other crop.
31. COAFG may be able to recapture a leadership role in defining AL and implementing AL projects, as recommended in the following sections, but it is incumbent on the organization to bear two things in mind: first, the coordination necessary for AL implementation should start in-house, such that the AL group is routinely both aware of and providing inputs to the other Sub-Programmes within the Office. Second especially given the Afghan context, the Office needs to retain its strategic common vision, so that UNODC's working definition of AL must be extended to include a demand reduction component, conceivably wrapping it around the concept of negating household asset depletion.
32. Some readers may regard as pedantic this suggested course of action, but this evaluation believes that it has a function – that of keeping the context in mind when designing interventions. UNODC's Rainbow Strategy 'Blue Paper,' citing NDCS, stipulates that "the elimination of opium poppy cultivation must be effectively sequenced with the broader stabilization effort" – a sequencing that most strongly suggests that AL must come prior (or possibly in parallel with) infrastructural improvements having an HDI outcome. While at first glance axiomatic, an understanding of proper sequencing as the conditionality for success seems to elude many organizations working on CN/AL projects. Pointing to the ease with which households may revert to poppy cultivation, the NDCS subsequently recognizes that "no *sustainable* reduction in cultivation... will be possible until farmers have access to *sufficient* legal livelihoods,"⁶ implicitly stating that there are no quick-fixes or "magic bullets" to provide a durable end poppy production. This evaluation seeks to remind UNODC, especially in light of ongoing Project AFG/J55 (the integrated approach for the Western Provinces), that missing from the NDCS argument above –

³ DFID's about-to-commence 3-year, £30 million CARD project is built on the concept of sustainable and integrated approaches, ones that seek to mimic the opium economy through the provision of credit and agricultural inputs. It is relatively confined geographically, however, targeting 6 Districts in 3 Provinces in Year 1, expanding to 32 of Afghanistan's 314 districts by the end of Year 3.

⁴ Public hot-water baths.

⁵ Hence the UNODC's October 2008 *Alternative Livelihoods Database Analysis Report*, which seeks to relate AL investments and levels of opium poppy cultivation, cannot be reliably used.

⁶ Italics not in original document

focused as it is on farmers – is mention of replacement livelihoods for the lancers and the small-scale smugglers active in the western region.⁷

A.2. UNODC's Counterpart Ministry: An Overview of MCN and PDCN Functions and Capabilities

'However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.'
Winston Churchill

33. In accordance with Article 52 of the Counter Narcotics Law, the MCN shall coordinate all CN activities throughout Afghanistan. A key feature of Article 52 is that responsibility for implementation of the CN Law lies with each of the line ministries according to their individual mandates, using the NDCS as a strategic template for their activities. Hence MCN is not directly responsible for implementation, but is instead charged with coordination of CN/AL efforts, as well as with monitoring and evaluation. The MCN's NDCS (Feb 2006) identifies eight 'pillars' to group activities around common objectives: alternative livelihoods, demand reduction, eradication, public awareness, law enforcement, criminal justice, international and regional cooperation, and institution building.
34. It is becoming increasingly clear as time passes that even three years after finalization, line ministries have neither comprehended nor absorbed the guidance offered by the NDCS; furthermore, MCN itself doesn't understand the document, and fails to champion it. It is not uncommon that such a disconnect exists, since the concepts contained in these strategic visions (NDCS being one of several, the most well-known of which is the Afghan National Development Strategy, ANDS) were mostly conceived and written in English by international consultants, with subsequent translation into Dari and Pashtu.
35. UNODC's AL projects have included a component of NDCS short-course training offered to MCN and other GIRA departmental staff in the provinces, but there is no evidence, when speaking to the staff, that there has resulted any appreciable degree of content absorption by the trainees.
36. Furthermore, since MCN has neither funds to disburse through independent field projects (i.e., it is not a "line ministry") nor enforcement mechanisms, other GIRA Ministries and Departmental staff tend therefore to view it as more of an impediment to their planning than as a strategic partner for CN/AL activities. On the other hand, MCN has interpreted its "CN mainstreaming" role as well as its CN/AL coordination task as a mechanism through which to control the activity of others. This has led to a logjam both at the Centre and at Provincial level, with initial friction between MCN and other Ministries morphing over time into a dismissal of MCN and PDCNs as irrelevant.
37. This sense of irrelevancy is heightened in those provinces where CNAT is active. CNAT was designed initially as a one-year project to build MCN and PDCN capacity in seven key poppy-growing provinces, but is now in its third year. In some cases, it is obvious that the Governorate and the Provincial line departments have come to view CNAT as representing MCN, although CNAT is but a US State Department-funded project within the Ministry. MCN itself has perhaps inadvertently strengthened this view; as one PDCN Director bitterly told the evaluation team, the

⁷ The District Administrator in Kohsan District, Herat Province (one of the target provinces in this Western Provinces initiative) informed the evaluation mission that by his estimate, 2,500 young men move to Helmand Province each spring from his District to participate in lancing activities.

Minister came to address GIRA staff in the Province, repeatedly praised the work of CNAT, but didn't mention the PDCN even once.

38. Because MCN and the PDCN are sidelined in this manner, it is difficult indeed for staff to gather the inputs necessary for the AL Database, both in the Provinces and at the Centre. Often Line Ministries, as well as NGOs, refuse to divulge information regarding their projects to PDCN, claiming that they fulfil their reporting obligations by reporting their activities to the DEcon, as GIRA regulations stipulate. UNODC's I87 efforts to build an AL Database thus are not simply replicating an effort undertaken by the Ministry of Economy, but are also guaranteed to be incomplete.⁸
39. PDCNs are tasked with convening the monthly ALWGs, and act as the Chair. In one Province, members of the ALWG voted for a Chairperson affiliated with a different Department, and when shown the GIRA regulation specifying that the chair is to be the PDCN Director or his designate, gradually ceased attending. In another Province, attendees of the ALWG complain of disorganization and lack of clarity, and that the PDCN can't even provide an agenda for the meeting – hence they are reluctant to “waste time” in showing up. In yet another Province, the ALWG has not met for six months, the last three of which were because everyone in the PDCN (including the cook!) were actively involved in eradication efforts, the initial three of which PDCN staff were “too busy” planning for the eradication effort.
40. Balkh Province offers an example of the way in which the relationship between MCN and the Governor can become contentious. While the precise circumstances and roles of the players not completely transparent to the evaluation mission despite triangulation efforts, the gist of the matter is that there are two PDCN Directors in the Province. The original incumbent entered the PRR process and upon exit, MCN reappointed him to his post. Purportedly it may have been the very next day that MCN appointed a new MCN Director to Balkh. From this point forward, the stories diverge: either the original incumbent went to the Governor to ask that the Governor – a very powerful figure throughout the Governorate and Province – verify who is Director, and was reassured that only he holds that position; or the Governor refused to acknowledge the presence of the new Director sent from Kabul. Regardless, the presence of both these “Directors” raises the political stakes for all other actors – including UNODC – who routinely interact with the PDCN. Interactions with the “official” Director dispatched from Kabul risks irking the Governor, whereas interactions with the original incumbent risks further marginalizing MCN.
41. PDCNs away from the spotlight of being among the former heavily dependent poppy growing provinces may fare even less well. The Governor of Jawzjan reported that his PDCN officer is paralyzed, having neither a computer nor access to transport of his own, and that he desperately needs technical training. Furthermore, a staff of just one is insufficient to handle the full spectrum of activities demanded by the PIC. The PDAIL Director in Sar-e Pul Province reports that his PDCN counterpart never organized an ALWG, which calls into question how entrenched the concept ever became at MCN, despite all UNODC's efforts.
42. The paltry annual budget of PDCNs suffuses the inability of the Department to function appropriately. While overstaffed for the work that is actually achieved, the low budget

⁸ To illustrate perhaps with greater clarity the lack of coordination and the willingness to share planned project activities, consider that DEW in Herat Province is set to implement an ADB loan for 16 major canals off the Hari Rud (river), plus the Indian Government-financed Selma dam. Once completed – and the project has already started this year – an additional 40,000 ha of land will be supplied with irrigation water. A dispassionate observer might conclude that this is significant indeed, given that the irrigable land along the Hari Rud will more than double in extent. The evaluation mission was therefore surprised to learn that PDAIL in Herat is unaware of these plans, as is DEcon. GIRA expenditure data and project information may circulate among Ministries at the Centre, but whether such data reliably enter the Ministry of Economy's central database is questionable.

(Badakhshan: \$16,000/year; Herat: \$40,000/y; Nangarhar: \$19,000/y, to cover salaries, utilities, office space, vehicle maintenance and fuel) guarantees that little can get done. MCN directives specify that the vehicle is to be used to provide the PDCN Director with his daily transport requirements, resulting in the vehicle being mostly confined to the city. Charged with MCN's monitoring role in the Provinces, the PDCN's AL Manager has no way to take on this task unless someone offers him a ride.

43. PDCNs harping on a lack of fuel as the handicap for their monitoring or data gathering functions underscores their low capacity vis-à-vis their own procedures. It is not the role of UNODC to provide running costs for the PDCNs, but that of the MCN itself. UNODC frequently points PDCN Directors in the right direction, but so far there has been no resolution to this issue. At least partly, this is due to a failure within MCN at both central and provincial levels to more fully comprehend the relevant functions of the other.
44. Low and uncompetitive salaries were so pervasive throughout GIRA that the World Bank took on coordination of donor funds for the PAR programme, including the response component of salary rationalization through PRR. In principle, PRR slots are competitive and meritocratic, and incumbents cannot go through the process and be re-appointed to the same location in which they apply for eligibility. In practice, things may work differently, but regardless of issues surrounding transparency, what has emerged in this evaluation is that the process can take many months to decide on an applicant's status. Meanwhile, PDCN staff can be chronically underpaid, especially in relation to salaries awarded to others. To quote one PDCN Director, "I am earning just \$200 per month. The guard at CNAT earns \$800." Such salary discrepancies drive the process of constant staff turnover: once having built up their personal "capacity," GIRA staff – including MCN and PDCN – all-too-frequently seek other employment opportunities outside of the civil service, leaving positions vacant sometimes for months at a time (including, e.g., the MCN AL Director, which at the time of writing this report has been vacant for eight months).
45. The result of all these factors is a self-reinforcing downward spiral. Many MCN and PDCN employees are disgruntled, disillusioned, demoralized, and demotivated. PDCN staff complains that MCN offers them no guidance, provides them with neither workplans nor ToRs; they feel cast adrift.⁹ Their attendance at the office has become simply a means to draw salary, and absenteeism is rife. Their willingness to monitor MCN-funded CNTF projects is compromised, especially if these are in remote areas. One NABDP provincial project manager complained to the evaluation mission that PDCN personnel have refused in the past to monitor his CNTF-funded projects although he specifically asked them to do so.
46. It is important to understand that the above list is a broad generalization, and that exceptions exist. The evaluation mission has concluded that the PDCN in Herat Province functions well, and is respected throughout the layers of Government, from the Governor himself through the line ministries to the District Administrators.¹⁰ Morale within the Department remains high, and PDCN's PIC is considered to have been a vital and successful component both in poppy eradication and elimination efforts in the Province, thereby generating much anticipated GPI funding. Notably, however, the PDCN in Herat operates in the absence of a CNAT team in the Province. Furthermore, its Director – a former Governor of Farah Province – is a charismatic and dynamic leader and manager, with good connections throughout the Province, allowing him the

⁹ In part, this is attributable to the fact that MCN insists on hardcopy for all official correspondence between the PDCNs and the Center, in a country without a functioning mail service. It can take 4-5 months for a reply to be received from Kabul to any request or concern.

¹⁰ But this is due to the current Director of PDCN. The Governor's Executive Director stated that before the current incumbent took up his post, the Governorate was barely aware that MCN had a presence in Herat Province. UNODC's Provincial Coordinator in Herat sensed that the previous PDCN Director viewed CN/AL partners as competitors, and became entirely focused on acquiring project funding.

“space” to adopt an activist stance. The same situation prevails for the PDCN in Balkh Province, where the original PDCN Director (see discussion above on the dual Directors, paragraph 40) has excellent relations with the Governor, PDCN is a key member of the five-unit CN Working Group the Governor set up,¹¹ and where the CN strategy has successfully eliminated from the Province not just opium poppy but also cannabis, a centuries-old tradition as opposed to just the few years of poppy cultivation. In part, the ability of the Balkh PDCN to function relatively well can be attributed to the Governor shutting out CNAT from any more than the “A” in its title suggests, – i.e., inviting it to participate in CN planning in its advisory capacity, but not permitting it to act as a stand-in for the PDCN. This stands in sharp contrast to the passive role of PDCNs in other Provinces, as alleged by line ministry staff.

47. Lest the Herat and Balkh exceptions paint an overly optimistic picture, international contractors embedded in MCN have a glum view of MCN’s capacity to implement its mandate. They contend that the creation of a Ministry from a Directorate under the President has allowed the President to represent CN as “not my problem” and other Ministers to shirk their CN responsibilities. Concomitantly, the internal structure of MCN has been stacked with the ethnic group producing and trafficking the majority of opium Afghanistan grows (see footnote 1), resulting in its morphing into a toothless tiger, little more than a social welfare scheme wherein staff does little actual work, further weakening it politically. MCN has no ability to force Governors to implement CN in the provinces, which has therefore become a role assumed by the IDLG.^{12,13} Moreover, so poorly had MCN’s procurement department performed that the Ministry of Finance retracted its budget midyear, leaving it with the ability to pay only salaries from October 2008 to the time of writing.
48. Such deficiencies are recognized by senior management in MCN, but with a slightly different nuance. The Director-General of Policy and Planning stated that not only was his staff’s capacity low, but it consisted of just two people, who were beset by demands for information from the Cabinet and Parliament. Tasked also with consolidating line ministries reports on CN strategies, they are able to accomplish little else.
49. In part, the CNTF was designed with the idea behind it that allowing MCN to distribute money, as other line ministries do, would empower it. Conceptually a rational response, in the end the CNTF became the cause of considerable friction between Governors and the Ministry, as promises made locally could not be delivered because the money was never – or only much belatedly – delivered. However, such tardiness was not MCN’s fault; UNDP’s management and disbursement of the funds proved so cumbersome that it took 12 months or more to release money to the provinces for planned allocations. This functionality deficit within UNDP is reiterated in paragraphs 116-128, the discussion of the UNODC-UNDP relationship.

B. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

50. A consultancy was undertaken from 27 April to 15 June 2009 in order to review the projects entitled “Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control,” hereafter referred to as I87 and the subject of this report, as well as “Alternative Livelihoods Capacity Building at National and Regional Level,” hereafter referred to as G76.

¹¹ Comprised of the PDCN, UNODC, CNAT, the CN Police, and ANP Intelligence.

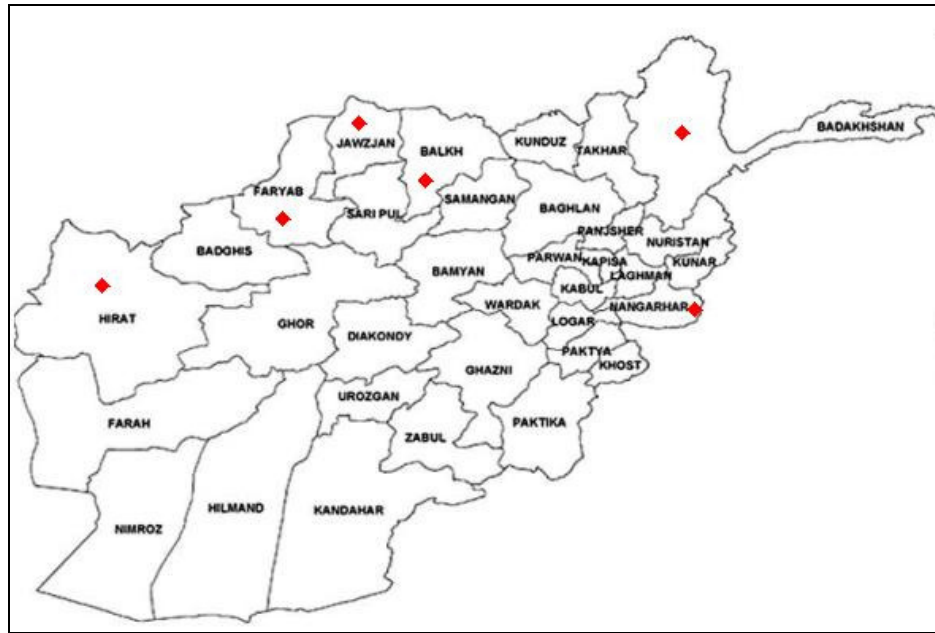
¹² But as the Governor of Jawzjan reported, IDLG has no CN/AL influence whatsoever in his Governorate, and is merely copied on correspondence between him and the PDCN.

¹³ Nonetheless, the IDLG can have tremendous influence. After a year of work, at a cost of around \$1 million, IDLG refused to endorse the February 2008 *Herat Medium-Term Counter Narcotics Plan, 1387-1389*, placing the strategy in limbo.

51. More specifically, the purpose of the evaluation of I87 is to determine what the project has achieved, and whether it is in the process of attaining its objectives successfully (and efficiently), while taking into account the difficult conditions under which work continues in Afghanistan, as described above.
52. The time period for the evaluation was from the project's inception in September 2006 to the time of the mid-term evaluation, which ended in early June 2009. It is acknowledged by all involved that the timing for the middle of the project was delayed by some months.
53. The aim of this mid-term evaluation is to improve the management and implementation of the project through the remainder of its lifetime, i.e., until December 2010, and for COAFG to use the lessons learned to improve the planning, design, and management of future projects. In this regard, the extent to which the needs of the beneficiaries are being met as well as what has been achieved in terms of impact, relevance and sustainability will also be assessed.
54. The evaluation will also draw lessons as well as good (and bad) practices from the projects' implementation that will be used to improve the management and implementation of the project during the remainder of the project period. The findings of the evaluation will also be used by the Afghanistan Country Office to improve the planning, design and management of future projects. Furthermore, the evaluation will also measure the projects' achievements, outcomes, and impacts, both positive and negative.

C. Evaluation Methodology

55. Beyond a desk review of all applicable project and other relevant documents, interviews were held with key informants at both national and provincial levels; a total of 127 entities (individuals or groups) were consulted from among GIRA counterparts and other line ministries, the Afghan uniformed services, donors and donor-funded project managers, NGOs, community members, the nascent private sector, and of course UNODC itself, as well as personnel of other UN Agencies. A full list is provided in Appendix B, while the map below shows the Provinces where these were conducted, marked with a red diamond. Note that the discussions were not limited by a fixed-format questionnaire – as can be appreciated, given the wide array of respondents, a single survey instrument would not have been functional. Instead, interviews were open-ended and free-ranging, covering a large number of interlinked topics, but focused primarily on the issue of the I87 projects efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, taking into account both cultural constraints and the unique challenges that prevail in Afghanistan. While the evaluator had worked in Afghanistan for a year prior to undertaking the evaluation and therefore had a fundamental understanding of the Afghan context prior to starting the evaluation, as time progressed and more was learned the interviews naturally became much more complex and wide-ranging.
56. CDCs were interviewed 17 times, as focus group discussions, two of which (because the people adhere to the Ismaili sect, permitting contact by unrelated males) were women's CDCs. Security considerations did not permit the evaluation to proceed to the south, in particular to Kandahar, location of the fifth UNODC Provincial Office. The other four provinces in which UNODC offices are located were visited, and their I87 programmes evaluated (viz. Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat), and in the case of the Balkh office, Jawzjan and Faryab provinces as well, which fall under Balkh's purview.



57. The interviews with the individuals proceeded with questions specific to those people's expertise, and were focused on CN/AL aspects and the role of MCN and the PDCN, in some cases as well as on UNODC's role and comparative advantage. The array of individuals contacted, having such a broad range of affiliations, militated against having a standardized questionnaire.
58. With the CDC focus groups, discussions were centered on farming systems, opium poppy cultivation and its cessation, and the role played by development interventions in maintaining poppy-free farming systems. Two WFP-UNODC projects were also visited, one in Badakhshan, the other in Balkh Provinces; in each case, a CDC focus group was convened. However, while the evaluation was able to visit one district in Badakhshan that had had a small amount of poppy cultivated this year, which has been subsequently eradicated, none of the major poppy growing districts could be accessed because of security concerns.

D. Limitations to the Evaluation

59. The sole limitations to the evaluation were security-related. Kandahar, location of one of UNODC's five provincial offices, and a major opium poppy cultivating and trafficking province, could not be accessed because of severely limited UN Department of Security Services (UNDSS)-approved accommodation. In Nangarhar, UNDSS prohibited road travel without the use of two armoured vehicles and police escorts, which was next-to-impossible to arrange for longer than a few hours, since the vehicles had to be loaned from other UN Agencies. At the time of the evaluation, UNODC had no such vehicles itself in Nangarhar.

II. Major Findings

'If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack.'
Winston Churchill

60. It is difficult to disaggregate I87 from G76 activities; the two projects were ultimately merged, but before that occurred, I87 paid for some G76 salaries after funds had run out. The discussion below may therefore not be exclusive to I87, and reflects the near-impossibility of fully separating the two projects.
61. The evaluation has formed the opinion that while I87 seems to be a potlatch of smaller projects that have successfully been linked into a coherent strategy, several of these might benefit from a stand-alone status. First and foremost, having now worked within UNODC for the past several weeks, the evaluation has come to the realization that COAFG's Kabul CN/AL office is woefully understaffed, and that competing demands on the CN Program Manager means that this AL portfolio receives but a portion of his attention when it should probably have had a full-time AL manager assigned to it. Even with the very capable AL Consultant and exceptionally capable National Project Coordinator (both former and current), AL has been adversely impacted because under most circumstances only someone with the requisite authority – i.e., a Program Manager or above – can build consensus among fractious competing counterparts.
62. The evaluation wishes to draw attention to paragraph 34 of the initial I87 Project Document, which notes that the predecessor project (AFG/G24) found “issues and difficulties” that include staff capacity within MCN. Perhaps the lessons learned by G24 could have been better internalized by I87 in a way to pre-empt the repetition that has subsequently occurred, as discussed below.

A. Capacity Building

63. ***Have leadership and technical skills been enhanced within MCN at institutional and individual levels? Has the operational capacity (skills and service delivery) of the PDs of MCN increased through training and improvement of working conditions? Has a mentorship system been set up? Has the creation of a mentorship mechanism helped the day-to-day operations to oversee and advise on technical issues as well as on the administration of the PDs of MCN? Was training material produced and is it available for future use by the Government and concerned authorities?***
64. MCN's Director-General (DG) of Policy & Coordination reports that the linkage between MCN and UNODC's research activities is weak – “this is very unfortunate, it should be much closer.” He contends that comprehension within MCN can be improved through regular workshops on research results.
65. “To be honest,” acknowledged this DG, he has not seen much achieved in the way of MCN's capacity having been built, the problem being that there has been little in the way of continuity or follow-up. He concedes that there is “mutual responsibility” in this state of affairs, but contends that there was a lack of mentorship by UNODC. He has not himself seen or been asked to comment on UNODC training materials. He has met a number of individuals from the G76 project, and is grateful for the computer hardware received.
66. While the ability of MCN to function well has been severely compromised in the years since its formation, as well described by Section A.2, the DG's comments highlight the weakness of the

linkage between the two organizations. Where UNODC may have fallen short in realizing its goals in I87 is in not paying attention to the inherent weaknesses in the MCN, which have been well known for some years now. Whatever “capacity building” has come to mean, it cannot possibly achieve its goals through occasional three- to five-day training workshops that have no follow-up. This is axiomatic within most of the LDCs, but in a country such as Afghanistan with its recognized immense gaps in educational attainment and hence a very small cohort of professional-caliber civil servants, the idea that capacity *could* be built in short-order by ramming knowledge into recipients should have been rather quickly retired.

67. To illustrate the depth of this lack of basic skills, the evaluation asked the MCN Director for Provincial Relations and Coordination to look at a map in the UNODC Annual Opium Survey consisting of a base layer with a pie-chart overlay, and asked him how many of his staff could understand the information it contains. “Probably nobody except me,” he responded.
68. UNODC, this Director continued, has been unable to develop the PDCN capacity in the five provinces in which it has Provincial Offices, due to poor coordination – attributable at least in part to the two organizations residing in different buildings. When G76 (I87’s precursor) commenced, MCN and UNODC were housed in the same building, to the considerable consternation of the UN Security Team. A decision to physically separate the two was taken after the UN demanded close inspection and registration of visitors, which MCN contended impaired their ability to function since it would make conspicuous and endanger visitors to their premises, especially those wishing to more-or-less anonymously report drugs activities. The decision to physically separate premises thus detached I87’s routine daily contact, compromising the ability of PDCN staff to retain their newly gained knowledge. Without this daily handholding, as practiced by others involved in Afghan capacity building (such as the NGO CRS with PDAIL in Herat, and ARD with MoWA), the predictable outcome of little gain was indeed realized.
69. The Director suggested the following as a list of areas where MCN and PDCN personnel need hand-holding: understanding what is a project, from writing a proposal to project cycle management to assessing outcome; the meaning of sustainability; the implications of effectiveness and efficiency; and M&E.
70. In regard to M&E, the evaluation asked a PDCN AL Manager who had been at his post over the two M&E trainings UNODC extended for the difference between “output” and “outcome,” but he was unable to answer correctly. In this regard, item A3 in the G76 logframe stipulates an indicator for the outcome of national expertise in AL centrally and regionally to be that of the availability of trained AL experts within MCN (and by inference, also at the PDCN level). The stipulated means of verification are, however, meaningless, for they do not, and intrinsically cannot, quantify or evaluate “training” in any way whatsoever.¹⁴ The only way to measure acquisition of the trainings’ information content is through an objective test. The mere issuance of a Certificate, as is common in Afghanistan and also practiced by UNODC, warrants and means nothing, except that the certificate can be used by its recipient to “prove” prowess when subsequently job hunting for a better-paid position.
71. In retrospect, managing the physical infrastructure promised by I87 in concert with the capacity building component could have been better sequenced. I87’s provision of vehicles,¹⁵ buildings, and computer hardware/software was received with alacrity and gratitude by MCN, but answering

¹⁴ This problem with the logframe is pervasive, and is discussed in greater detail in paragraphs 140-144.

¹⁵ UNODC accepted MCN specifications when purchasing top-of-the-line gasoline (petrol) fueled Toyota Hi-Lux pick-up trucks. Such a vehicle is wholly unsuited to provinces such as Badakhshan with its many river fords, whereas a diesel-powered vehicle would never short-out. Though trivial, in a way this illustrates the lack of a true partnership between the two parties, inasmuch as UNODC never used its superior real-world knowledge to persuade MCN that a change of specifications was necessary.

the question of what is to be actually accomplished by having ownership of these new facilities proved to be a much more difficult consideration. In a very real sense, the cart was put before the horse. Vehicles were provided so that the PDCN's AL Manager should be able to perform a monitoring function, without the PDCN having a budget to provide fuel for the vehicle and without the AL Manager having an idea of what "monitoring" might entail. In Nangarhar, the new PDCN premises cannot yet be occupied because the local staff isn't capable of writing the proposal that will pry loose the funding from MCN that will enable them to pay for moving equipment from the building PDCN currently occupies. In several cases, PDCN staff remains baffled as to how to use computers; I87 also pays for English and computer lessons, but it's not unknown for the teacher to be co-opted to write proposals, rather than fulfill the terms of his teaching contract.

72. In summary, it would be fair to conclude that UNODC has had little impact on MCN's capacity, but it has unquestionably faced an uphill struggle because of very low initial capabilities within the Ministry and its provincial directorates, constant turn-over of personnel, and often a disempowered, demoralized staff. On the other hand, the operational mode UNODC selected, an essentially hands-off one offering sporadic trainings and periodic staff visits, could never have been optimally strategic given the Afghan context.

Recommendations are:

1. That mentorship requires routine physical contact on virtually a daily basis, even if this means that for practical purposes UNODC staff performs the counterpart functions at MCN/PDCN during the first months of this partnership.
2. That attainment of this capacity must be measured appropriately, with perhaps some incentive (monetary or not) provided to those achieving a certain standard, while concomitantly asking trainees to sign a commitment to remain at their post for a certain period.¹⁶
3. That training materials should be in Dari for the North, Pashtu for the South, in both hard copy and electronic format, and archived throughout UNODC and its provincial offices as well as MCN and its provincial directorates. The start-level of any new training course should be considered at most times to be at a *very* basic launch point, i.e., at a level that a graduate from a primary school is capable of grasping.¹⁷
4. That the programme for the under-construction Staff Training Centre at MCN-Kabul be carefully thought through, based on the need for routine hand-holding rather than one-off short-duration training courses. Building and equipping the training centre will not be the magic bullet for building MCN capacity. UNODC will be unable to fulfill its "catalytic role," as called for in the I87 Project documents, if it fails to move to a more direct mentorship system.
5. That careful thought should be given as to which GIRA Ministry(ies) should be UNODC's counterparts. Doubt has been raised by senior MCN officials themselves as to whether the Ministry will prevail as such after the August Presidential election, or whether it will revert to being a Directorate. Regardless of this outcome – and especially in the possible but unlikely event that the President should declare MCN's mainstreaming role to have successfully concluded, and abolishes it – UNODC should expand its influence on CN/AL into other line ministries, notable

¹⁶ Implemented only through a culturally appropriate honour system, there would be no enforcement of this commitment.

¹⁷ This runs the risk of being misinterpreted as a derogatory reference to Afghan capabilities, but it is in no way intended as such. The reality is that many faculty at Kabul University, the country's premier tertiary institute, have themselves only a Bachelor's degree from an Afghan institution, and were unable to keep up with advances in thought and science over the past 30 years of war. Until the real gains realized by across-the-board post-2001 educational efforts become discernibly entrenched within Government, the fact remains that many GIRA personnel have been poorly educated in secular subjects, if at all. Hence the need for training to start at very basic levels.

MAIL, MRRD, and MEW, as well as MoWA if it survives the post-election shake-up. This is a reversion back to the original plan of G76, never realized, to include MAIL and MRRD in the project.

6. That a significant effort be made to transfer lessons learned from other UNODC country programmes into the AL projects of COAFG. The evaluation considers that the conviction of too many development practitioners that “Afghanistan is unique” is but a platitude and one blown far out of proportion. It is true that the circumstances under which Afghanistan currently finds itself may be unusual, but they are far from unique, and the development pathway should remain quite clear, even if nuanced by the country’s particular mix of cultures and religion. The recently appointed COAFG Country Representative, with his wealth of experience in SE Asia, can form an important link between I87 and UNODC’s institutional knowledge, and should be involved in the I87 project revision that emerges from this evaluation.
7. That lessons learned from other nations’ experiences should be absorbed while the I87 project revision is being considered. In particular, China’s Xinjiang Province is likely to offer insights into a set of development alternatives ensconced within a very similar socio-cultural milieu as some in Afghanistan. SE Asia’s experience with illicit poppy eradication will be germane. Other opportunities may arise for learning about successful AL models, ranging from small enterprises’ marketing strategies to the similar focused strategies of larger collective farms, to current best-practices in agriculture (particularly drip irrigation techniques and integrated pest management), and can be pursued in turn.

B. The AL Database

73. *To further strengthen the established Alternative Livelihoods Database at MCN to enable effective functioning of data collection and analysis in the related field at center and provincial level (I87 Logframe, immediate objective 3).*
74. The MCN AL database is scarcely used, reports the database officer. MCN demands are limited to requests to provide visiting parliamentarians with a list of AL projects in his or her jurisdiction. UNODC has used the information in compiling a report comparing poppy cultivation areas with AL financial inputs, but the limitations of the database are sufficiently deep so as to seriously compromise the output document and question its conclusions.
75. Serious limitations prevail as a consequence of staff turnover in this department of MCN, as in its other directorates. Since January 2009 until the evaluation mission arrived in early May, four qualified staff, trained in India, have quit their jobs because of low salaries, citing an inability to survive on \$160 per month.
76. The database at this juncture is severely compromised. Until the end of 2007, UN agencies routinely provided information on their activities to the AL Directorate at MCN, but no longer; it is also likely that USAID expenditures were never adequately tracked.
77. In principle, inputs to the database are now expected to arrive from MCN’s provincial directorates, but the evaluation mission found that in practice that MCN staff is unable to collect data. NGOs, for example, must report their activities to the DEcon in each province in which they are active, and having done so, adopt the attitude that they have discharged their duty. Submitted as hardcopy in a standardized format, the data provided are highly variable insofar as project details are concerned. In some instances, large international NGOs take great trouble to outline each project in detail, but in others, usually local NGOs, the generalizations and sparseness of input render any attempt at disaggregation of activities futile. These voluminous reports are then entered into MS-Excel or MS-Access, depending on the familiarity of the DEcon staff member with one or other of these. Concomitantly, line ministries’ projects are transparent only if

implemented through an NGO (rather than a private company) that then reports to DEcon; evidently, the Ministries do not appear to have a culture of sharing information even among themselves.¹⁸

78. In summary, the AL database as it now stands has a design flaw that needs to be “fixed” if UNODC is to use it; it is incomplete; and it duplicates efforts made elsewhere, both by DEcon and by UNAMA, which also collect project-related data in the provinces.

Recommendations are:

1. That UNODC decides whether to close down or retain the database.
2. That UNODC investigates the potential to access and use the ALCIS (a consulting firm engaged in the UK-funded Data Analysis of Livelihood Activity in Helmand) database, as suggested by the Head of the CN Team at the British Embassy, or use it as a model; partnering with Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) may also be possible.
3. That if the decision is to retain the MCN database, then substantial work must be undertaken:
 - a. Negotiate with the Ministry of Economy to determine whether it is feasible to distribute a template through which UNODC’s information needs are met, a request that may be received cordially if accompanied by an offer to teach database programs to DEcon personnel.
 - b. Encourage the submission of reports in appropriate electronic format with completely disaggregated information by using the UNODC Provincial Office staff to visit NGOs in their provinces, as warranted; physical transmission of electronic data via USB virus-checked pen drives may be necessary.
 - c. Envisage establishing a one-way intranet connecting UN offices and GIRA provincial directorates in each province such that the database can be queried from outside DEcon, but not amended or changed; hire an IT consultant/engineer so that the technical assessment for installation, maintenance, and repair be made in a thorough manner, and subsequent authorized work (if any) be accomplished flawlessly.
 - d. Request GIRA line ministries to report non-NGO related project expenditures.
 - e. Instruct DEcon how to watch out for and avoid duplication of entries, and how to transmit the cleaned database to their Ministry and to MCN.
 - f. Train MCN database staff in Kabul how to incorporate, after conversion if necessary, the incoming electronic data from DEcon offices.
 - g. Consider how best to reward trained personnel at MCN such that the rapid turnover rate experienced this year does not repeat itself.
 - h. Refer to paragraphs 27-30 for the need to redefine AL such that the data outputs are more useful.

¹⁸ A case in point is an ADB loan that is being used to construct a 16-canal system off the Hari Rud river in Herat Province, centered upon the Indian-financed Selma dam. When complete, the irrigable area in the Province will more than double, from 35,000 ha to 75,000 ha. DEW in Herat informed the evaluation mission that work has already started on the new system. When the mission asked both PDAIL and PRRD whether they knew of this, both responded negatively.

C. CN Public Information Campaigns

79. PICs have proven to be effective in the CN arena, but the study commissioned by UNODC under I87 shows that people do not respond well to posters (as opposed to billboards and radio slots). Overly optimistic messages have to be weeded out, for they are prone to backfire – the intended recipients have developed a deep skepticism in regard to the “promise of AL.” The message needs to be nuanced to the audience, with people in the North less inclined to think of poppy as “good,” while people in the South consider it to be “normal,” in a milieu where the Taliban is encouraging people to grow poppy as revenge against the West and the “occupation” of Afghanistan.
80. The evaluation mission did not happen to hear any Dari/Pashtu CN radio messages while in-country, but these are more likely to have been broadcast before planting poppy rather than closer to harvest, when the mission was present. The evaluation mission has seen posters scattered around during its travels, mostly in GIRA buildings, some of the older ones of which may have been created by MCN, but most of which now derive from CNAT. The evaluation mission picked up several of these from CNAT, to be tested during its meetings with CDCs in Badakhshan, and found the same result as that of the I87 consultant – they are good for adding colour to a wall, but little else.

Recommendations are:

1. That UNODC, having no comparative advantage, should exit the PIC production arena, leaving it to specialists at the British Embassy and in CNAT, while making sure that CNAT understands how ineffective its posters have been.
2. That nonetheless UNODC should continue to monitor the efficacy and effectiveness of PIC campaigns, and report back to the donors.
3. That UNODC explore the use of CN graphics-based “text” messages transmitted directly over the mobile phone network under the Blue Flag. The targeted recipients should be subscribers in particularly heavy poppy-growing areas, those now totally inaccessible to the UN or GIRA.¹⁹

D. Revamping the Role of UNODC’s Provincial AL Managers

81. While the central idea of G76 was to build the capacity of UNODC’s provincial office AL managers, the spillover into I87 calls for UNODC staff to work closely with PDCN staff to monitor and evaluate drug control issues, *particularly* AL development assistance. Funds for the AL National Project Coordinator (Kabul) and AL Experts in the five key provinces were allocated under Project Revision III. This component was the impetus for the evaluation mission’s field monitoring focus-group discussions with CDCs.
82. The focus-group discussions revealed a great deal about the impetus for commencing poppy cultivation in the first place, ranging from Royal decrees granting the right to do so issued during the early 20th Century in Badakhshan, in high, cold mountain marginal farming environments, to coercion by the Taliban in the northern and western steppes and river valleys, with a history of poppy cultivation of less than five years. Discussions also ascertained the driving factors behind the voluntary cessation of cultivation, for indeed it was 99% voluntary in the areas the mission visited: that it’s *haram* (forbidden by Islam); that it damages local society; and that since the

¹⁹ The impetus for this recommendation derives from a report on the use of text messages to transmit health campaigns in Africa; evidence suggests that “unlike radio or billboard ads, a message on your phone forces you to take a moment to think and maybe act” (*The Economist*, Africa Health Nets. April 18-24, 2009, insert page 11). In Afghanistan, because of low literacy rates, the bulk of the message would need to be graphical.

Government has banned it, farmers are both afraid to lose income to eradication and fear the fines and imprisonment that may accompany it. In one village in Argu District in Badakhshan, the community expressed dismay at the CN Police's conduct, claiming that they beat and abused the two of its members who grew poppy this year and who had their fields eradicated. Perhaps most crucially in terms of the sustainability of CN policy and attainments to-date, 15 of the 17 focus groups indicated that a transaction is in progress:²⁰ they have temporarily ceased poppy cultivation, which they perceive as more beneficial than other crop alternatives, with the expectation that delivery of promised assistance would arrive in the next two to three years. They reserve the option to return to poppy cultivation. There are, however, new social and religious hurdles that would stand in their way were they to contemplate a return to poppy cultivation; one success of the CN PIC has been to allow farmers to learn how damaging illicit use of opium and its derivatives has been to Afghans as well as to others. "We didn't know" was an expression often used in communities that have no opium addicts of their own.

83. Discussants also explained the communities' farming systems and livelihoods options, listed their NSP priorities, and elaborated on project delivery and quality. The evaluation mission finds that NSP priorities were largely established by the grassroots – who, after all, have to a great extent been cut-off from the outside world for the last 30 years – in the absence of much in the way of guidance from NSP's NGO implementers. The result is a sense of heightened expectations, the desire that each of their five priorities be met, however illogical these may be. Examples are the frequent listing of clinics and schools; a rational skeptic would ask how it is feasible for every village in the country to have its own clinic, and the answer is, of course, that it isn't (refer to paragraph 98).
84. Moreover, none of the CDCs' priorities necessarily have a direct AL outcome, not even canal rehabilitation. There is not much point in a second season of cultivation derived from water flowing in a repaired canal for growing a standard horticultural crop (such as tomatoes, a popular choice) to the point of excess, of flooding the market and depressing prices, of ending up with effort squandered and no derivative income. Tomatoes are actually a good case in point. The evaluation mission was pleased to find tomato sauce from a Mazar-e Sharif processor for sale in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan. But the subsequent discussion with the CDC in Balkh revealed that the factory is buying all its raw tomatoes from China rather than 20 minutes down a well-graveled and repaired road because China can guarantee a 12-month supply chain, whereas local producers, without access to cold storage, are only able to provide a glut over a 3-month harvest period.
85. Project Revision II of I87 reiterates that UNODC "will have a catalytic role." To remake UNODC as a better catalyst for AL, it needs to augment its activities. One example of how this might proceed is best illustrated by a community in Jawzjan, one where the evaluation discussed the cultivation of melons and cumin, both lucrative alternatives to poppy. While cumin is much more labour-intensive than melon, requiring 60 person-days for weeding and 30 person-days for harvest and post-harvest processing,²¹ returns are 8-10 times that of melons. Yet for the first time this year, the cumin crop has suffered catastrophic failure, with plants drying up in the field despite good rainfall. The community sent people to PDAIL in Shibergan, the provincial capital, to ask what might be done, but the Department had no answer; the community does not know who else to ask for help. Meanwhile, FAO in Mazar-e Sharif – ironically geographically closer to the village than Shibergan – not only have agronomists but an on-site pathology laboratory, and is much more likely to have an answer. Even if the outcome as far as the community is concerned is negative – for example, that the soil is now infested with a pathogen that will always kill the

²⁰ The exceptions that indicated they'll never return to poppy were in Jawzjan, with a history of just 2 years of poppy cultivation, and in Balkh, with a history of just 3-4 years cultivation on roughly 1/10th of their land area.

²¹ A similar labour input as provided for poppy, according to the CDC members.

cumin plant – knowing this, the community can cease wasting money and effort on cultivating a non-viable crop.

86. While cumin is the clearest example of a compromised AL-type intervention the evaluation encountered, such misconnects seem to be relatively common. Two examples suffice: an AKF-built microhydro flume that is misaligned, causing excessive wear on a rubber gasket, prompting the community to restrict its electricity to just 3/7 instead of 24/7; and an undelivered promise by USAID to purchase a walnut crop while exacting a guarantee from the producers not to sell to traditional middlemen, which prompted the middlemen to exact revenge by offering a low price once the buyers did not arrive to make their purchase.
87. It is difficult for the evaluation mission to determine how the AL Experts in UNODC's provincial offices spend their work hours, because the sporadic meetings and trainings that are organized surely do not require a full workweek. Monitoring thus far seems to have consisted of monitoring the few (if any) UNODC-funded projects. The AL Experts themselves are somewhat bewildered where it comes to UNODC's expectations of them. The question of how the Experts spend their time cannot be answered at the Kabul level either. This suggests that the AL Experts can be used more effectively, and the evaluation mission has found that they are eager to accept the expanded duties suggested below.

Recommendations are:

UNODC's AL Experts as "Connectors"

1. That the AL Experts learn what resources are available for problem-solving in their geographic areas, and list and update these in a way that institutional memory is retained.
2. That the AL Experts undertake study tours, to build their knowledge base.
3. That UNODC offers training to the AL Experts on "how to connect the dots" so that the AL Experts know what is expected of them in their role as troubleshooters and connectors.
4. That the AL Experts spend 50% of their time on travel around their jurisdictions, monitoring and evaluating community concerns and any deficiencies project delivery, reporting to the project provider as warranted, and that he performs this together with the PDCN AL Manager, ultimately building PDCNs capacity to jointly implement this work.
5. That part of this duty as troubleshooter and connector specifically be the lowering of expectations for non-viable CDC priority selections.
6. That the AL Experts revitalize the ALWG (not just provincially, but also in Kabul) by taking interim control of it.²² This will better enable them to take on the first item on this list. In addition, it is incumbent on the AL Experts to attend all Agricultural Sector Working Groups meetings (if present in their provinces), in order to keep the AL perspective at the forefront.

UNODC's AL Experts as Researchers or Research Managers

1. That UNODC selects a number of survey sites across agroecological zones, one or two within each Provincial Office's jurisdiction, wherein longitudinal studies are done to track the progress of

²² The donors have gradually come to view the Kabul ALWG as not worth their time attending, one reason that the meeting has not been held for the past seven months. Just five people came to the last ALWG meeting in November 2008; MCN reports that even UNODC failed to show. MCN is mandated with coordinating CN activities (of which AL is considered to be an integral part), and subsequently with calling and chairing the ALWG; that attendance has fallen so dramatically may be considered to be indicative of the perception that MCN inadequately manages its coordination activities.

household livelihoods over time. Ideally, villages would be selected such that the baseline survey will capture on-going poppy cultivation.

2. That precisely because it is such Districts that are off-limits for the UN if travel is not done with two armoured vehicles, UNODC should either purchase such vehicles for its Provincial Offices where necessary, make formal arrangements at the Kabul level with other UN Agencies to loan their armoured vehicles at specific times, or use other available mechanisms for vehicular access.²³
3. That the survey be fielded twice a year, once immediately after the first harvest, the second time around October or November, which would be after the second harvest if there is one and before the snow sets in.²⁴
4. That the survey instrument be administered to just nine households in any village, consisting of three sharecroppers, three smallholders, and three wealthier households having access to larger tracts.²⁵
5. That the crop gross margins worksheet be administered to each household interviewed.

E. Partnerships: Synergistic or at Cross-Purposes?

88. The evaluation mission visited two communities where a joint UNODC-WFP food-for-work implementation was taking place.²⁶ One, in Khash District, Badakhshan, installing gabions in a gully that is eating away at the community's irrigable land, and threatens to undermine the village itself, is unquestionably required and successful. Its CN component is correlated with the fact that it was the ending of poppy cultivation and the loss of the villagers' primary source of biomass fuel for cooking and winter heating, the poppy stalk and capsules, that has triggered the gully's expansion. To replace this biomass, villagers have torn up the surrounding hillsides, harvesting an *Artemisia* species that has the majority of its biomass in its root system, as well as any uncultivated tree that happens to be within reach. The net result has been accelerated sheet and splash erosion of soil, with faster and more turbid watercourses, and thus the fast growth of the gully.
89. The second UNODC-WFP project, in Dehdadi District, Balkh, stands in sharp contrast to the above. The project was one that rehabilitated a canal, in a district immediately adjacent to Mazar-e Sharif, in a well-watered flatland community. The initial indicator that this project may have been unnecessarily prioritized was that the community centre in which the CDC focus group was held was stacked with plastic-draped sacks of WFP wheat that had not been distributed to beneficiaries since delivery two months ago. This would have been the time of the deepest food insecurity, the "lean season" that usually occurs prior to the first harvest.
90. What went wrong in the selection of the Dehdadi community is now difficult to pin down. WFP states that it specified in the initial agreement with UNODC that if a community was to be selected, it *must* be food insecure. Concomitantly, the WFP Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Officer stated that Dehdadi is one of the best-off districts in not only Balkh, but the

²³ The Nangarhar Provincial Office is the prime example of a programme hampered by an inability to move around. All of the Province except Jalalabad City is under the armoured vehicle restriction, and UNODC doesn't own any of these in Nangarhar. The Provincial Office Coordinator at the time the evaluation mission visited did not understand the mechanism through which the UN's Department of Safety and Security tries to facilitate access to such vehicles, and met with no success when he tried to borrow one from other Agencies.

²⁴ Regardless of whether there is a second harvest or not – and in high mountain communities, there isn't one – a second pre-winter check on households will prove useful.

²⁵ The aim is not to arrive at statistical significance, which would require a much larger sample size, but to gain an understanding of the factors that promote or retard sustainable alternative livelihoods.

²⁶ While the preparatory phase may have been undertaken as part of G76, the continuum between G76 and I87 has meant that the physical work and food deliveries progressed beyond the closure of G76 in December 2008.

entire country (a fact visually verified by the brief vehicular cruise through the District that the evaluation made). What may have prompted the choice of Dehdadi is not chronic food insecurity, but the acute food insecurity that was due to the two years of severe drought that particularly affected Balkh. However, there are communities in Balkh along the Charikar Canal that assuredly were much more adversely affected by this drought and cessation of poppy cultivation, ones where entire households abandoned the community to move elsewhere – usually the very last strategy (“out-migration”) on a traditional coping mechanisms continuum.

91. Oddly, the Priority Needs Assessment commissioned by UNODC (released October 2008), contracted to SIC, paints a very different picture of food security, suggesting that Dehdadi District is particularly food insecure, based on a metric of dietary diversity. Dietary diversity is considered as a reliable proxy for food insecurity across the food security community. Hence it may indeed have been the effects of the drought that is leading this indicator, though it remains opaque as to why this metric was so much greater in Dehdadi than in Charbolak.
92. UNODC’s role in the partnership was to provide information on where poppy has been eradicated, such that the food-for-work project can act as a gap-filler prior to emplacement of AL activities. Part of the problem is that the longevity of poppy is not necessarily a component that is considered, part is ignorance of the extent to which households are dependent on it, and part, finally, to not fully comprehending that eradication is but one way that poppy stops, the other being (so as to use the same first letter “e”) elimination, i.e., uncoerced and voluntary cessation of poppy cultivation. Dehdadi only cultivated poppy for 3-4 years, according to the CDC, was not dependent on it having turned over just a tenth of their land area to poppy, and abruptly stopped its cultivation voluntarily after the GIRA ban came into force, motivated by its well-educated Mullah and his anti-poppy religious message. Moreover, reported the community, in contrast to the SIC report, it gets two crops a year from its irrigated lands.
93. Who suggested Dehdadi as a suitable site is no longer ascertainable, but two things about the partnership proved an irritant to WFP: first, at the macro-level, UNODC was supposed to provide “technical support,” and what this means was never fully explained or clarified, leaving WFP uncertain as to how to proceed with the relationship; second, at the local level, the WFP Area Office is perturbed that UNODC never once undertook a joint assessment, never engaged with them on a routine basis, and may have inadvertently given the local population the impression that UNODC’s involvement implied a cash-for-work activity, rather than the food that was the outcome.
94. This critique should not be misinterpreted as indicating that UNODC-UN Sister Agency partnerships are beset by irremedial problems, because of course they are not. Properly structured, they are a powerful tool, but this is exactly the take-home message from the Dehdadi fiasco: they need to be properly thought out and structured, with everyone aware of their roles and responsibilities as well as the synergistic potential of the collaboration.

Recommendations are:

1. That UNODC rebuilds its partnership with WFP, but clarifies what its roles and responsibilities are, specifically in regard to targeting communities where real, and substantial, forced eradication has taken place.
2. That there is no need to subcontract needs assessments, for current staff on both UNODC’s and WFP’s payroll are well capable of a rapid needs assessment at the community level (in essence, the same type of focus-group discussion that this evaluation carried out) prior to extending assistance in the form of a food-for-work project, one where UNODC has to be able to provide some cash for the purchase of tools and protective clothing as warranted.
3. That each joint project has an annotated checklist, so that future evaluations can comprehend the choice of the site.

4. That UNODC should join up with UNEP, to jointly address the issue of natural resources degradation especially as a consequence of poppy eradication and its impact on biomass fuels. A possible local implementing partner for this work would be the NGO Save the Environment Afghanistan (SEA), a partner with the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society. An international NGO interested in such work is AKF. WFP offers possibilities for food-for-work remediation projects under its Climate Change Adaptation Activities programme in Afghanistan, in which it may assist in restoring heavily degraded local environments.
5. That the UNODC-UNEP and implementing partner collaboration should also focus on the use of fuel-efficient stoves for reducing biomass fuel needs, capitalizing on successful regional models such as those pioneered by the Pune (India)-based NGO, Appropriate Rural Technology Institute.
6. That UNODC should consider building a partnership with FAO for two purposes, one to access its seeds companies in the event that a flood should wipe out a recently eradicated communities' agricultural assets, the second to consider how to rebuild MAIL's extension services with a CN/AL emphasis.

F. Gender Mainstreaming: Incorporating MoWA, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNESCO

95. While the all-male evaluation mission was able to access only two female CDCs, what emerged is that none of their NSP priorities had been addressed unless these were coincident with the priorities of the men's CDC. This is not to say that women are yet again being sidelined in Afghanistan, as could be surmised by outsiders with scant experience in the country, but does underscore the lack of evidence concerning the meeting of women's priority needs.
96. Two interesting points emerged from the discussions. First, these women view literacy and numeracy as a tool that will enable them to successfully negotiate the commercial world. As they reported, they are reluctant to go to town alone because they cannot read signs once they are there, and quickly become confused – and initiating contact with strange men to ask directions is still taboo, regardless of their ability to meet with the evaluation mission (albeit two related men were present even then). *Literacy and numeracy to these women means economic empowerment, and is therefore a powerful AL tool since it opens a new arena of women-to-women commerce.*
97. Second, the women's prioritization is not necessarily sensible, in common with the men's, and will result in heightened but unmet expectations while there is concomitantly a very real need that can be addressed. One example is the selection of skills training in tailoring, with the expectation that this will result in future sales. Home-based tailoring has the potential to lower a household's clothing expenditure, but nobody seems to have done the arithmetic to prove that this is true, that purchasing material bolts, thread, and other accessories (zippers, buttons, lace, etc.) for home production is any less costly than buying a factory-made garment mass-produced in China or Indonesia. *Home production for sale may be possible, but people have to acknowledge that there is a limited market for such goods, especially as such initiatives take root across the country.*
98. A second example is that of the priority choice of a clinic. What drives this is maternal mortality, especially in remote mountain areas in winter, when help is far from reach. The evaluation mission took the time to lead the women through a process of due consideration, beginning with the fact that there are just over 31,000 settlements in Afghanistan,²⁷ and that if only one in ten received a new clinic, there are not enough trained personnel in the country to staff them, moving through isolation as a determining factor in the staff's full-time presence in the clinic, to what other options may exist. The evaluation mission thus took on the role of the social mobilizer that the implementing NSP partner should have undertaken, but with the outcome in mind that the women would accede to the principle that "barefoot doctor" training is better than hoping for a clinic that is unlikely ever to materialize, which was the result attained.

²⁷ AIMS Settlement Database, November 2004.

99. Because there is no mention of gender in COAFG’s April 2009 Draft Strategy Paper, yet conversely the cover photo shows two female opium addicts, there is the opportunity and the need to begin gender mainstreaming activities in I87. It must also be recognized that women are a crucial component of a CN strategy, for while Afghan women inhabit a profoundly patriarchal cultural space, it is not one, in general, that is misogynistic. *Women do indeed often have a say in whether or not poppy is cultivated; in several cases, the male CDCs reported that women played a role in the decision to abstain from growing poppy.*

Recommendations are:

1. That UNODC hires a female National AL Expert based in Kabul under the guidance of the National Project Coordinator, one who is able to travel to the provinces without being accompanied by a *maharam*.²⁸
2. That this woman undertakes a round of initial fact-finding visits across accessible provinces.
3. That she leads the CN mainstreaming and AL component with MoWA, and determines the best mode of collaboration with this Ministry.
4. That she meets with sister UN Agencies tasked with adult literacy and women’s health to determine how women’s needs and aspirations can be more effectively met, with special attention on piloting a barefoot doctor/midwife/veterinarian model.^{29,30}
5. That she is trained in responding appropriately as a connector if rural women express, for example, a desire for setting up small enterprises for agricultural production, or enhancing household nutrition through a more varied and productive kitchen garden.

G. Rationalizing the Internal Structure

G.1. CN/AL and Demand Reduction

100. As noted in paragraph 28, a community decision to cease cultivating poppy can lead to a downward spiral of impoverishment among former own-producing households, members of which often remain addicted. Reduced to beggars over time in the absence of suitable intervention, these addicts become a strain borne by the entire community, and a point of friction between individuals and households that could erupt into conflict at any juncture.
101. In COAFG’s April 2009 Draft Strategy Paper for 2009-2011, one sub-section under the CN section is titled “Avoiding Unwelcome Complications,” albeit the topic is demand reduction and HIV/AIDS. Clearly, a similar nexus exists between CN/AL strategies and demand reduction, but this is a topic neither addressed by the Country Strategy nor by I87.
102. The community in Badakhshan in which 30% of households grew poppy and may have formed an addiction to opium suggests the gradual formation of a new vulnerable class. Depleted of household assets, and on rare occasions resorting to selling their marriageable young women, both the addicted and non-addicted members of the community pled for demand-reduction interventions. What had been offered so far was an ineffectual visit of three days duration by medical doctors.
103. There are at least two organizations with effective models for demand reduction: Nejad, an Afghan NGO, is located in Faryab Province, which recently won an MCN tender for supplying services to addicts in the former Russian Cultural Centre in Kabul; and the international NGO

²⁸ A *maharam* is a male family member who accompanies a woman when she travels.

²⁹ It is normally the women who are tasked with animal health and productivity within the household, men who free-range them on pastures.

³⁰ Xinjiang province, China, may offer insight into “barefoot” practices, based in a similar Islamic setting.

AKF, whose demand reduction services are most active in Badakhshan, especially the Wakhan corridor.

104. The evaluation mission did not have the opportunity to discuss demand reduction with AKF, but was able to do so with Nejad. It commences services in a fresh community with a three-month awareness and mobilization campaign, followed by a month of treating addicts with pain-killers (Paracetamol), antibiotics to fight off opportunistic infections, and vitamins. The treatment regime is bolstered by a year of follow-up, consisting of individual, family, and group counseling. For the heaviest users, the NGO offers a 15-day in-patient program, during which patients' other medical conditions are treated. Nejad thus far has successfully treated 400 addicts using this method in Faryab, with a recidivism rate of at most 2.5%. Thousands more, they report, are currently in the programme.³¹
105. While it is not necessarily the role of a CN/AL project such as I87 to become a treatment avenue for addicts, casting a lifeline to former poppy farmers who became addicted is morally the right stance. Offering access to a treatment option, especially if delivered in some way under the auspices of MCN, will work tremendously in its favour, softening its public image from that of a hard-core eradication agency to one that combines eradication with concern for people's welfare. Such a change in public perception will benefit I87 indirectly, giving rise to target populations more amenable (and less resistant) to a CN message that has a sustainable outcome.

Recommendations are:

1. That the next I87 project revision explicitly recognizes the nexus between CN and demand reduction, and expressly link with UNODC demand reduction projects.
2. That UNODC explores the pros and cons of the approaches both of AKF and Nejad, as well as other successful NGO-led demand reduction therapies once identified, if any, and determines which may be most suitable in which locales.
3. That UNODC's provincial AL Experts remain conscious of the need to locate communities with significant and unmet demand reduction needs.
4. That UNODC catalyzes the relationship between MCN and its PDCN, and the selected NGO, to deliver demand reduction services to affected communities.

G.2. AL and Appropriate Marketing of Production

106. The linchpin of any successful AL project is the marketing and sale of the farmers' production. Without reliable buyers and markets, none of the effort will be sustainable. This is, of course, widely recognized, yet there appears to be a significant gap between rhetoric and action. Some actors are well equipped with market outlets, such as GAA's rose-oil project in Nangarhar, which was initiated by a German buyer contacting GTZ in Berlin. The conundrum for GTZ is that partly because of the need to purchase diesel for the distillery, partly because of intrinsic market differentials, dried rose petals would be a venture three times more profitable to former opium poppy farmers than is the distilled rose oil, but there is no clear avenues to export a bulk product from a landlocked country without incurring huge trucking charges that reverse the price advantage.
107. Quality issues have repeatedly been cited as an impediment to Afghan produce finding ready markets, whether as import substitutes or for export. It is true that traditional processing techniques often introduce pathogens and foreign matter into the product, but experience has shown – such as the work undertaken by Afghan Saffron – a company whose attendance UNODC

³¹ A frequently made statement by many CDCs the evaluation mission interviewed is that young men returning from searching for remittance labour in Iran come home addicted to opium and heroin.

has sponsored at trade shows – that this can be overcome, such that now saffron from Afghanistan is rated “super fine.”

108. Afghanistan’s traditional markets have been focused eastward, to India and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan. Many producers still have this mindset, ignoring the marketing asset of an agricultural production that is largely organic. Reorienting marketing strategies to OECD nations would yield substantial differences in revenues, for consumers in these countries are ready, willing, and able to pay higher prices for organic produce than can Indians. A great deal of dried fruit and nuts, as well as pomegranates, remain cultivated under organic or semi-organic conditions, and Afghanistan may be the only country to have the potential to export large volumes of organic, wild-grown pistachios as well as sweet pine nuts.
109. This potential remains largely untapped, not just abroad, but at home. After three decades of war, during which Afghan processors shut down never again to reopen, most Afghans have an engrained inferiority complex where it comes to the country’s competing with imports. Products from especially Iran and Pakistan, but also from elsewhere, are generally believed to be of higher quality than similar products grown or processed at home. This is a mindset that urgently needs changing if AL-related projects are to succeed and be sustainable.
110. Finally, the obverse of the rose case may exist for some value-added products, one good example being that of walnut oil. Cold-pressed walnuts yield an oil high in omega-3 fatty acids; oil content, depending on type, ranges from 30% to 65%. A litre of non-organic French walnut oil retails for just under \$20 online, suggesting that there is an opportunity for appropriately labeled Afghan exports to be competitive on the world market.

Recommendations are:

1. That I87 engage a marketing consultant to ascertain appropriate value-added niches for Afghan AL production.
2. That this consultant examines the “Tasmanian” trademark launched last year in that Australian State, to ascertain the suitability of the model for Afghan exports.
3. That this consultant examines the “Ceres” brand from South Africa as a marketing tool, compares it to other similar tools projecting an image of a pristine production site, and reports on its suitability for Afghan exports.
4. That UNODC commences an association with MAIL in regard to training the Ministry how to pursue organic certification in Europe, Japan, and North America.
5. That UNODC sponsors, via MCN in order to soften the Ministry’s image, a “buy Afghan” campaign targeting the domestic audience.
6. That UNODC engages with the WB on its soon-to-commence RED initiative to find common ground and investigate collaborative opportunities.

H. A Moratorium on MCN Infrastructure, but Continued Building Elsewhere

111. Fifteen percent of the budget of I87 has been allocated to past and future construction of MCN facilities in Kabul and the Provinces, but the evaluation mission finds this money not to have been well spent. As noted in paragraph 71, provision of facilities to MCN has preceded the ability of the Ministry and its Provincial Directorates to use what has been provided, and the Nangarhar PDCN’s inability to relocate because of lack of financial resources emphasizes its dysfunctionality.
112. Project Revision III, revised activity 1.1.1. calls for the construction of two additional office buildings, one in Herat, the other in Kunduz, noted as at MCN’s request. These should be denied, particularly the one in Herat. Ismail Khan, former Governor of Herat, insisted that all GIRA Ministries be located in a single compound, and the result has been a consolidation that is

beneficial to all, both the public and Ministries, which no longer have to traipse around the city to seek service or attend meetings. The Herat premises of MCN are spacious and pleasant, and it strikes the evaluation mission as nothing short of ludicrous that the issue of the leasing of current premises should be the guiding principle for undertaking the construction of a new building. By virtue of this precedent, is “the UN” encouraging all GIRA Ministries to disperse from the common premises in Herat? This may be the message sent, if this plan proceeds.

113. It is time for UNODC to apply a little “tough love” to MCN, which has substantially underperformed in many places and many areas (but not, ironically, in Herat as noted in paragraph 46). Until performance is indexed to input, no further infrastructural assistance should be provided – there is, after all, not much point in pouring more money into MCN ‘hardware’ if it continues along the same line. A much better use of this funding would be in augmenting MCN’s ‘software,’ whether as interim salary support while personnel are caught up in the PRR or its replacement “pay and grading” process, or in providing a fuel subsidy with the expectation that its provincial staff can get out into the field independently.
114. In Herat in particular, a much better use of the allocated funds would be the construction of a farmer-training facility on the outskirts of Herat City, on land that can have a demonstration farm installed. Afghan Saffron, one of the entities the evaluation interviewed, suggested a cross-training centre of excellence focusing on various AL crops, which seems like an eminently sensible idea. The obvious partner for this is the PDAIL, but the PDCN could be included as a means to have its staff think more holistically about the nexus between CN and AL. This facility could be rented out to commercial ventures (such as Afghan Saffron) at a reasonable rate to help defray maintenance and running costs.

Recommendations are:

1. That there should be a complete and immediate moratorium on all new MCN construction activities, completing only those proceeding beyond the groundbreaking stage (i.e., where construction of walls has commenced).
2. That an alternative use of the allocated construction funds is considered and, if not dismissed, formulated for use within MCN, especially in regard to rationalizing salaries and/or providing the means for fulfilling MCN’s monitoring mandate.
3. That a new relationship with MAIL is probed, in regard to construction of cross-training centres of excellence.

I. The Overall Implementation Process

I.1. Rationalizing Procurement: UNDP-UNODC Functionality Reaches a Nadir

115. To what extent has UNDP been efficient, effective, and transparent? Were alternative less-costly intervention modalities considered in designing this project? Do they exist?

116. UNDP’s rules and regulations for financial disbursement has helped derail the CNTF, MCN’s flagship (and sole) means of distributing largesse, and almost the only reason for its being acceded a seat at the table when line ministries meet in the provinces. A statement as strong as that is not unwarranted and unjustifiable hyperbole, for the same rules and regulations, writ smaller of course, are also responsible for an immense sense of frustration within UNODC, having consumed staff time unnecessarily, prompted a mission from Vienna and a consultant’s resignation, and hampered the progress of I87.

117. While appraising CNTF is beyond the scope of this evaluation, it is worthwhile to take a little time to understand the role UNDP had in CNTF’s demise, because it is precisely attributable to undelivered promises MCN made in regard to CNTF disbursements that the Governorates and

District Administrators now find themselves steadily losing credibility with the grassroots. That this loss in credibility can have a tremendous impact on the sustainability of CN has to be recognized; ultimately, promises alone do not alleviate hunger.

118. Understanding the context in which CNTF operated is vital to understanding why its intended performance was such a vital component in the CN campaign. The sums awarded are not (on a provincial basis) all that significant, reaching only \$3 million in Badakhshan, for example; but larger sums have been “promised” (by whom and how is not at all clear), ranging as high as \$10 million for other provinces. CNTF was established in order to incentivize Governorates to eliminate poppy cultivation by whatever means, either voluntary or forced. In turn, the Governors and PDCN staff during PICs promised targeted farmers a “reward” for ceasing poppy cultivation, usually in the form of some significant infrastructure project, or via the formation of farmers’ cooperatives, the provision of a tractor. Hence CNTF can be seen to be, in a way, an augmentation of NSP activities (NSP is the primary development initiative across non-Taliban controlled territory), but with a specific CN theme. In principle this is all simple and straightforward, but in practice at the grassroots level, it all gets wrapped in one package, labeled “promises.” And interestingly, the label “CNTF” and all that is associated with its failure to deliver is still current; only a single government official mentioned GPI, the programme that is CNTF’s successor, implying that the ghost of CNTF still lingers.
119. The importance of this point cannot be overstated: it can be assumed that all current and future CN/AL activities are now, or will be, tarred with the CNTF brush. This is now a high hurdle to clear.
120. A UNAMA interviewee explained the process as follows: UNDP developed complicated forms for CNTF – the sophistication necessary to complete these is on par with that of “a World Bank Ph.D.” There is simply no way for local government to connect with CNTF without external assistance, which UNAMA was able to provide. However, once the forms were duly filled in, even then approval for a single project would take a year, much longer if the forms were returned for any reason. By this time, continuity had been lost as people moved on, or rotated through positions.
121. The same procedural issues dominate the relationship between UNODC and UNDP. The AL consultant resigned in frustration effective the end of May 2009, having had little work since November 2008, when he submitted a tender for his survey via UNDP. Not only did the tender and approval process take three months (from November until late February), but then it was nearly another three months until the contract was finally signed.
122. The evaluation finds that UNODC’s relationship with UNDP revolves around the fact that UNDP treats UNODC as a project, rather than as an organization. UNDP manages more than 100 projects, and is daily bombarded with paperwork from these. UNODC’s requests simply get stacked in the pile, without prioritization, and are dealt with in-turn. But following this procedure can take months, as exemplified by the AI Consultant’s case. UNODC has had the experience of waiting a month merely to obtain the UNDP Resident representative’s signature. Such delays are damaging UNODC’s reputation, and with it MCN’s; one example is the new PDCN building in Badakhshan, where UNDP is insisting on UNODC hiring an international engineer to certify \$45,000 of grading work, unanticipated in the original procurement because the original intended worksite was flat, but the land eventually allocated by Government is hilly. Until UNODC follows UNDP procedures, the money will not be released, and the contractor remains unpaid.
123. Any procurement >\$2,500 must pass through UNDP; this has resulted in instances where approval for purchasing \$10,000-worth of computers took six weeks. If UNODC wishes to offer a training course with costs >\$30,000, it must advertise a tender. The responses are opened at UNODC and evaluated, then passed on to UNDP. But rather than rubber-stamping them at the weekly procurement committee meeting, UNODC is required to *defend* its choice, and even then, report COAFG staff, 50% are rejected, which means UNODC must start the process afresh.

124. If planned expenditures are >\$300,000, UNDP sends the procurement request to its New York Headquarters; in the case of MCN's Kabul training centre, construction work was delayed eight months awaiting UNDP's response.
125. Similar procedures and their concomitant delays prevail with UNDP's HR and Finance sections. Before January 2009, monthly petty cash disbursements to UNODC's provincial offices were limited to just \$1,000, which often meant that these offices would be operating without cash resources. The monthly allocation has now been increased to \$2,500, alleviating some of the burden. This sum remains insufficient to run a training course, however, and reimbursement takes a month or longer.
126. Frustrated UNODC staff report that such problems have been common ones between the two organizations over the past five years, but have worsened as UNDP became more deeply engaged in this year's election process. Any attempt by UNODC to redress the problem via direct appeal to UNDP is said to have backfired, with UNODC's forms replaced on the bottom of the pile.
127. Aware of the difficulties early on, COAFG attempted to acquire a direct account but, the evaluation was informed, this request was denied by Headquarters. Vienna sent a mission to evaluate the UNODC-UNDP relationship, but to COAFG's consternation, findings were to "follow UNDP rules and procedures."
128. It is not the place of a project evaluation to suggest a way forward for an issue that transcends the project itself; the evaluator is of the belief that this item was inserted into the mission's TOR deliberately, so as to flag once more the adverse implications of the UNODC-UNDP relationship. Since this may be the case, the following suggestions are offered.

Recommendations are:

1. That the administrative relationship with UNDP be terminated as soon as practicable, to be replaced by COAFG and/or HQ control of procurement and finances.
2. That UNODC continues to intensively train MCN-Kabul in finance and administration, so that if GPI follows the same course as CNTF, none of the blame in regard to tardiness will reflect back on the Ministry or, by virtue of association, on UNODC.

1.2. UNODC's Provincial Coordinators

129. The four of the five Provincial Coordinators the evaluation mission met left a very positive impression. Essentially tasked in the beginning to be logisticians to support local missions and those arriving from Kabul, all four have commendably grown through their own initiative and auto-didacticism to fill a crucial role, that of intermediary between UNODC and the Governorate.

Recommendation:

1. That UNODC further strengthens the roles of the Provincial Coordinators through broadening their knowledge base, providing background reading and beginning-level short-courses in subjects such as micro-economics and development theory. By so doing, the provincial AL Experts will have someone attuned to local conditions with whom to exchange ideas

1.3. UNODC's Provincial AL Coordinators

130. The four of the five AL Experts the evaluation mission met appear to be working to the best of their capabilities, but these remain limited in scope and depth. Some appear at first sight to be more dynamic than others, but this may be a function more of the limitations of their personal knowledge-bases than any inherent inability to get the work done. And as with MCN and its PDCNs, the training UNODC offers to its own staff owns little in the way of mentorship, focusing instead on short courses that may not be particularly well absorbed.

131. One recent example is the crop gross margins training offered to the AL Experts at the beginning of 2009. Well-intentioned advice to conduct the effort by means of a focus-group discussion, which has the advantage of, through internal regulation mechanisms, arriving at a quasi-average outcome for a community, the training was off-target because the experience-based learning that would allow the AL Experts to adequately conduct and manage such discussions has not yet been attained. Furthermore, the method by which to transfer the information collected verbally to a quantitative Excel spreadsheet generated more confusion than enlightenment. Hence the only way to acquire the highly relevant, sorely needed (for evidence-based strategies) information is via the much more time-consuming household-level questionnaire, based on a pre-defined survey instrument and sampling methodology, one via which the AL Experts can readily transfer the data to spreadsheets without much intervening thought and interpretation.

Recommendation:

1. That UNODC further strengthens the roles of the Provincial AL Coordinators through broadening their knowledge base, providing background reading and beginning-level short-courses in subjects such as micro-economics and development theory. In addition, and importantly, the National Project Coordinator will need to individually mentor each AL Expert intensively over time, to ensure that knowledge acquisition transmutes into a working skill set

1.4. Brief Responses to the TOR's Remaining "Implementation Process" Bulletpoints

Are there less costly methods which could achieve the same outcome/impact at the beneficiary level?

132. There are no methods of service delivery that would prove less costly vis-à-vis achieving the same outcome/impact at MCN and its provincial directorates, with the exception perhaps of the issue of a moratorium on the construction of new premises as suggested in paragraph 112. In terms of the ramp-up in activities this evaluation suggests, the expectation needs to be one of increased costs; e.g., when monitoring AL projects with PDCN AL Managers, the PDCN officers will need to have their per-diems provided. The mentoring campaign recommended following paragraph 72 will also see expenditures increase, e.g., on fuel for shuttling between the UNODC and PDCN premises. MCN further suggested that one of their staff will better acquire evaluation techniques if he can accompany a professional evaluator in the course of his mission; this evaluation endorses the request in principle, and opportunities should be extended as warranted, with the expectation that MCN's costs would need to be met.

To what extent was a transparent operating environment and accountability of government established?

133. In terms of transparency, none whatsoever, as the case of the dual PDCN Directors in Balkh suggests. It is likely that UNODC requests for greater transparency would be stonewalled, but accountability could and should be promoted. For example, MCN personnel should be asked to take objective tests at the end of training courses. MCN should be held accountable for its decision-making, with UNODC no longer acting as a rubber-stamping donor; the example most pertinent is the MCN request for new premises in Herat, as described in paragraph 112.

To what extent have partnerships been sought and established with other relevant actors (including UN agencies) and synergies been created in the delivery of assistance?

134. Other than with WFP, as described in paragraphs 88-94, no programmatic partnerships were established.

Was there effective coordination among government, UNODC and other implementing partners, including donor countries?

135. There was, and continues to be, no effective coordination among actors. Major CN/AL donor countries especially are driven by their own domestic and foreign-policy agendas, and are at times reluctant to share information, never mind accept partnership, with the UN.

Has adequate and appropriate backstopping support been provided by the UNODC headquarters and the Field Office in Kabul (administrative / managerial support and coordination)? Have partner institutions fully and effectively discharged their responsibilities?

136. The evaluation mission has not encountered any negative sentiments regarding backstopping support provided by Vienna, with the exception of what COAFG considers to be the null response of the mission tasked with smoothing procurement (see paragraph 127). Partner institution WFP has discharged its responsibilities fully but, as paragraph 90 explains, not necessarily effectively in some instances, while very effectively in others.

What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects of interventions of the projects on the beneficiary MCN staff and institutions?

137. MCN and PDCN persons interviewed all express their appreciation and gratitude for UNODC's I87 efforts, which while perhaps falling short on sustained achievement, certainly have had no negative effects. By contrast, UNODC cannot be said to have had any impact, positive or negative, on CNAT.

What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders, including the Government of Afghanistan, implementing partners, other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, about the overall impact of UNODC's project activities?

138. GIRA, outside of MCN, is not very aware of UNODC, and as noted in paragraph 41, some provincial directorates may find PDCNs to be nearly invisible. Since UNODC is only a minor player in respect to AL, line ministries such as MAIL, MRRD, and MEW find it to be peripheral, if visible at all. Most other UN agencies at provincial level are cognisant of UNODC's role with the PDCN. Major donors do not see an impact from I87's AL component, but are more willing to recognize that MCN plays a significant role in the CN message being disseminated.

How have internal UNODC factors affected project effectiveness, including human resources, logistic support and procurement?

139. On the one hand, an absence of sufficient human resources has adversely affected the efficacy of the project. On the other hand, the reporting requirements in differing formats of the project donors have tied up the CN National Project Coordinator so that he is unable to focus on his other duties. A reports officer would seem to be warranted. In combination, several staff members, both national and international, are stretched beyond full capacity. Logistics support and procurement are an office-wide issue, hardly confined to I87 alone. COAFG is bound to UNDP for many administrative functions, and as described in paragraphs 121-126, there are indeed significant problems in this relationship.

How have factors external to the projects, including security, governance, limits on access to project sites and human resource constraints, impacted on effectiveness?

140. The security situation and absence of GIRA in rural areas of the South and East have severely hampered I87's effectiveness in Kandahar, somewhat less so in Nangarhar where Jalalabad city has no travel restrictions. Unfortunately, even in the North and West, the same situation prevails in some areas that continue to grow poppy, making it difficult if not impossible for I87 to function effectively in those districts. In other cases it is the overly conservative stance on travel taken by the UN Department of Safety and Security that reduces effectiveness; one such example that affected the evaluation mission directly was the temporary closure of Argu District for three days in Badakhshan because of a single shop having burned down one night.

J. Project Concept and Design

J.1. Assessing the Impact of I87: The Project Logframe

141. Correct project design is the starting point to evaluation of project outcomes and the assessment of impact. Unfortunately, the design of I87 has failed to meet internationally accepted norms as to what constitutes a valid logical framework (“logframe”).
142. First, *Goals* (what is being called the *Objective* here) and *Objectives* (called *Outcomes* here, an acceptable label) should be stated in terms of the changes to the system or beneficiaries, NOT the process.
143. Hence, “The PDs of MCN in five provinces have their own offices and are able to effectively support the planning, monitoring and evaluation of drug control programmes” is not a valid goal (or objective). This should be framed instead as something akin to “Increased capacity of the MCN-PDs to better coordinate, target, plan, monitor, and assess drug control programs.”
144. Next, the indicators are also faulty; for example, “CN Training Courses Delivered” should be replaced by an objectively measurable indicator that reflects the (revised) goal.
145. Finally, the column labeled *Assumptions* should include assumptions of what will be true rather than a list of *risks*, which is what are listed here. Assumptions are better stated in positive terms. Hence, “No transfer of counter narcotics responsibilities to ministries other than MCN” becomes “MCN retains in full the counter narcotics mandate.” This is a proper assumption, because if one were to assume that the original assumption is the case, why start the project?

Recommendation:

1. The above findings apply to *all* outcomes – all of the indicators are vague, undefined, and off-target. For I87 to be evaluated as it should be at the end of its life, all outcomes need to be completely rewritten, and the ambiguous terms (“expedited,” “coordinated,” “in place,” etc.) all need to be made specific so that an evaluator can actually measure them. Indicators selected, if not measurable, have no use.

J.2. The Midterm Evaluation

146. This is the first midterm evaluation of I87. Given that the initial project term was 36 months (September 2006 – September 2009), the midterm evaluation should have occurred around March 2008. Even with its newly extended duration of 51 months, this midterm evaluation is roughly eight months late. Given the breadth and depth of the major findings, these eight months represent a lost opportunity to redress shortfalls in performance.

Recommendation:

1. The evaluator recommends that future UNODC projects adhere more closely to the meaning rather than the spirit of “midterm”.

J.3. I87 and UNODC’s Comparative Advantage in AL

147. COAFG’s April 2009 Draft Country Strategy, page 20, stipulates that UNODC’s comparative advantage is in understanding the relationship between the opium economy and rural development. This evaluation mission is uncertain whether this implies, as it seems to, that *other* rural development actors *don’t* understand the relationship between the two, because such an assertion, even if implicit, is patently false. AREU has painstakingly documented the rise and fall of the opium economy in different locations across the country, tracking input and output factors

longitudinally over several years, and the results of these studies are available to all interested parties on-line, cost-free.

148. A rewording of this statement might be along the lines of, “UNODC’s comparative advantage is in understanding the relationship between loss of household income as a consequence of abandoning the cultivation of opium and the need to bridge this to sustainable income-generating activities with relatively short-term alternative livelihoods.” A statement of this type, even if not verbatim, comes much closer to the core of UNODC’s fundamental comprehension of its AL mission, since as noted in paragraph 29-30, many actors seem not to fully grasp what AL is, or is supposed to accomplish.

149. Despite I87’s potential, it has not performed well to-date in analyzing the opium economy’s effect at the local level, nor (as shown by the discussion around paragraph 89) in assisting other UN agencies in developing well-targeted interventions. Nor has I87 been in a position where its advice to Governorates might have had an impact – this is generally achieved through PDCs, of which the PDCNs are putatively a member; however, UNODC’s linkage to PDCs is nebulous at best, given the low capacities of the PDCNs.

150. UNODC’s other comparative advantage is the appeal of the Blue Flag. It will assuredly take a while to build a reputation as a knowledge-led organization, but UNODC has the potential as a Blue Flag agency to assume intellectual leadership of the AL sector. In achieving this, the ability to fund project activities plays only a minor role, so that the statement on page 20 of the Draft Country Strategy that “[r]ural economic development is a wide field in which UNODC is dwarfed by other donors,” while true, actually becomes moot.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that the UNODC Provincial Offices refocus their efforts on building understanding of AL in the provinces under their jurisdiction, from the Governor on down through the line ministries, such that when the PDC meets to allocate GPI funds, it can better reach decisions that have true AL outcomes.

J.4. I87 and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy

151. The ANDS is a medium-term strategic plan for 2008-2013. A measure of how internally inconsistent and contradictory the document truly is (the reason for this is that parts of it were forcefully taken over and written by USAID consultants) can be seen by comparing two sub-sections, one on pages 44/45 (Responding to the challenges of the opium economy) and the other on page 54 (Narcotics). In the former, the ANDS suggests that “The government should focus on sensible rural development, *instead of short-term alternative livelihoods programs.*” In the latter, just nine pages later, the ANDS states that “[t]he Government’s strategy... addresses issues such as the development of economic infrastructure, demand reduction, poppy eradication, countering drug trafficking *and establishing alternative livelihood programs.*”³² Resolving this dichotomy is not the place of a single UNODC project.

J.5. I87 and the Afghanistan Compact

152. The Afghanistan Compact is an agreement signed in London in January 2006 between Afghanistan and the international community. It reiterates that development will proceed according to the ANDS pillars. It spotlights CN as a cross-cutting priority, wherein it calls for the “...wider provision of economic alternatives for farmers and labourers in the context of

³² Text is not italicized in the original document in either case.

comprehensive rural development; and building national and provincial counter-narcotics institutions.” The I87 project was designed to further these goals, inasmuch as AL can be regarded as the initial component of a “comprehensive rural development” strategy.

J.6. I87 and the 2008 UNODC Thematic Evaluation

153. Volume 2 (Alternative Livelihoods Programme) of the May 2008 Thematic Evaluation of the Technical Assistance Provided to Afghanistan by UNODC first recommends that UNODC’s AL efforts should be focused on the provinces, which I87 does. Its second suggestion, that UNODC must develop strategic partnerships with competent local entities experienced in rural development has not been adopted so far (WFP, UNODC’s only strategic partner thus far, is engaged in humanitarian response rather than rural development), but if this evaluation’s roadmap is adopted, this will also be true.
154. The third finding regarding donors adopting flexibility vis-à-vis UNODC’s rational use of their resources is not germane to this evaluation, but as an offered comment, the fact that project revisions have been endorsed with additional funding would suggest that this is indeed the case.
155. The fourth recommendation is the one that this project has paid least heed to: that UNODC should not be involved in delivering construction or equipment or in strengthening institutions since other donors “should do that.” Clearly, this recommendation has not been adopted, although this current evaluation has independently arrived at the same conclusion as far as MCN construction is concerned (but not necessarily on construction for other uses more closely related to AL), and has serious qualms, as outlined in above sections, regarding the provision of equipment to the Ministry. However, this current evaluation finds that MCN is the natural partner of UNODC, and should be supported in every way possible where it comes to building capacity although – as discussed in great detail above – using methods and structures very different to those now being implemented.
156. The final recommendation is that UNODC should have a say in how the CNTF is used and should facilitate access to it. Regrettably, UNODC has been unable to implement the first of these very good suggestions, even by proxy through PDCN Directors, while international UNAMA personnel in the provinces have been the facilitators for local government due largely to the difficulty in filling the forms for access to CNTF funds, as discussed in greater detail above.

J.7. Sub-Contract Performance

157. The evaluator is not a construction engineer, and thus cannot comment on the construction activities. Altai Consulting was retained to upgrade the AL Database, but as described in paragraphs 74-78, this exercise proved rather futile. CETENA, retained to conduct the media research, performed credibly, and results from their survey are discussed in greater depth in paragraph 79. CETENA also carried out a focus groups training to UNODC provincial staff in 2007, which while it may have been a fine exercise, left no lasting impression; the ability to think on-the-run cannot be trained, and must be continually practiced, which the staff were not explicitly required to do.
158. Also in 2007, both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Hajj and the Herat Governorate undertook pre-planting and public information campaigns respectively, the direct results of which cannot be measured at this point in time. In 2008, CHA took on the task of training UNODC provincial staff on needs assessments, community mobilization, proposal writing, logframe construction, M&E, report writing, training-of-trainers, activity planning, and management/leadership skills. Since there was no objective testing of knowledge or skills prior to, or post-training, evaluating subcontractor performance is impossible. The trainings were

provided, but in common with the focus groups training, skills attained can quickly rust if not regularly exercised.

159. What can be said in regard to UNODC staff performance at provincial level is that the evaluation mission was pleased to find a high degree of motivation among staff. However, training needs and a requirement to use the new skills acquired remain themes that can practically be provided through opportunities to work closely with professionals; one example is the engagement of the AL Expert in Balkh in the sub-contracted work to Eureka Research, which is fielding quantitative questionnaires and focus group discussions in Jawzjan Province at the time of writing.

III. Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Growth Potential

160. The fundamental lesson to be learned both by UNODC and the donor community is the need to be adaptable to prevailing circumstances. The international community entered the country in 2001 with the best intentions to rebuild, revitalize, and turn the economy to licit crop production, only to be faced with the evidence, time and again, that this country may well be unique in its circumstances.
161. To illustrate what this means requires some explication. The evaluation notes a statement made not long ago by a US military trainer in which, in exasperation, he commented that training recruits for the Afghan Army is like trying to train a class of five-year olds. While this might be dismissed by skeptics as analytically flawed and hyperbolic, it may then be more noteworthy that Richard Holbrooke recently commented on the training of the Afghan Police; after six years of effort, he noted wryly, 85% of police recruits enter the course illiterate, and leave the course illiterate. He made it a point to ask how, then, can the international community expect them to verify identification and other documents?
162. Such hurdles are hardly unique to the uniformed branch of Government. They also permeate almost all levels of civilian administration to a appreciable degree, in some cases to such a degree that the best-designed capacity-building initiatives, that is, the primary output of the I87 project, are predictably likely to fail.
163. Hence, the evaluation does not fault the I87 project for its attempts to build capacity. This is exactly what is needed to ensure a functioning and functional civilian administration. Where the lesson was not learned quickly enough, perhaps, and in line with Paragraph 8, is that the Project showed little adaptability. In the face of multiple avenues of evidence, and most likely constrained by explicit or implicit donor expectations, I87 did not evolve so as to be capable of delivering its outcomes in MCN, in the PDCNs, with the AL database, and for the AL objective. Only in the CN public information campaigns (PICs) can it be said that I87 has had some success.
164. The only logical conclusion in such circumstances as described in Paragraphs 9-11 would be to upgrade efforts in “capacity building” to become direct mentorship on a quasi-daily basis. Of course, the problem with this approach is that UNODC could easily fall into the trap of *becoming* the PDCNs in which staff would be effectively embedded.
165. While UNODC provincial AL coordinators are justifiably classifiable as top-rate, this applies only if compared to the overall Afghan context. To put it bluntly, if their knowledge base, ability to conceptualize, and capability to understand how to conduct research were compared with high-school students from the West or from East Asia, it is likely that they would often score lower. UNODC needs to institutionalize procedures that allow it to ascertain where such gaps exist and take steps to redress these, either through formal workshops or via on-line courses. Continuance of contracts can then be partially based on success in measurable knowledge- and skills-acquisition – that is, via tests and exams.

166. Vis-à-vis the desire for partnerships with other UN agencies, I87 undertook joint projects with WFP that left WFP feeling uncertain whether it would repeat such endeavours. UNODC must be able to maintain its promised role in such partnerships.
167. There is great potential for synergy when working with other UN agencies, hence the concept of collaboration should be actively pursued as a best-practice.
168. Women are often co-decision-makers as to whether or not a household grows opium poppy, and thus I87's ability to gather information from women and project a CN/AL message is severely compromised – especially given the Afghan context, once again, where social conservatism dominates – by not having a female project officer on staff. As a counterpoint, there is no shortage of female staff in other COAFG projects, so why the AL project fell by the wayside is most likely due to an absence of any female officers at MCN/PDCNs, rather than an oversight. However, if as suggested the AL project moves into field implementation mode, the presence of a woman on the team will prove invaluable.
169. The 2008 Thematic Evaluation has had minimal influence on the structure and functioning of I87. Too many of its recommendations have not been incorporated into the project plan, but this could possibly have much to do with real or perceived donor inflexibility as much as an evasion or dismissal of recommended actions. The same holds true in terms of including findings from past programme evaluations, one of which, for example, noted the failure of “capacity building” vis-à-vis MCN. Project creation and revisions may well be proceeding on the basis of memory of what has been written, rather than via a careful consideration of prior performance. A best practice would be to take the time – as a team – to review successes and failures of the past, and build from this knowledge-base.
170. The lessons learned from the implementation of the project thus centre on the issue of sustainability, both in terms of UNODC's partner Ministry's institutional memory and in terms of the broadly defined AL component of I87.
171. Despite good intentions from the start, UNODC may have unfortunately worked at marginalizing itself. As a noted and influential CN/AL researcher acerbically remarked, it was the World Bank that drew up the CN guidelines for national programmes, not UNODC. The same might be said for the work with MCN; had UNODC reacted faster and with less of a cerebral stance and more a hands-on one, there would have been far less of an opportunity for the US to create CNAT within MCN.
172. At present, the needs of MCN and the PDCNs are no different than when I87 started. Capacity building has achieved few durable results so far, but within different implementation parameters, as described in greater detail in above sections, the potential to bring MCN and its directorates up-to-speed certainly exists. But UNODC should refrain from expanding its I87 capacity building activities to other provinces until there is objectively measurable and sustainable improvement in the four of the five provincial office locations where it is able to currently operate.

IV. Constraints that Impacted Project Delivery

173. The beneficiary's constraints (the beneficiary being MCN and the PDCNs) are discussed in detail in paragraphs 33-49, and the braking effect of UNDP as the administrative partner in paragraphs 116-128. An additional constraint is the security situation in Kandahar. It has steadily become increasingly impossible to work not just in the rural areas of the Province, but in the city itself, since UNODC staff is subject to the common UN security system's regulations.

V. Conclusions and Final Recommendations

174. The I87 project is far from achieving its goals; in most locations monitored, “planning, monitoring, and evaluation of drug control related issues” remains distant from MCN’s ability to operate autonomously, and as far as “particularly Alternative Livelihoods Development assistance” is concerned, there is indeed much work to be accomplished. The build-up of capacity in UNODC’s provincial offices has proceeded much more smoothly, but again the integration of activities with the PDCNs has not in any way produced a sustainable institutional impact. Even among those provinces where PDCNs are effective, the gain in institutional capacity seems tenuous: it is underpinned by a charismatic, well-connected Director. When these individuals leave their positions, it will be in doubt as to whether the realized gains will persist.
175. It is not too late to effect substantial change to the way in which the project is conducted, and to reach the goals by the end-of-project in December 2010. The central tenets of this change are twofold: (1), to expand the way in which UNODC interprets and monitors AL, such that it begins to play a catalytic role in opening doors to households for durable livelihood streams, especially in those areas less-served by the immense projects undertaken by major donors. (2) The ongoing partnership with MCN and the PDCNs has to be strengthened through a robust mentorship process, while concomitantly new avenues for AL partnerships with other GIRA Ministries should be implemented.
176. To ascertain progress, this evaluation’s final recommendation is that there should be a UNODC internal evaluation of the project following the provision of a new logframe (refer to paragraphs 141-145) that needs to be compiled beforehand.

Appendix A: TOR

JOINT TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR

FINAL EVALUATION

Project AFG/G76

Alternative Livelihoods Capacity Building at National and Regional Level

AND

MID-TERM EVALUATION

Project AFG/I87

Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control

UNODC COUNTRY OFFICE AFGHANISTAN

1.BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project AFG G76

Capacity building of MCN field staff through the project was designed to systematically “mainstream” the counter-narcotics dimension and analysis into key National Development Programmes (NDPs) and to facilitate the targeting, planning, coordinating, monitoring and impact assessment of Alternative Livelihoods (AL) in, but not limited to, poppy growing areas and areas “at risk”. The mainstreaming strategy included the following key elements:

- **Livelihoods Analysis:** Strengthening the network of AL national experts in the UNODC regional offices to compile relevant data and to develop a data collection and analysis system that enables stakeholders to better understand the livelihoods and the development needs of small farmers in commonly identified targeted areas of opium poppy cultivation – or those areas at risk of cultivating poppy- with a view to channelling this information into joint programme development with partners.
- **Project Facilitation:** Forming strategic partnerships with international stakeholders on specifically targeted AL projects and activities, improving and strengthening the interventions’ outcome and impact through pooling the required multi-dimensional expertise to address the multi-functional role of opium poppy in rural household by phasing and improved targeting of interventions.

Project Duration:February 2006 to December 2008

Project Budget:USD 1,250,000

Project AFG I87

The purpose of this project is to strengthen the institutional and operational capability of the Provincial Directorates (PDs) of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN). The project works closely with the staff of MCN PDs in the five target provinces (Herat, Balkh, Badakhshan, Nangarhar, Kandahar) to improve their organisation and to involve them increasingly in planning, monitoring and evaluation of drug control related issues, particularly AL development assistance. The role of provincial offices of MCN will be extended to assisting provincial administration mainstream counter narcotics strategies into their provincial development plans. This project also aims to develop the counter narcotics capacity of UNODC at the provincial level. By strengthening the UNODC Provincial Offices (POs), the project seeks to ensure the existence of an effective and sufficient institutional frame-work and mechanism at provincial levels, capable of providing technical support/expertise to the increasing needs of the Afghan government and aid agencies in all sectors of drug control. The strengthening of drug control capacity at provincial level, for MCN with UNODC support, is needed to sustain the momentum of counter narcotics efforts, and to support the ongoing and planned development assistance to ensure the mainstreaming of the counter-narcotics dimension and analysis into key development programmes at national and provincial levels. The project will support the establishment of coordination network and data base units in PDs to ensure the regular update of the AI database established at the MCN in Kabul. This project is currently being revised with a further extension and expansion of building, training and equipping of the PDs of MCN in all 34 provinces and the UNODC provincial offices in the five key provinces mentioned above. This revision will also include a counter narcotics information campaign to rural communities as well as farmer training and the launching of a public information campaign on AL.

Project Duration: November 2006 to September 2009

Project Budget: USD 8,467,971

2.PURPOSE OF THE TWO EVALUATIONS

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to determine what the projects have achieved and if they have attained their objectives successfully and efficiently, taking into account the difficult conditions in Afghanistan and to generate lessons. In this regard, the extent to which the needs of the beneficiaries are being met as well as what has been achieved in terms of impact, relevance and sustainability will also be assessed.

The evaluation will also draw lessons as well as good (and bad) practices from the projects' implementation which, in the case of the Mid-term Evaluation of I87 will be used to improve the management and implementation of the project during the remainder of the project period. The findings of the evaluations of both projects will also be used by the Afghanistan Country Office to improve the planning, design and management of future projects. Furthermore, the evaluation will also to measure the projects' achievements, outcomes and impacts, both positive and negative.

3.EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation will focus mainly on the projects' concept, design, implementation, results, outputs and outcomes. The evaluation should appraise:

(a) Projects concept and design:

The evaluation should analyse whether and how the projects contributed to a priority area or comparative advantage for UNODC within the country strategy for Afghanistan. It will also review problems identified by the projects and the corresponding strategy chosen to address these. The evaluation will also encompass an assessment of the relevance and attainability of the objectives and of planned outputs, activities and inputs of the two projects as compared to other cost-effective alternatives. An analysis of the clarity, logic and coherence of the projects will also be conducted. The key overarching questions to be addressed by this evaluation include:

- Are the objectives of the projects aligned with the current policy priorities and action plans of the Government of Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy and the UNODC mandate and regional and national strategies?
- Do the projects reflect the findings and recommendation of the 2007 UNODC Thematic Evaluation and have they contributed to the recommended follow-up actions?
- Is the design of the projects technically sound? Are the projects' objectives clear, realistic and coherent in terms of contributing to the achievements of the Strategic Programme Framework and Afghanistan Development Strategy, and other strategic instruments?

- Are the activities and implementation strategy appropriate for meeting the stated objectives of the projects, with a focus on assessing project elements directly related to capacity building, coordination and sub-contract performance?
- As the two projects are closely related and form a continuum from the headquarters of MCN in Kabul through to the field offices at provincial level, what synergies, if any, have developed between the projects during implementation and what lessons have been learned from the process?
- How well do the projects' objectives reflect the specific nature of the problems and needs of alternative development and counter narcotics policies in Afghanistan?

(b) Objectives, outputs, impact and sustainability:

The evaluation will determine to what extent the planned project results have been achieved, and, in case of non-achievement, to what extent there has been progress towards their achievement. Ultimately, the overall impact of the projects will be assessed (against the indicators given in Annexes 1 and 2): this will encompass the likely sustainability of the results and benefits as well as the projects' contribution to human and institutional capacity building at MCN – including the benefits of the capacity building (i.e. have the beneficiaries gained the necessary tools and skills?). The beneficiaries' perception of the projects' achievements will be assessed as an important factor in determining sustainability. The key questions to be addressed by the evaluation are:

- Have leadership and technical skills been enhanced within MCN at institutional and individual levels?
- **G76:** Has the operational capacity (skills and service delivery) of MCN increased through training and improvement of working conditions?
- **I87:** Has the operational capacity (skills and service delivery) of the PDs of MCN been increased through training and improvement of working conditions?
- **G76:** Has a mentorship system been set-up? Has the creation of a mentorship mechanism helped the day-to-day operations of MCN?
- **I87:** Has a mentorship system been set-up? Has the creation of a mentorship mechanism helped the day-to-day operations to oversee and advise on technical issues as well as on the administration of the PDs of MCN?
- Was training material produced and is it available for future use by the Government and concerned authorities?

(c) Overall implementation process:

The evaluation will assess how effectively and efficiently the planning and implementation of the two projects has been carried out. This will include assessing the extent to which organizational structure, managerial support and the coordination mechanisms used by UNODC effectively support the projects. The role played by the UNODC field offices in the development and implementation of the projects will also be assessed. The evaluation will analyse problems and constraints encountered during implementation as well as the quality and timeliness of inputs and the efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. The questions to be addressed include:

- Were alternative less costly interventions modalities considered in designing this project? Do they exist? To what extent has UNDP been efficient, effective and transparent?
- Are there less costly methods which could achieve the same outcome/impact at the beneficiary level?

- To what extent was a transparent operating environment and accountability of government established?
- To what extent have partnerships been sought and established with other relevant actors (including UN-agencies) and synergies been created in the delivery of assistance?
- Was there effective coordination among government, UNODC and other implementing partners, including donor countries?
- Has adequate and appropriate backstopping support been provided by the UNODC headquarters and the Field Office in Kabul (administrative / managerial support and coordination)? Have partner institutions fully and effectively discharged their responsibilities?
- What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects of interventions of the projects on the beneficiary MCN staff and institutions?
- What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders, including the Government of Afghanistan, implementing partners, other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, about the overall impact of UNODC's project activities?
- How have internal UNODC factors affected project effectiveness, including human resources, logistic support and procurement?
- How have factors external to the projects, including security, governance, limits on access to project sites and human resource constraints, impacted on effectiveness?

(d) Lessons learned from the concept, design and implementation of the projects, as well as good practices:

Recommendations will also be made in respect of issues related to the implementation and management of the projects. The evaluation shall assess in what ways the projects' design and/or delivery can be improved to enhance their effectiveness. The evaluation will also identify the key elements, assumptions and risks for the development of similar initiatives in other regions. Some of the questions to be addressed are:

- To what extent have the findings and recommendations from the past project evaluations been followed up and implemented to address some of the challenges already identified.
- Do the projects' interventions have a potential for scaling up or replication?
- G76** What are the outstanding needs of MCN?
- I87:** What are the outstanding needs of the PDs of MCN and other involved institutions?

4.EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation will present a detailed statement of evaluation methods and the approach to be used to identify information sources and to collect and analyse information during the evaluation. The evaluation methods will include:

- (a) Document review: this will comprise of all major documents, such as the project documents, progress and monitoring reports, terminal narrative reports, as well as assessments, manuals developed under the project;
- (b) Field assessment mission to Kabul and key provinces;

- (d) **G76:** Meetings, interviews, and focus group related to the work of the Afghan Border Police.
- (e) **I87:** Meetings, interviews, and focus group related to the work of the PDs of MCN.
- (f) The completion of a questionnaire prepared by the evaluator (and approved by the UNODC Country Office) by selected national counter narcotics staff.

Before the field mission, the evaluator will prepare an evaluation methodology, including questions and questionnaires that are acceptable to the UNODC country office. Following the completion of the fact-finding and analysis phase, a draft evaluation report will be prepared by the evaluator and presented to the UNODC country office within the stipulated timeframe and in accordance with UNODC standard evaluation report outline (Item 6 below). The draft report will include a detailed statement of the evaluation methods used during the appraisal. Inputs from the UNODC country office will be recorded and taken into account by the evaluators, as relevant and appropriate.

5.EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

The project evaluations of AFG G76 and AFG I87 will take place simultaneously. The evaluator should have excellent knowledge of alternative development issues within the counter narcotics framework in Afghanistan.

The evaluator should hold an advanced degree in a relevant field and have proven experience on key issues, preferably in Afghanistan. In addition, the evaluator should also meet the following criteria:

- 1) *Be familiar with the project implementation in international organizations.*
- 2) Have experience in conducting independent evaluations and or assessments.
- 3) Have at least 10 years relevant professional experience in counter narcotics and legal issues in post conflict settings.
- 4) Have obtained a post-graduate degree in a relevant area.
- 5) *Possess excellent analytical, drafting and communication/writing skills in English.*

6. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This evaluation will be a joint effort between the evaluator and UNODC. As for substance, it is critical that the evaluation should be carried out independently by the evaluator who should conduct a thorough evaluation covering all aspects of the projects' objectives, achievements, implementation and management. The evaluator will have access to all relevant documents and the UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan will provide the required support for the evaluator during the evaluation.

The UNODC officials responsible for briefing of the evaluator are:

UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan:

- Representative
- Deputy Representative
- Counter Narcotics Programme Manager
- International Project Coordinator
- National Project Coordinator

UNODC Country Office will secure office space, administrative basic support, and travel arrangements for the evaluator during his/her stay in Kabul. UNODC will also assist with accommodation bookings, visa facilitation etc....

Time Frame & Tentative programme for the Evaluator:

The evaluator will be recruited for 6 weeks spread over a period of 8 weeks.

| Programme & Activity | Days Required | Tentative dates |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Preparation of methodology/questionnaires + Desk-review | 3 | 1 – 3 April |
| Travelling to Afghanistan | 2 | 4 - 5 April |
| Briefing by Country office staff | 1 | 6 April |
| Desk-review of documentation at COAFG | 3 | 7 – 9 April |
| Meetings/interviews with Ministries, Departments, UN Agencies and relevant stakeholders., visit to project intervention sites | 25 | 10 April 4 May |
| Field mission | 10 | TBD but between above dates |
| Returning home | 2 | 5 – 6 May |
| Preparation of the draft reports (2) | 5 | 7 – 11 May |
| Break | | |
| Incorporating the UNODC comments in the two reports and preparing the final drafts | 2 | 20-21 May |
| Total Working & Travel Days | 43 | 12 April – 21 May |

Note: Detailed itinerary and programme will be prepared by UNODC Afghanistan in consultation with the evaluator upon arrival in Kabul.

Deliverables of the evaluation:

- 1) For each project: an evaluation plan and detailed terms of reference with methodology;
- 2) Debriefing on initial findings of the two evaluations with stakeholders prior to departure from Kabul;
- 3) Draft final evaluation report with findings for Project G76
- 4) Draft mid-term evaluation report with findings for Project I87;
- 5) Final evaluation reports.

Payment:

The Evaluator will be issued a consultancy contract as per the common UN rules and procedures. The final payment will be made after the acceptance of the final draft of the evaluation report by UNODC HQs and the Country Office for Afghanistan.

Evaluation reports:

The evaluation reports should be in line with UNODC’s evaluation policy and handbook. The outline of the reports, to be agreed with the Afghanistan Country Office, should include the headings listed below:

- 1) Evaluation summary (maximum 4 pages)
- 2) Introduction
- 3) Background (Project description)

- 4) Evaluation purpose and objective
- 5) Evaluation methodology
- 6) Major findings
- 7) Lessons learned (from both positive and negative experiences)
- 8) Constraints that impacted project delivery
- 9) Conclusions and recommendations

**Appendix B: List of People Interviewed
(Alphabetic by Affiliation)**

| | Name | Affiliation | Position / Location |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dagerman Hashur | ABP | Commander, Aqina border, Faryab |
| 2 | Asadullah | ABP | Deputy Commander, Islam Qala border, Herat |
| 3 | Hamid Zay | Afghan Saffron | Managing Director |
| 4 | Abdul Malik | AKF | Engineer, Yumgan District, Badakhshan |
| 5 | Sayid Mohamed Shewa | AKF | Manager, Yumgan District, Badakhshan |
| 6 | Romin Fararoon | AKF | Planning and M&E Coordinator, Badakhshan |
| 7 | Shah Mahmood | ANP | CN trained officer, Aqina border, Faryab |
| 8 | Paula Kantor | AREU | Director |
| 9 | Paul Fishstein | AREU | Former Director, consultant |
| 10 | Zane Kandraub | ASI | Country Director |
| 11 | Alnoor Maherali | Canadian Embassy | Second Secretary (Political) |
| 12 | Iskan village | CDC (female) | Jurm District, Badakhshan |
| 13 | Charmhargzistan village | CDC (female) | Yumgan District, Badakhshan |
| 14 | Shumkarchi village | CDC (male) | Argu District, Badakhshan |
| 15 | Merkaz Dehdadi | CDC (male) | Dehdadi District, Balkh |
| 16 | Sansiz village | CDC (male) | Faizabad District, Jawzjan |
| 17 | Chunge Kayemakhchi village | CDC (male) | Jurm District, Badakhshan |
| 18 | Iskan village | CDC (male) | Jurm District, Badakhshan |
| 19 | Debala village | CDC (male) | Karokh District, Herat |
| 20 | Pushtaju village | CDC (male) | Karokh District, Herat |
| 21 | Deepore village | CDC (male) | Khash District, Badakhshan |
| 22 | Moghulha village | CDC (male) | Khash District, Badakhshan |
| 23 | Gowhar Shad Sharki village | CDC (male) | Kohsan District, Herat |
| 24 | Islam Qala Shomali village | CDC (male) | Kohsan District, Herat |
| 25 | Yakhcheu village | CDC (male) | Shahada District, Badakhshan |
| 26 | Qala-e Bakhtan village | CDC (male) | Surkhrud District, Nangarhar |
| 27 | Sabz Abad village | CDC (male) | Surkhrud District, Nangarhar |
| 28 | Charmhargzistan village | CDC (male) | Yumgan District, Badakhshan |
| 29 | Mohamed Wahid Waqfi | CHA | Field Office Manager, Herat |
| 30 | Mohamed Akbar | CNAT | AL Officer, Badakhshan |
| 31 | Zahurodin | CNAT | AL Officer, Badakhshan |
| 32 | Ross Ballantyne | CNAT | Chief International Advisor for Strategy |
| 33 | Laila Martin | CNAT | International Advisor, Badakhshan |
| 34 | John Cole | CNAT | International Advisor, Farah |
| 35 | Cheryl Morgan | CNAT | International Advisor, Nangarhar |
| 36 | Chris Corsten | CNAT | International Advisor, Nangarhar |
| 37 | Mohamed Khalid | CNAT | Team Leader, Badakhshan |
| 38 | Matt McGarry | CRS | Country Director |
| 39 | Khash District | DDA | Badakhshan |
| 40 | Abdul Naser Aswadi | DEcon | Director, Herat |
| 41 | Sayed Qias Saedi | DEcon | Director, Nangarhar |
| 42 | Mohamed Sanuallah | DEcon | Head |

| | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 43 | Sayed Hassan Fazli | DEW | Deputy Director, Herat |
| 44 | Anna Morgan | DFID | Growth and Livelihood Programme Manager |
| 45 | Lemonia Chatzigeorgiou | Eureka Group | Research Director |
| 46 | Mohammed Aqa | FAO | Assistant Representative |
| 47 | Aqil Saidwahidullah | FAO | National Area Agronomist, Herat |
| 48 | Mohamed Zia Aria | FAO | Northern Region Seed Coordinating Officer |
| 49 | Rudolph Strasser | GAA | Country Director |
| 50 | Mohmand Akbar | GAA | Deputy Project Manager, Nangarhar |
| 51 | Alexander Schrade | GAA | Programme and Monitoring Manager |
| 52 | Norbert Burger | GAA | Programme Manager, Nangarhar |
| 53 | Khairullah Anoush | GIRA | Andkhoy District Administrator, Faryab |
| 54 | Abdul Jabar Mossadeq | GIRA | Argu District Administrator, Badakhshan |
| 55 | Daulat Mohamed | GIRA | Baharak District Administrator, Badakhshan |
| 56 | Itzhak Zai | GIRA | Deputy Governor, Nangarhar |
| 57 | Asiladin Jami | GIRA | Executive Director, Herat Governorate |
| 58 | Gowhar Khan | GIRA | Faizabad District Administrator, Jawzjan |
| 59 | Baz Mohammed Ahmadi | GIRA | Governor, Badakhshan |
| 60 | Hashim Zari | GIRA | Governor, Jawzjan Province |
| 61 | Zabihullah Akhtary | GIRA | Head, Sectoral Services, Balkh Province |
| 62 | Ahmad Haftbala | GIRA | Kohsan District Administrator, Herat |
| 63 | Peter Foerster | GTZ | Team Leader, Project for AL |
| 64 | Shuma Fukumura | JICA | Project Formulation Advisor, Nangarhar |
| 65 | Hiroshi Maeda | JICA | Project Formulation Officer, Balkh Province |
| 66 | Haseeb Kabiri | MCN | AL Database Officer |
| 67 | Mohamed Nabi Hussaini | MCN | Director General, Policy and Coordination |
| 68 | Abdul Wahab Nassimi | MCN | Provincial Relations & Coordination Director |
| 69 | Firiba Majid | MoWA | Director, Balkh Province |
| 70 | Mohamed Nader | MPA-N | Deputy Manager |
| 71 | Abdulwahab Tourabi | MRRD | Manager, Badakhshan WATSIP Project |
| 72 | David Mansfield | n/a | Independent consultant, counter narcotics |
| 73 | Sarob village | opium addicts | Yumgan District, Badakhshan |
| 74 | Jumagol Momand | NABDP | Provincial Project Manager, Badakhshan |
| 75 | Ruin Khanoush | Nejad (NGO) | Medical Director, demand reduction, Faryab |
| 76 | Farid Zaman Safi | Nejad (NGO) | Project Manager, demand reduction, Faryab |
| 77 | Humayun Rahmani | NRAP | Head, Badakhshan |
| 78 | Abdullah Haq Ahmad | NVDA | Deputy Director |
| 79 | Ghulam Gul | NVDA | Factory Director |
| 80 | Ismail Haiderzadeh | PDAIL | Director, Herat |
| 81 | Abdul Rashid Amani | PDAIL | Director, Jawzjan Province |
| 82 | Mohamed Hussin Safi | PDAIL | Director, Nangarhar |
| 83 | Mohamed Nabi Sadri | PDAIL | Director, Sar-e Pul Province |
| 84 | Bashir Ahmed | PDAIL | Head, Research and Extension, Herat |
| 85 | Mahbub Jamili | PDCN | Admin/Finance Officer, Badakhshan |
| 86 | Sayed Qambar Fakeri | PDCN | AL Manager, Badakhshan |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 87 | Mohamed Afzal | PDCN | AL Manager, Herat |
| 88 | Mohamed Naim Safi | PDCN | AL Manager, Nangarhar |
| 89 | Abdul Jamal Hadafmand | PDCN | Director, Badakhshan |
| 90 | Gholam Jailani Daqiq | PDCN | Director, Herat |
| 91 | Mohamed Yakob Mohmand | PDCN | Director, Nangarhar |
| 92 | Mohamed Ajan | PDCN | Finance Officer, Nangarhar |
| 93 | Rahimshah Qarlaq | PRRD | Deputy Head, Badakhshan |
| 94 | Mohamed Yusuf Uraz | PRRD | Director, Jawzjan Province |
| 95 | Ahmad Walid | PRRD | Director, Nangarhar |
| 96 | Mark Miller | UK Embassy | CN Communications Advisor |
| 97 | David Belgrove | UK Embassy | Head of Counter Narcotics Team |
| 98 | Ravshan Bakoev | UNAMA | Civil Affairs Officer, Balkh |
| 99 | Dejan Stepanovic | UNAMA | Governance Officer, Balkh |
| 100 | Mohamed Hakim | UNAMA | National Head of Office, Badakhshan |
| 101 | Seif Kibayasi | UNAMA | Officer-in-Charge, Herat |
| 102 | Marcus Williamson | UNDP | Advisor to IDLG |
| 103 | Hussain Jalili | UNODC | AL Coordinator, Badakhshan |
| 104 | Mohamed Azim | UNODC | AL Coordinator, Balkh |
| 105 | Ahmed Wahid Fayeed | UNODC | AL Coordinator, Herat |
| 106 | Bahram Mohmand | UNODC | AL Coordinator, Nangarhar |
| 107 | Andrew Weir | UNODC | AL International Consultant |
| 108 | Nazir Qayoome | UNODC | AL National Project Coordinator |
| 109 | Ahmad Zubair Farouqi | UNODC | CN National Project Coordinator |
| 110 | Patrick Halewood | UNODC | Counter Narcotics Program Manager |
| 111 | Jean-Luc Lemahieu | UNODC | Country Representative |
| 112 | Elizabeth Bayer | UNODC | Deputy Country Representative |
| 113 | Anthony Oliver | UNODC | Project Coordinator, Border Task Force |
| 114 | Anthony Oliver | UNODC | Project Coordinator, Law Enforcement |
| 115 | Mohamed Alem Yaqubi | UNODC | Provincial Coordinator, Badakhshan |
| 116 | Lutfrahman Lutfi | UNODC | Provincial Coordinator, Balkh |
| 117 | Altaf Hussein Joya | UNODC | Provincial Coordinator, Herat |
| 118 | Mohamed Alam Ghalib | UNODC | Provincial Coordinator, Nangarhar |
| 119 | Jonathan Greenham | USAID | Chief-of-Party, ADP/E |
| 120 | Qazi Azmat Isa | WB | Senior Rural Development Specialist |
| 121 | Sebastian Eckhardt | WB | Task Leader, Civil Service Reform |
| 122 | Hom Chhetri | WFP | Head of Area Office, Balkh |
| 123 | Abdi Farah | WFP | Head of Program |
| 124 | James Feeney | WFP | Head of Sub-Office, Badakhshan |
| 125 | Sven Thealin | WFP | Head of Sub-Office, Herat |
| 126 | Liu Dageng | WFP | Program Officer, Nangarhar |
| 127 | Ahmad Shah Shahi | WFP | Vulnerability Assessment & Mapping Officer |

Appendix C: The PRR vs. the MCP

Since it was common for GIRA personnel to refer to the PRR and MCP in what seemed to the evaluation mission to be an interchangeable manner, it can be concluded that they are confused by the terminology. So as to clarify for future evaluations what these programmes are, they are briefly outlined below.

The PRR is run by the IARSC without any foreign observers, but had WB involvement in its design. It was intended as a measure to reform the civil service and support organizational development in designated sub-units of GIRA (initially the ones declared mission-critical, such as the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy), and to undertake a reorganization of each sub-unit's *tashkil* (staff structure) to align more closely with its functions. Concomitantly, the PRR modernized the Human Resources departments of these sub-units such that precise job descriptions were published, and job-related grades established that had clearly defined pay scales. In principle, this removed sinecures and nepotism from the reformed sub-units, as well as promotion based solely on seniority.

The PRR proved so much in demand that it rapidly grew from selected sub-units to encompass entire Ministries.

In 2007, the PRR was supplanted by a Government-wide “pay and grading” policy through the enactment of the Civil Servants Law. While PRR did not legally exist any longer, it had a delayed demise – up to the end of 2008, new Ministries and Directorates were admitted into the process.

PRR and its replacement are meritocratic in nature, with resultant pay scaled consistently across all GIRA Ministries. Its top pay scale is AFG 35,000 per month (\$700).

The MCP, by contrast, is a World Bank-administered project that can be thought of as essentially a salary augmentation process of three-years duration. MCP is the successor to two other programmes, Lateral Entry and Afghan Expatriate. Both, as well as MCP, aim to place highly qualified individuals in advisory roles or in high Ministerial positions, although an amendment soon to be implemented will add \$5 million to fund 46 technocrat positions for ANDS oversight at the lower Grades 3 and 4. MCP prior to this had a budget of \$30 million for supporting a projected total of 241 positions; to-date, it has released \$10 million of this total for 70 positions, with salaries ranging from \$1500 to \$7000 per month (albeit the average salary is \$2800/month). Positions are at the Director and Director-General levels, i.e., Grades 1 and 2.

While the selection process for MCP is based on criteria that the Ministries themselves develop, the WB has a strong oversight role in that it oversees these criteria, endorses the IARSC's final selection, and clears TORs. The TORs must always include a skills transfer component.

The IARSC procedures for MCP are administered and led by a strong individual, according to the WB, someone who is able to reject political manipulation of these positions. However, according to an MCN insider, the Minister has refused to sign his endorsement of some MCP postings.