



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

**THEMATIC EVALUATION OF
THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO
AFGHANISTAN BY THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME**

**Volume 2
Alternative Livelihoods Programme**

Independent Evaluation Unit

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

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Independent Evaluation Unit
May 2008



United Nations
New York, 2008

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The team would like to thank all who collaborated in the evaluation.

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Summary

This is a thematic evaluation of the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its purpose is to assess the extent to which UNODC has contributed to building the capacity of agencies of the Government of Afghanistan. The findings of the evaluation are based on documents and interviews.

Working in Afghanistan's chaotic environment, with trafficking in narcotic drugs and the activities of the insurgency fuelling each other, is difficult. The role of UNODC alternative livelihoods activities in this environment over the years has been small, considering the large amount of opium poppy being cultivated and the generous financial contributions received from donors. Although activities involving alternative livelihoods fall within international and national policy and strategy frameworks, they remain not very relevant because: (a) they are tied to a weak Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and; (b) the resources of UNODC do not match the broad scope of the activities. Much confusion – among UNODC, donors and the Government – hinders the implementation of the alternative livelihoods concept, which appears not to have been integrated into public planning. In brief, there is no evidence that any of the alternatives involving alternative livelihoods have impacted policy formulation, improved the lives of opium poppy growers or reduced the total area of land under opium poppy cultivation.

Factors limiting the efficiency of the UNODC Alternative Livelihoods Programme include donor dependence and, more importantly, the growing tendency among donors to earmark funds. Those factors have resulted in activities that do not take advantage of UNODC capacities and do not meet country needs; a Sustainable Livelihoods Unit in Vienna that has no substantive role in the way in which the programme is run in Afghanistan; weak coordination among donors and United Nations entities; a programme on alternative livelihoods that has no formal partners; and an approach to alternative livelihoods that does not make the best use possible of the limited resources of UNODC. In other words, in its current form, the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of UNODC is not sustainable.

In Afghanistan, the alternative livelihoods resources of UNODC are dwarfed by those of the other international players. In such a setting and under such conditions, UNODC cannot be unique so long as its work is carried out in the form of projects. If UNODC elects to continue with its Alternative Livelihoods Programme – a basic decision that must be made – it must identify areas that it can leverage in order to be effective. Above all, it should drop its current focus on projects in favour of an approach that takes into account its limitations and that would allow it to influence policies and strategies on alternative livelihoods. The present evaluation report outlines a model that is based on the premise that Afghanistan must be built from the provinces up rather than from Kabul down. Too much activity currently centres on Kabul.

Some basic recommendations flow from the report's conclusions. First, the alternative livelihoods efforts of UNODC must focus on the provinces. Second, UNODC must develop strategic partnerships with competent local entities experienced in rural development. Third, donors should allow UNODC to use resources in a rational manner so as to best meet the needs of the country. Fourth, UNODC should not be involved in delivering construction or equipment or in strengthening institutions; other

donors should do that. Fifth, UNODC should have a say in how the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund is used and should facilitate access to it by provincial governments and other relevant institutions, for, among other things, constructing, equipping and strengthening institutions.

Postscript

The fieldwork for this evaluation was completed on the 24th of August 2007, and hence activities that have been undertaken after that date are not reflected in this report.

The evaluation team however acknowledges that, following the evaluation, a number of initiatives took place.

I. Introduction

1. This is a thematic evaluation of the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), one of the Office's five programmes. The other four programmes are on illicit crop monitoring, law enforcement, the rule of law and drug demand reduction. All are currently under review as part of a country-level programme evaluation. This is the first such evaluation carried out by UNODC of its technical assistance activities.

A. Purpose and scope

2. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which UNODC has contributed to building the capacity of agencies of the Government of Afghanistan. The evaluation presents key findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations. It looks at the sustainability of activities to date and at the strengths and weaknesses of UNODC. In particular, it seeks to identify the comparative advantages of the Office and to suggest future directions based on those advantages.

3. To fulfil that purpose, the evaluation addresses important questions relating to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of activities. It also suggests some lessons learned and identifies best practices. The period under review is from early 2002 to March 2007.

B. Background and executing modality

4. The role of UNODC alternative livelihoods activities has been small over the years considering the large amount of opium poppy being cultivated and the financial contributions received from donors. In the 1990s, UNODC (then the United Nations International Drug Control Programme) had a presence in Peshawar, Pakistan, and managed two projects with alternative livelihoods components: a drug demand reduction effort that was launched in 1989 and an alternative livelihoods pilot project that had begun in 1996 to reduce the amount of opium poppy being cultivated in certain districts of Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces in Afghanistan. A small project that was launched in Nangarhar in mid-2001 was suspended soon after the events of 11 September 2001.¹

5. After the routing of the Taliban, UNODC moved its Afghanistan office from Peshawar to Kabul in early 2002. One of the first international agencies to arrive, it conducted counter-narcotics needs assessments and helped draft the first counter-narcotics strategy. It thus played an important early role in crafting a counter-narcotics framework (more so in some thematic areas than in others) after years of upheaval. But the arrival of large donors in Afghanistan to address what has become a widely-recognized world crisis relegated UNODC to the margins.

¹ The project entitled "Drug control and rural rehabilitation" (AD/AFG/89/580), which was implemented from 1989 to 1996, was followed by the project entitled "Poppy crop reduction" (AFG/97/C28), a pilot project initiated in 1996 that soon ended for want of funding. The events of 11 September 2001 forced the closure of the project entitled "Short-term assistance to sustain the ban on opium poppy cultivation in Nangarhar province" (AFG/F79), which had been launched in July 2001.

6. In early 2004, UNODC initiated another rural development project in Badakhshan, which was implemented by the Aga Khan Development Network.² But it was clear, given the large sums being poured by donors into rural development, that UNODC needed a new role. That is why it initiated two different kinds of projects.³ One kind aimed to advise on policy and how to build the alternative livelihoods capacity of the government, both at the central and provincial levels. The other kind aimed to mainstream counter-narcotics issues in development programmes and ministries. International consulting firms implemented some of the work but much was also done by UNODC staff. Those first two projects have since developed into the small Alternative Livelihoods Programme, which represents 15 per cent (9,775,771 United States dollars) of the ongoing country portfolio of UNODC (\$65,221,337) and about 4 per cent of the annual budget of a major donor (\$220,000,000) for the agricultural sector of Afghanistan alone.

C. Evaluation methodology

7. The raw data that inform the evaluation findings come from two broad sources: a document review and informal interviews with individuals whose positions qualify them to discuss issues relevant for the evaluation. The interviewees include UNODC personnel, officials of the Government of Afghanistan, members of the donor and diplomatic communities, officials from international agencies, representatives of non-governmental organizations working at the community level and farmers. The interviews were an especially important source of information.

8. Before going to Afghanistan, the evaluation team spent one week in Vienna defining evaluation methodology by adapting the terms of reference (see annex I) to the context of alternative livelihoods and interviewing relevant UNODC staff. The team then stayed in Afghanistan for one month, from 24 July to 23 August 2007. The team also received preliminary feedback from staff at the UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan and external stakeholders at a validation workshop held in Kabul at the close of the team's visit. In addition, the alternative livelihoods evaluator visited the provinces of Herat and Nangarhar. In Herat, he spoke with local leaders at a shura (a meeting of community leaders). He also spent one day in London interviewing experts; several more counter-narcotics officials based in London were subsequently interviewed by telephone.

D. The challenge of Afghanistan

9. Afghanistan has been in crisis for at least three decades. Following the events of 11 September 2001, that crisis was brought to the attention of the whole world. The crisis has two key dimensions: narcotic drugs and what the world now calls terrorism. Those two dimensions are related, for they fuel each other. Yet, they are different, as are the threats they pose. Some members of the international community see one as being more of a threat than the other. Moreover, members are at odds over how best to address them and how to address one without undermining efforts to address the other. The

² "Alternative Livelihoods Development in Badakhshan" (AD/AFG/H56).

³ "Alternative Livelihoods Capacity-Building at National and Regional Levels" (AFG/G76) and the project entitled "Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control" (AFG/I87).

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan was established to strike a balance in addressing the two dimensions, in the larger framework of nation-building.

10. Afghanistan is in many ways a unique place. For two centuries, it was a buffer zone between contending international powers rather than a nation State. A precarious social contract between Kabul and the rest of the country held Afghanistan together. In more recent times, years of war (1979-1989) between Soviet occupiers and mujahideen destroyed vital infrastructure, including irrigation works. In a dry, drought-prone country where about 10 per cent of the land is arable, that was a major setback. After defeating the Soviets, the mujahideen then fought each other in a bloody civil war that created havoc in cities and towns. As many as 2,000 rockets per day rained on Kabul, levelling entire neighbourhoods. The chaos and fatigue of war ushered in Taliban rule (1996-2001).

11. That chaos has favoured the opium trade. As researcher David Mansfield put it, opium poppy is a low-risk crop in a high-risk environment. By the 1990s, Afghanistan was the world's chief producer of opium and by 2000 was responsible for 70 per cent of global production.⁴ In 2007, that figure was 93 per cent.⁵ In the meantime, insurgent forces, including elements of the former Taliban, have again formed. They engage the International Security Assistance Force, mostly in the south but also throughout the country, with suicide bombings and guerrilla actions. That, in a country where live ordnance and mines linger, even in Kabul, as a reminder of 25 years of war. It is premature to talk of a post-conflict environment.

12. Donors have rushed to Afghanistan in response to the crisis, bringing with them large bureaucracies to deliver aid that the fledgling Government can neither absorb nor coordinate. They vie for the services of the few trained Afghans in the country and have supplemented public-sector salaries to attract them.⁶ Meanwhile, political decision makers back home, constrained by short-term political horizons, yield to delusions of finding quick solutions to huge problems. Decisions are taken one day and reversed the next, in a mad rush for fixes. In terms of development, such an approach creates confusion and leads to the dissipation of efforts.

13. This is the setting in which the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of UNODC operates. The value of promoting rural development – in an effort to provide alternative or licit livelihoods – in the service of drug control has been recognized. In its annual report for 2005,⁷ the International Narcotics Control Board devoted a full chapter to alternative development and licit livelihoods, noting the “significant contribution” that such development had made to reducing the cultivation of illicit drug crops. Nonetheless, Afghanistan continues to present some thorny challenges, in part because rural development serves both to control illicit drugs and to build the State in what remains a difficult setting.

14. Three decades of war have weakened, if not destroyed, the social contract that once bound people to place. At the same time, the population of Afghanistan has grown.

⁴ William Byrd and Christopher Ward. *Drugs and Development in Afghanistan*. Social Development Paper No. 18, World Bank (December 2004).

⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2007* (October 2007).

⁶ The practice is controversial and was under discussion by donors and Government officials at the time of this evaluation.

⁷ *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XI.2), chap. I.

The war displaced legions of Afghans to nearby countries, including Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan. Many of these people are now returning to Afghanistan, but the country cannot accommodate them economically. In addition, former mujahideen, both fighters and commanders, some of whom are influential and have grievances about the present order, also reside in the villages, where guns are plentiful. Reports from those who work in villages suggest that there is widespread mistrust of government. The corruption of some officials has not helped, nor has it inspired good governance as an aspect of nation-building. One villager asked the evaluator of the present report why farmers should get rid of opium poppy crops when public officials were involved in the illicit drug trade.

15. Since rural development works at the village level, several issues emerge. Foremost is that of security, a major concern among villagers. In that regard, several organizations promoting rural development in villages refuse to carry a counter-narcotics banner. This may be a delicate political issue for donors operating with funds specifically designated to counter narcotics. The first and loudest message that developers should communicate when they begin to work in a village should not be “We are here to get rid of your opium poppy” (in other words, to destroy the livelihood of the villagers) but, rather “We are here to improve your quality of life.” Rural development could be promoted under a counter-narcotics mandate but without the banner. A related issue that has come very much to the fore is the polemical practice of forced opium poppy eradication. Prudence counsels that this be done only among farmers who have resources and, therefore, alternatives, not among farmers whose resources allow no alternatives.

16. Rural Afghanistan is potentially volatile. It should be recalled that Afghans drove out the British in the nineteenth century and the Soviets in the twentieth. There is the risk that Afghans will once more see outsiders as invaders and respond as they have done in the past. The insurgent forces that are currently active or that could become active may be ready to plant this vision and organize a response.

17. The international community should harbour no illusions about Afghanistan. There are no quick fixes, no short-term solutions. The very concept of development is new to many Afghans and nation-building is a long-term process under the best of conditions.

II. Analysis and major findings

A. Relevance

18. The issue of the extent to which the alternative livelihoods activities of UNODC are relevant is addressed on two levels. The first level is that of the relevance of the activities within a larger policy, planning and institutional framework; the second level is that of the capacity of such activities to achieve their intended objectives within that framework. The distinction between the two levels is subtle but important.

19. A framework within which to rebuild Afghanistan began to be constructed in late 2001. The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions,⁸ known as the Bonn Agreement, created an Interim Authority that would start governing on 22 December.

⁸ S/2001/1154.

The signatories to the Bonn Agreement strongly urged that the United Nations, the international community and regional organizations cooperate with the Interim Authority to combat international terrorism, cultivation of and trafficking in illicit drugs and provide Afghan farmers with financial, material and technical resources for alternative crop production.

20. Whereas the Bonn Agreement was a pact among Afghans monitored by the United Nations, the Afghanistan Compact,⁹ which was signed in London on 1 February 2006, was a pact between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community that detailed the commitments of each party and set benchmarks. The issue of counter-narcotics cuts across three interdependent pillars of activity, the third of which is on economic and social development. Agriculture and comprehensive rural development both fall under this pillar. The Compact also mentions achieving a sustained annual reduction in the amount of land under poppy and other drug crop cultivation by the strengthening and diversification of licit livelihoods and other counter-narcotics measures.

21. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy¹⁰ was launched in January 2006 and embodies the objectives of the Compact. The Strategy is built around eight sectors and includes counter-narcotics as a cross-cutting theme. In one of the sectors, entitled “agriculture and rural development”, alternative livelihoods is mentioned specifically: opium poppy cultivation remains a significant contribution to many rural households and that calls for alternative livelihoods programmes that are broad-based and multisectoral.

22. The five-year National Drug Control Strategy, which was also released in January 2006, consists of eight pillars, two of which are entitled “building institutions” and “alternative livelihoods”. Furthermore, the National Drug Control Strategy seeks to strengthen institutions at the central and provincial levels, including the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics. It has been recognized that it is essential for that Strategy to reach the provinces.

23. The strategic programme framework for Afghanistan for the period 2006-2010¹¹ fits with all the above frameworks, as do the alternative livelihoods activities of UNODC in Afghanistan. In that sense, the activities are relevant. But in another sense, a more important one, they are not.

24. First, many in the international community argue that the National Drug Control Strategy is not achieving its intended aims and that the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics is weak and is not performing as intended. Moreover, there seems to be little agreement within the international community as to what to do about the situation. The alternative livelihoods activities of UNODC are part of that larger dilemma and, in that sense, are made less relevant.

25. Second, the Office’s limited technical capacity and scant resources for promoting alternative livelihoods and consequent small impact relative to the magnitude of the challenge of providing or mainstreaming alternative livelihoods mean that the current

⁹ S/2006/90, annex.

¹⁰ S/2006/105, annex.

¹¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Afghanistan: Strategic Programme Framework 2006-2010* (September 2006).

activities are marginal at best. A different approach is needed in order to make better use of the position and resources of UNODC.

B. Effectiveness

26. There is much confusion among donors in Afghanistan and among Government officials with regard to what alternative livelihoods and mainstreaming are about, and little evidence that either concept is being instituted in a way that their primary ideologues and promoters intended. The World Bank has prepared a useful set of mainstreaming guidelines for the projects it funds in Afghanistan (through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development), with instructive examples.¹² However, in the minds of many individuals, both from Afghanistan and other countries, alternative livelihoods refers to a special kind of project, one that is somehow different from rural development as it is conventionally understood. The term “alternative livelihoods” is also often used to refer to a variety of development interventions in areas where opium poppy is grown. This confusion – cited in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy – is widespread, to the point that it is also manifest among UNODC staff, both at headquarters in Vienna and at the Country Office in Afghanistan.

27. A brief clarification of the concepts is in order. The idea is to ensure that interventions are well targeted so that they can address the problem of opium poppy cultivation. In actual fact, few interventions anywhere are well-targeted, not only in Afghanistan, but the drug problem in Afghanistan is particularly severe, as are the consequences.

28. It should be made clear that the term “alternative livelihoods” does not describe a particular kind of project but, rather, that it is an end state in which individuals are engaged in viable, legal livelihoods instead of in growing or processing opium poppy or in trafficking in its derivatives. Alternative development should also be seen as an approach that enables rural development activities to reach that end state.

29. It is important to consider the nature of the communities where rural development is being promoted. In Afghanistan, perhaps more so than elsewhere, such communities tend to be heterogeneous. To be effective as a drug control tool, rural development strategies must recognize this diversity and take it into account when diagnosing problems and guiding interventions. Furthermore, the alternative livelihoods approach views communities holistically, as systems. It can happen, for example, that the main reason farmers grow opium poppy is that they lack access to the credit necessary to grow food crops (growing opium poppy is often the only way to secure loans).¹³ Improved irrigation systems and roads, while arguably meeting local needs, do not address the credit crunch nor do they allow farmers to quit growing opium poppy; in fact, such a focus might even increase opium poppy cultivation.¹⁴ Thus, understanding

¹² World Bank. “Treating the Opium Problem in World Bank Operations in Afghanistan. Guideline Note”. n.d.

¹³ It does not follow, however, that opium poppy cultivation in those cases is unrelated to poverty. The general conclusion that opium poppy cultivation is unrelated to poverty is misleading and is sometimes cited to justify forced eradication, especially by aerial spraying.

¹⁴ Research points to the need to identify the drivers of opium poppy growing. See, for example, “Beyond the Metrics: Understanding the Nature of Change in the Rural Livelihoods of Opium Poppy Growing Households in the 2006/07 Growing Season”. A report for the Afghan Drugs

the dynamic of opium poppy cultivation enables rural development activities to better address drug control issues. This is one aspect of the alternative livelihoods approach.

30. There are other aspects, which typically involve the sequencing of interventions. Addressing the credit crunch in the case cited above might take priority but other interventions – such as improvements in the irrigation infrastructure, roads, agricultural technology or health and education systems – may be required either immediately after or at the same time. Adopting an alternative livelihoods approach would help identify this sequencing in order to fight the illegal trade in narcotic drugs in the context of always improving, not harming, people’s quality of life.

31. Mainstreaming is in one sense organically tied to alternative livelihoods. The interventions involve public (or private) agencies with mandates to act in the several sectors referred to above. Mainstreaming means that those agencies – for example, a ministry of agriculture – must be able to organize or prioritize actions so as to address those geographical areas and communities defined as counter-narcotics targets. Implicit also is the coordination of these agencies, a role that should be played by an authoritative external entity.

32. The cursory description of the alternative livelihoods approach given above is provided to clarify the concept and to emphasize that that is not how UNODC typically understands alternative livelihoods nor is it how alternative livelihoods are generally understood in Afghanistan.

33. There is no evidence that the alternative livelihoods concept, however it is understood, has been integrated into provincial or district development plans, despite the aims of the project entitled “Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control”, (AFG/I87) supported by the project entitled “Alternative Development Capacity-Building at National and Regional Levels” (AFG/G76). The monitoring and evaluation courses given under project AFG/G76, and much of the project’s training in alternative livelihoods, have, as one observer put it, been conducted in a vacuum. The observation does not weigh in on the quality of the training, which would be dealt with in an evaluation of the project and which is irrelevant for the purposes of the present evaluation, but rather emphasizes that the unstable setting prevailing in Afghanistan does not allow for the implementation of such a project.

34. The current efforts being made, under project AFG/I87, to create an alternative livelihoods database raise some questions and merit reflection. First, such an endeavour seems to go against the intended notion of alternative livelihoods, which is not a project but an end state. The database seems to include rural development initiatives carried out throughout the country, with a convenient alternative livelihoods tag attached to them. Alternative livelihoods has become a fashionable term in Afghanistan and donors, including the influential ones, have started attaching the tag to many initiatives.

35. Second, even as a catalogue of rural development projects, it is not clear to what use the database can usefully be put in a counter-narcotics context. What conclusion can be drawn, for example, from the fact that 15 projects have been carried out in a certain area over the past four years? Or that only 5 projects have been carried out in a different area? And does the database capture enough project nuances and parameters to be useful? The evaluator cannot see that useful conclusions could be drawn. The effort

Inter-Departmental Unit of the Government of the United Kingdom (May 2007).

lacks a convincing logic. Furthermore, there are questions regarding who will maintain the database and, therefore, whether it is sustainable.

36. In the framework of project AFG/I87, UNODC is to ensure the building of three provincial offices for the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics (currently, those provincial offices are being leased), the renovation of 29 other offices (in the compounds of governors) and the building and equipping of a training centre in Kabul. The issue is not whether those facilities are needed – they might well be – but whether building them makes the best use of the resources of UNODC. Since it started reorganizing and rethinking its efforts in Afghanistan, the UNODC Country Office seems to have moved away from construction, likely for the best. The strengths and comparative advantages of UNODC lie elsewhere, as discussed below.

37. In the light of the findings of the present evaluation, the evaluator does not consider the prospects of achieving the operational targets outlined in the strategic programme framework for Afghanistan for the period 2006-2010 to be encouraging.

C. Efficiency

38. The fact that UNODC is dependent on donors for its programmes has implications for their efficiency and means that programmes are often donor-driven. Since donor contributions are increasingly earmarked, they must at times be used in a way that is irrational from the standpoint of the needs of the recipient country, the capacity of UNODC or of an otherwise optimal intervention. Project AFG/G76, for example, was revised in February 2007 in part because a donor earmarked funds for a study (already being done by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) to assess the feasibility of establishing two medicinal plants, both of which proved unsuitable to Afghanistan. The effort diverted the energies of project staff and resulted in a loss of valuable time. The Office's inability to decline donor offers and to decide what to do, and where, adversely affects efficiency.

39. As noted above, there is international consensus that the National Drug Control Strategy is not achieving its intended aims and that the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics is weak and not performing as intended. Since the alternative livelihoods activities of UNODC are tightly linked to the Strategy and to its aims, they too have become inefficient.

40. With regard to the field offices, the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit at UNODC headquarters in Vienna has no visible substantive role vis-à-vis the Alternative Livelihoods Programme in Afghanistan. It is unclear what the relationship is on the programmatic side. This matter relates to issues raised in a recent evaluation of UNODC support mechanisms for technical cooperation.¹⁵

41. The organizational structure of the UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan is undergoing changes. Efforts are being made to create two broad units, one to deal with capacity-building issues and the other to deal with criminal justice issues. A corresponding increase in the number of staff members is also foreseen. Further plans include the creation of an analytical unit to work with staff engaged in crop monitoring.

¹⁵ *Evaluation of UNODC Support Mechanisms for Technical Cooperation*. Independent Evaluation Unit, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, March 2007. Available at www.unodc.org.

The UNODC Representative in Afghanistan believes such measures will improve efficiency.

42. The quality of staff currently working on the Alternative Livelihoods Programme, from Afghanistan and other countries, is high. The question is whether the activities being carried out in the framework of the two projects concerned with alternative livelihoods make the best use of UNODC resources in the difficult Afghan setting.

43. The issues of partnering and coordination are complex. A general lack of coordination among donors and other entities is widely recognized as a problem that seriously hinders activities in the country. The sheer speed at which international entities have converged on Afghanistan, coupled with the presence of new and weak national institutions, have presented some formidable challenges. Evidence points to weak coordination among United Nations agencies as well. The Alternative Livelihoods Programme has not partnered with other entities, at least not formally. Coordination has taken the form of efforts to build capacity in public agencies as well as to create and manage monthly meetings of working groups on alternative livelihoods attended by several stakeholders. Given the limitations faced by UNODC, some well-considered partnerships on alternative livelihoods should be established.

III. Impact and sustainability

A. Impact

44. In the provinces, thanks to the diligent work of able national staff members who work well in an environment where informal kinship and ethnic ties are more important than formal institutional networks, UNODC has brought together public and private entities, both national and international, around the issues of alternative livelihoods and drug control, raising the profile of both. Such entities have come together through training events and working groups. The impact has been positive. Direct beneficiaries of these efforts, especially Government employees, have qualified them as helpful and asked for more activities. Nonetheless, there is no evidence to date that either the working groups or the training events have had an impact on policy formulation.

45. UNODC has also opened regional offices in several provinces and enabled the construction and equipment of facilities for the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics (for example, in the framework of project AFG/I87). Again, public officials, especially officials of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, said those efforts had had a positive impact. Indeed, they expressed a wish for more buildings and more equipment. Although there is no question that both are needed, the issue is whether providing buildings and equipment makes the best possible use of UNODC resources, in particular since there is as yet no evidence that doing so has had an impact on policy formulation.

46. The overall impact of the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of UNODC, as seen by donors and other agencies, has been either nil or modest. The relatively small size of the programme may have influenced that view. A small staff and limited budget are inherently limiting. Moreover, the difficult setting, rather than UNODC, might also be partially responsible for the limited impact. All considered, however, it is hard not to conclude that the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of UNODC has low priority for donors.

47. In the two provinces visited, the presence of UNODC in those provinces made sense. Logic alone would suggest the merit of such a presence, given the differences between provinces and the need to tailor programmes accordingly rather than to design and impose uniformity from Kabul. The presence is also needed for effective counter-narcotics monitoring.

48. There is as yet no evidence that the Alternative Livelihoods Programme of UNODC has improved the lives of opium poppy growers or reduced the amount of opium poppy planted.

B. Sustainability

49. The Government of Afghanistan is weak and has leadership problems. Kabul cannot effectively support the provinces. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics cannot supply its provincial offices with fuel for its vehicles, which means that it is unable to work at the district level or below. At the provincial level, Ministry salaries are low. There is little indication that UNODC has made progress with regard to achieving its objectives in the areas of alternative livelihoods, including in mainstreaming, and in strengthening the operational capacity of the Ministry at the provincial level. The Ministry is unable to sustainably assimilate and incorporate the project activities of UNODC.

50. There is little reason to believe that other alternative livelihoods activities (such as the provision of training in monitoring and evaluation and in conducting needs assessments) or their results are sustainable. The turnover of personnel employed in the public sector is high and institutions are unstable. Moreover, there is no mechanism to capture the results of training and carry them forward. The working groups that UNODC set up and for which it acts as secretariat are unlikely to survive without UNODC support. The sustainability of the alternative livelihoods database has already been questioned. In other words, there is no guarantee that the alternative livelihoods activities currently under way will be sustainable under current institutional arrangements, arrangements that are beyond the control of UNODC.

IV. Lessons learned and best practices

51. *Be realistically proactive instead of reactive. Make donors aware instead of responding to their often uninformed notions and proposals.* This lesson applies in general to the UNODC programmes in Afghanistan. With respect to alternative livelihoods, UNODC might help donors understand the size and the complexity of the challenge of arriving at viable alternatives to an opium-based economy. The challenge not only embraces agro-ecological constraints in a dry and drought-prone region, but infrastructural, social (caused, for example, by a weak public sector) and physical constraints. In addition, there are socio-political and cultural constraints, including poor security in a deeply divided society beset with ethnic and regional tensions and a historically tenuous relationship between the centre and the periphery.

52. *Develop a strategy based on careful analysis.* A careful analysis should be made of (a) the Afghan setting and (b) the resources available to UNODC. UNODC has no such strategy for alternative livelihoods activities in Afghanistan. This observation links closely to the following one.

53. *Do not try to do too much and look for feasible niches.* Alternative livelihoods programmes and activities (as well as other types of activities) should be designed to respond to the various needs of the different regions in Afghanistan and to capitalize on the relative strengths of UNODC in a context of scarce resources.

54. *Do not engage in activities without first assessing the institutional capacity of relevant entities to sustain them.* The activities must be designed from the outset with a view to their sustainability. In other words, sustainability should be built in as a component of any given activity.

V. Conclusions

55. The activities of UNODC in Afghanistan fall well within the larger international and national policy and strategy frameworks laid out in the Bonn Agreement, the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Drug Control Strategy. In that sense, the activities are relevant. Yet, they are irrelevant in other ways. First, they are tightly linked to the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and the National Drug Control Strategy, the viability of which many in the international community question. Second, the activities have little impact because UNODC resources are small compared with the challenge of introducing alternative livelihoods activities in Afghanistan. UNODC needs an approach that is better aligned with its own limitations.

56. Alternative livelihoods activities such as providing training and creating working groups have had no discernible impact on policy formulation, although they have raised the profile of alternative livelihoods issues. The same holds true for the involvement of UNODC in the construction, refurbishing and equipping of facilities of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics. Such involvement is not an effective use of the Office's resources, which should instead focus on matters of policy, strategy and monitoring. Moreover, there is no evidence that any of those activities have improved the lives of opium poppy growers or that they have reduced the amount of opium poppy planted. Nor is there any evidence that the alternative livelihoods concept has been integrated into Government planning. A deep lack of understanding – among donors, the Government and UNODC – of the concepts of alternative livelihoods and mainstreaming has hampered the effectiveness of UNODC activities.

57. Several factors have reduced the efficiency of the UNODC Alternative Livelihoods Programme. First, the Office's increasing dependence on donors for funding. Earmarked funds, in particular, compromise rationality and give rise to programmes and activities that do not make the best use of UNODC capacities and do not meet country needs. Second, the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit in Vienna plays no substantive role vis-à-vis its counterpart in Afghanistan. Third, there is all-round weak coordination among donors and other entities, including among United Nations agencies. Fourth, the Alternative Livelihoods Programme has not formally partnered with any other entity. Fifth, the approach to alternative livelihoods adopted by UNODC does not enable the Office to make the best use possible of its limited resources.

58. Sustainability is problematic. The Government is weak and has leadership problems. Kabul cannot effectively support the provinces. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics is unable to take the lead in current UNODC alternative livelihoods activities. There is little reason to believe that other alternative livelihoods activities (such as the

provision of training in monitoring and evaluation and in conducting needs assessments) or their results are sustainable. The working groups that UNODC has set up and maintains will not survive without UNODC involvement.

VI. Recommendations

59. UNODC is in an awkward position in Afghanistan since it operates among multiple international players. As one actor among many, and a small one at that, its profile is low and its quest for leverage more demanding. Thus, UNODC is obliged to search for strategic leverage points in order to play an effective role. It must take hard decisions.

60. It should also be noted that UNODC cannot be unique in Afghanistan so long as its work is carried out in the form of projects, which is how many other actors also work, sometimes with resources and expertise that greatly exceed those of UNODC. That is the case in terms of the alternative livelihoods activities.

Recommendation 1

61. In seeking leverage, UNODC might look for:

- (a) Actions and strategies that have the greatest prospect of quickly achieving a sustained drop in opium production;
- (b) Paths of least resistance for achieving a sustained drop in opium production;
- (c) Niches that allow UNODC to make the most of the neutrality attributed to United Nations entities;
- (d) Niches that reap the greatest benefits in terms of their multiplier effects.

Recommendation 2

62. Lacking a comparative advantage in alternative livelihoods projects in Afghanistan, UNODC must decide whether and how to pursue its alternative livelihoods strategy. This basic decision must be taken. If UNODC elects to continue its involvement in alternative livelihoods beyond the expiration of its current projects, the model prepared by the evaluation team and included in the recommendations might be heuristically useful. Such a model rests on the premise that Afghanistan must be built from the provinces up rather than from Kabul down. Too much activity currently centres on the capital:

- (a) Current efforts to institute alternative livelihoods and to mainstream counter-narcotics approaches should focus on the provincial level and below;
- (b) Since it is unlikely that current training, focused as it is on the directorates of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and on creating and directing alternative livelihoods working groups, will have real impact, attention should be paid to mentoring those working in provincial-level line ministries such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development or even those working in the districts. Such mentoring would necessarily involve non-governmental organizations or other entities with good experience in implementing quality rural development activities in the communities;

(c) It is suggested that UNODC partner with such non-governmental organizations. Mentoring would involve the participation of officials from ministries, specifically from the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, in community-level surveys and in the process of identifying the kind and the sequencing of interventions. By working at the level at which alternative livelihoods and mainstreaming activities are carried out, even if only briefly, officials would learn about what is involved;

(d) UNODC could set up training exercises to prepare interventions in communities. That would provide on-the-ground and on-the-job training. Such exercises could be carried out in different parts of the country and UNODC could help in selecting where to hold the interventions and the training (for example, by using its poppy survey) and whom to invite. Officials from different parts of the country could be taken to the training site. With a little experience, UNODC could even formally package such training in an innovative way.

Alternative livelihoods and mainstreaming: a model for Afghanistan

63. The evaluators who reviewed the environment and the basic framework that is still emerging in Afghanistan believe that the model presented below might help to explain the concepts of “alternative livelihoods” and “mainstreaming” and how these two concepts have impacted operations. Much confusion, inside and outside Afghanistan, surrounds the concepts, not to mention the way in which they should guide operations:

(a) Step 1: identify geographical areas that are most vulnerable to opium poppy cultivation;

(b) Step 2: identify which farmer groups in those areas are most vulnerable, at the district and community levels. Well-designed and well-executed surveys, largely informal, can help identify such groups. Formal surveys with questionnaires are useful for collecting certain information but might be less useful for capturing diversity in heterogeneous communities like most of those in Afghanistan;

(c) Step 3: identify community needs (using community development councils and shuras where they exist or traditional shuras where no community development councils exist);

(d) Step 4: having assessed the needs of the community and of vulnerable farmer groups, identify (in broad terms) which interventions would respond to both sets of needs and suggest the ideal sequencing of interventions when those involve more than one sectoral implementing entity. That requires traditional rural development skills and the ability to adapt those skills to a counter-narcotics agenda. That is what alternative livelihoods – which is an end state, not a type of project – is all about (see steps 2, 3 and 4);

(e) Step 5: communicate those interventions and the sequencing plan to the relevant implementing entities and/or ministries. The interventions should also form part of district and provincial development plans (mainstreaming enters the picture on the operations side);

(f) Step 6: monitor the design and implementation of projects (or programmes) embodying the identified interventions. This process of design and implementation (monitoring and evaluation), should be “participatory” from start to finish – that is, it

should, involve valid local community representatives. Implementation will invariably require adjustments along the way, through a feedback process.

64. It will be noted that the process is demand-driven and must start at the most basic sociological levels. Those levels are: vulnerable communities and the vulnerable farmers within those communities, which are typically heterogeneous with regard to socioeconomic factors. Each step described above (steps 2-6) drives the next step. In that way, the entire process becomes demand-driven.

65. The situation in Afghanistan might pose some special challenges to this demand driven process. A large bureaucracy is now forming in Kabul and there is a general tendency for bureaucracies to work from the top down or from the centre out. That is what seems to be happening in Afghanistan, where the impetus for drug control and nation-building comes from Kabul. The impetus for drug control is largely due to pressure from donors but is maybe reinforced by the notion of a “command economy” and other residual ideas from the Soviet period. Unfortunately, given the power that the country’s regions have historically had in Afghanistan and the strength of social relations (weakened by years of war and human dislocation but still functioning), Afghanistan may be the kind of place where such a centre-based impetus is least viable.

Recommendation 3

66. It would be useful to ask what role UNODC should or could play in the light of this model, given the Office’s resource and other constraints. The model below could serve as a basis for reflection:

(a) UNODC should discard its project bias regarding alternative livelihoods and search for interventions that would allow it to influence policy and strategy;

(b) If UNODC elects to continue its involvement in alternative livelihoods, it should develop strategic partnerships with experienced local entities engaged in rural development (as detailed in the model above). Those might include the Aga Khan Development Network, the Mission d’aide au développement des économies rurales en Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit and the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees, to mention but a few;

(c) Donors should allow UNODC to use resources in a rational manner to meet the needs of the country. Alternative livelihoods contributions from donors should not be earmarked;

(d) UNODC should not be involved in constructing or equipping facilities in the context of alternative livelihoods, nor should the Office be involved in institutional strengthening. Other donors should do that. UNODC should have a say in how the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund is used and facilitate access to the Fund for those activities.

Annex I

List of persons interviewed

Afghanistan

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock

Haidary, Director, Department of Agriculture

Ministry of Counter-Narcotics

Ahmadullah Alizai, Deputy Governor/Director, Directorate of Counter-Narcotics

C. Brett, Alternative Livelihoods Directorate

Daqiq, Director, Directorate of Counter-Narcotics

Ghaws Rasoolzai, Deputy Director, Provincial Relations

Eng. Sami, Deputy Minister, Finance and Administration

Mohammad Zafar, Deputy Minister, Head of Drug Demand Reduction

Ministry of Economy

Gh. Hazrat, Officer-in-Charge, Department of Economy

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development

Hamidullah Yelani, Programme Manager and Deputy Director

Provincial officials

Ghulam Yayaah Ashna, District Officer, Gozara District

Community Development Council (Shura), Mahal Baqwanan, Ghozara District

Other Government entities

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Katrina Aitken, Counter-Narcotics Institutions Adviser, Embassy in Kabul

Damon Bristow, Alternative Livelihoods and Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Sebastian Heath, Eradication Team Leader, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Peter Holland, Chief, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Alice Mann, Livelihoods Adviser, Department for International Development, Embassy in Kabul

David Mansfield, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

United States of America

Timothy Anderson, Alternative Development Program, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Amy Slohr, Public Relations Officer, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Department of State

Loren Owen Stoddard, Director, Alternative Development and Agriculture Office, USAID

Chidi Ugonna, International Advisor, Poppy Elimination Program, Nangarhar

United Nations system

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Mahdi Hussaini, Programme Officer

Johanna Klinge, Relief and Development Officer

Sayed Ghias Sadat, Programme Officer, Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction/Institutional Development Group

Shakti Sinha, Senior Governance Officer

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Vienna

Gautam Babbar, Project Coordinator, Strategic Planning Unit

Doris Buddenberg, Senior Manager, Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (former Representative, UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan)

Sandeep Chawla, Chief, Policy Analysis and Research Branch

Stuart Gilman, Head, Anti-Corruption Unit

Katharina Kayser, Programme Management Officer, Strategic Planning Unit

Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Chief, Europe and West/Central Asia Section

Andrea Mancini, Project Coordinator, Europe and West/Central Asia Section

Jorge Rios, Chief, Sustainable Livelihoods Unit

Saul Takahashi, Drug Control Officer, Convention Evaluation Section, International Narcotics Control Board

Brian Taylor, Chief, Anti-Trafficking Section

Uglješa Zvekić, Chief, Strategic Planning Unit

Afghanistan

Noor Ali, National Project Coordinator

Elisabeth Bayer, Deputy Representative (Officer-in-Charge), former Drug Control and Crime Prevention Officer, Europe and West/Central Asia Section, Vienna

Mohammad Alam Ghaleb, Provincial Coordinator

Patrick Halewood, International Project Coordinator

Bahram Momand, Provincial Alternative Livelihoods Coordinator

Ajmal Noorzai, National Project Coordinator, Alternative Livelihoods

Christina Oguz, Representative

Shirish Ravan, International Project Coordinator, Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme

Alexandre Schmidt, Officer-in-Charge, UNODC Regional Office for the Russian Federation and Belarus (former Deputy Representative, UNODC Country Office in Afghanistan)

Sayed Afzal Sherzad, National Project Coordinator

Stephane Sourdin, International Project Coordinator, Alternative Livelihoods

Temur Shah Sultani, National Project Coordinator

Ahmad Zubair, National Project Coordinator

United Nations Development Programme

Anita Nirody, Country Director

Guadalupe Sanchez-Freymond, Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund Manager

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Nabi Gul “Shahid Zoi”, Regional Coordination Officer/National Seed Coordination Officer

World Bank

Susanne Holste, Senior Transport Specialist, Social and Sustainable Development Sector

Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

Adam Smith International

Paul Donnelly, Provincial Adviser

Richard Will, Team Leader, Support to Counter-Narcotics Institutions

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

Paul Fishstein, Director

Alan Roe, Senior Research Manager (Natural Resources Management)

Aga Khan Foundation

Henri Sutter, Rural Development Programme Coordinator

Joanne Trotter, Head of External Relations and Grants

Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees

Mohammad Hashim Aslami, Assistant Section Head, Rural Development Programme (RDP)

Mohammad Shah Rauf, RDP Section Head

European Commission

Michael Alexander, Security Sector Reform, Delegation of the European Commission to Afghanistan

German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Peter H. Foerster, Director, Small and Medium Enterprise and Alternative Livelihoods Unit

Wafi Walim, Deputy Strategy Adviser, Project for Alternative Livelihoods in Eastern Afghanistan

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas

S. Javed H. Rizvi, Assistant Country Manager and Senior Communications Specialist

Mission d'aide au développement des économies rurales en Afghanistan (MADERA)

Abdul Rahman Satarzai, Deputy Operations Director, Eastern Zone

Abdul Wali, Microfinance Specialist

Others

Mark Birnbaum, Deputy Chief of Party, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Juan Estrada, Deputy Chief of Party/Senior Agribusiness Adviser, Alternative Livelihoods Programme, Eastern Region, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Peter Middlebrook, Consultant, Middlebrook and Miller Consulting

Sharon Miller, Consultant, Middlebrook and Miller Consulting

Mokhlis, Mullah and University Rector

Annex II

Terms of reference

Thematic evaluation of the technical assistance provided to Afghanistan by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

I. Background

1. UNODC has been actively supporting the Government of Afghanistan since the inception of the transitional State of Afghanistan in December 2001. It has been working in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations agencies and donors and has been expanding its secretarial role for the relevant ministries (Counter Narcotics, Interior, Justice, Reconstruction and Rural Development, and Public Health).

2. The London Conference adopted the “Afghanistan Compact: Building on Success”,^a which outlines the priorities and goals for Afghanistan over the next five-year period (2006-2010) mutually agreed between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan. UNODC has developed a Strategic Programme Framework^b which aims at supporting the Afghanistan Compact. The Strategic Programme Framework equally fits within the National Drug Control Strategy,^c highlighting four national priorities for the three years (2006-2009). The first is to target the trafficker at the top end of the trade; the second is to strengthen and diversify legal rural livelihoods; the third is to reduce the demand for illicit drugs and improve the treatment of problem drug users; and the final objective is to develop state institutions at the central and the provincial levels vital to the delivery of the narcotics control strategy.

3. Over the years UNODC has provided technical assistance and advice to the Government of Afghanistan through support under country or global projects in five thematic areas or programmes.^d

Anti-trafficking: UNODC builds capacity of the criminal justice system, strengthening counter-narcotics law enforcement, limiting availability of chemicals used in illicit manufacturing of heroin and strengthening border control and cross-border cooperation. The total value of the ongoing and pipeline project is about \$23 million.

Global challenges: UNODC builds capacity of national and provincial governments, empowers communities for drug demand reduction and promotes alternative livelihoods for drug control. Presently, assistance is provided through supporting seven ongoing and pipeline projects for a total value of about \$16 million.

Rule of law: UNODC promotes stable and viable criminal justice systems and combats the growing threats of transnational organized crime, corruption and trafficking in human

^a Afghanistan Compact, launched at the London Conference on Afghanistan held on 31 January and 1 February 2006 (S/2006/90, annex), available at http://www.unama-afg.org/news/_londonConf/_docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf.

^b United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan: Strategic Programme Framework 2006-2010 (September 2006).

^c National Drug Control Strategy, an updated five-year policy for tackling the illicit drug problem (Kabul, January 2006).

^d United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Programme in Afghanistan (February 2007).

beings. Presently there are eight ongoing and pipeline projects with a total value of about \$24 million.

Terrorism prevention: The Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC has been mandated by the General Assembly to provide counter-terrorism technical assistance to requesting Member States. In accordance with this mandate, a Global Project was launched with the main objective being to “support Member States in achieving a functional universal legal regime against terrorism in accordance with the principles of the rule of law”. The main activities are the provision of legal advisory services, training of criminal justice officials and assistance for the strengthening of institutional structures and mechanisms in Member States.

Core programme: research and advocacy: In order to promote the development and maintenance of a global network of illicit crop monitoring systems in the context of the crop elimination objective of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together, UNODC has been providing overall coordination and direct technical support and supervision to the annual illicit crop surveys at the country level. Since 2000, the Government of Afghanistan, with the technical support of UNODC, has carried out an annual opium survey and has also carried out a number of rapid assessments. Along with illicit crop monitoring, other research and advocacy initiatives are also major inputs to building the capacity of the Government.

II. Purpose of the evaluation

4. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess how UNODC’s development cooperation has built the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan in the main areas of UNODC interventions, namely research and analysis, law enforcement, rule of law, terrorism prevention, alternative livelihood and drug demand reduction. The evaluation will draw lessons learned and recommend improvements. At the same time, the evaluation will address the issue of what is the net value added of UNODC’s work and its strategic positioning. The evaluation will:

- (a) Provide an assessment of the results achieved through UNODC’s support (project and non-project activities) and in partnership with other key development actors;
- (b) Provide an analysis of how UNODC has positioned itself strategically to add value in response to national needs and changes in the UNODC thematic areas;
- (c) Provide an assessment of design, coherence and focus of the country programme;
- (d) Provide an analysis of to what extent activities and results are sustainable at their respective levels (communities, intermediate or higher level institutions) and connected to local, regional and national capacities or other forms of external support;
- (e) Provide accountability to the UNODC management, Member States and donors;
- (f) Based on the analyses of achievements and positioning above, present key findings, draw lessons and provide clear and forward-looking recommendations in order to suggest effective and realistic strategies by UNODC and partners towards intended results.

5. The present evaluation is conducted as part of the 2007 work plan of the Independent Evaluation Unit under in-depth thematic evaluations of UNODC. The Unit will work closely with the Europe and West/Central Asia Section, the Anti-Trafficking Section, the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit, the Global Challenges Section, the Rule of Law Section and the Research Analysis and Scientific Support Unit in Vienna and the Afghanistan Country Office during all phases of the exercise.

III. Scope of the evaluation

6. The evaluation will undertake a comprehensive review of the UNODC Afghanistan Country Office programme portfolio and activities from 2001 until March 2007.

7. The evaluation will measure effects and impacts of the country programme, examine UNODC support to the Government of Afghanistan, assess programme performances and draw lessons and best practices. In addition, the evaluation will concentrate on whether and how UNODC support played a role in developing national capacity, enhancing national ownership, advocating and fostering an enabling policy environment and fostering partnership and coordination throughout the evaluation process.

8. For the purpose of this evaluation, UNODC activities will be grouped into the following categories:

- (a) Positioning of UNODC, policy and overall framework;
- (b) Research and analysis (illicit crop monitoring);
- (c) Law enforcement;
- (d) Rule of law, including terrorism prevention;
- (e) Alternative livelihood development;
- (f) Drug demand reduction.

9. The evaluation will answer the key questions outlined below in its final report. These questions remain generic, but are consistent with standard approaches to programme evaluation. There should be an element of flexibility, as the evaluation progresses, to adjust the evaluation's focus in response to changing circumstances.

10. The consultants selected to prepare the evaluation will be required to develop the specific evaluation questions in the areas mentioned above, based on the following generic questions.

11. The list of key questions follows the evaluation criteria of UNODC.

IV. Key evaluation questions

A. Relevance

Has UNODC assistance been relevant to the needs and demands of Afghanistan to fight the production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs, to monitor and report on production of illicit crops, to prevent terrorism and to strengthen the rule of law on its territory?

(a) Are objectives of programmes and projects aligned with the current policy priorities and action plans of the Government of Afghanistan, UNODC's mandates and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and other policy and development frameworks?

(b) Are designs of programmes and projects technically sound? Are the programme and project objectives clear, realistic and coherent in terms of collectively contributing to the achievements of the Strategic Programme Framework, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and other strategic instruments?

(c) Are response activities and implementation strategies appropriate for meeting stated objectives, with a focus on assessing programme and project elements directly related to capacity-building, coordination and subcontractor performance?

(d) Are UNODC assistance activities responsive to the country's needs? How well do the programme and project objectives reflect the specific nature of the problem and needs of the Government of Afghanistan?

(e) Does the Government at the national and local levels take the lead in developing and implementing frameworks and strategies within UNODC's mandated issues?

B. Effectiveness

Is UNODC's approach and assistance effective in enabling the Government of Afghanistan to fight the illicit drug menace, to establish rule of law and to monitor and report on production of illicit crops?

(a) To what extent has the UNODC country programme contributed to the achievement of the Afghanistan Compact, the Strategic Programme Framework and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy? What are the reasons for the achievement and non-achievement of objectives?

(b) How is institutional capacity development at the national and subnational levels promoted so as to guarantee rights and provide services, including through strategy development, policy formulation and application, and data collection, analysis and utilization?

(c) To what extent have key skills (e.g. policy formulation, strategic or programme planning, management, analysis, knowledge management, etc.) and specific skills in thematic areas been enhanced?

(d) Have leadership skills been enhanced at the institutional and individual levels in order to drive integrated national (e.g. Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Strategic Programme Framework etc.) and subnational level agendas?

(e) Has there been any improvement in programming in terms of designing, addressing the country problem and producing results over the period under evaluation?

(f) Did integration (intra- and inter-thematic areas) take place while implementing different project activities?

(g) How are internal UNODC factors and constraints affecting effectiveness, including human resources, logistic support and the predictability and regularity of resources and flexibility of the budget?

(h) How are external factors (such as limited access to intervention sites, human resource constraints and the security situation etc.) having an impact on effectiveness?

(i) To what extent did policy and research support and influence the policy framework and intellectual approaches to elimination of illicit drug production and supply, and enhance Government capacity to formulate strategies and monitor drug production and supply?

(j) Is the illicit crop monitoring survey methodology technically sound and does it provide accurate and timely information to the Government and other Member States?

(k) Has UNODC developed the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan and institutions to undertake crop-monitoring surveys on their own?

C. Efficiency

How efficient has the implementation of the UNODC programme and projects been?

(a) Were alternative less costly intervention modalities considered in designing projects? Do they exist?

(b) Are there less costly methods which could achieve the same outcome or impact at the beneficiary level?

(c) To what extent has a transparent operating environment and accountability of Government been established?

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

(e) Is there effective coordination among the Government, UNODC and other implementing partners?

(f) Is the country human resource structure appropriate and efficient?

(g) Assess quality, timeliness, effectiveness and sustainability of management arrangements, technical inputs and assistance;

(h) Has adequate and appropriate backstopping support been provided by field and headquarters staff (administrative and managerial support and coordination)? Have partner institutions fully and effectively discharged their responsibilities?

(i) What are the potential challenges that may prevent the operations from producing intended results?

(j) How does illicit crop monitoring assistance enable the Government of Afghanistan to develop its capacity to monitor and report on production of opium poppy?

D. Outcome and impact

What impact has UNODC assistance created in Afghanistan?

- (a) What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects of interventions on people, institutions and the physical environment?
- (b) Do the beneficiaries and other stakeholders affected by the intervention perceive the effect of the interventions on themselves?
- (c) What are the perceptions of the different stakeholders, especially the Government of Afghanistan, implementing partners, other United Nations organizations and bilateral and multilateral donors, about the overall impact of UNODC's response activities?

E. Sustainability

Are UNODC efforts in Afghanistan sustainable?

- (a) Does the national Government take the lead in developing and implementing frameworks and strategies for eradicating illicit drug production, trafficking in and consumption of illicit drugs, monitoring and reporting on production of illicit crops and strengthening the rule of law on its territory?
- (b) Are the UNODC supported policies and strategic issues integrated into the key national development documents?
- (c) What are the specific legal, policy and regulatory changes that incorporate issues of UNODC thematic areas?
- (d) Do the project interventions have a potential for scaling up or replication?
- (e) To what extent have the findings and recommendations from past project evaluations been followed up and implemented to address some of the challenges already identified?
- (f) How has UNODC ensured that benefits from its assistance continue after UNODC assistance stops?
- (g) How was sustainability built into the programme and projects?

F. Lessons learned and best practices

Are there any lessons from UNODC involvement in Afghanistan?

- (a) Identify key lessons in the thematic areas of focus and lessons on positioning that can provide a useful basis for strengthening UNODC support to the country and for improving programme and project performances, results and effectiveness in the future;
- (b) Through in-depth thematic assessment, present good practices (highlighting features to be considered as good practice) at the country level for learning and replication;
- (c) Draw lessons from unintended results where possible.

V. Evaluation methodology

12. The evaluation will take into consideration commonly agreed international evaluation norms and standards, including “Guiding principles for evaluation at UNODC”, “Standards of evaluation in the United Nations system”, “Norms for evaluation in the United Nations system” etc.

13. These evaluation terms of reference provide an overarching framework for the Afghanistan Country Technical Assistance evaluation, covering all UNODC areas of intervention in the country.

14. The Team Leader and team members of the evaluation are expected to assess the terms of reference and develop an evaluation framework with instruments to be discussed and agreed on by UNODC’s Independent Evaluation Unit. The evaluation framework should be flexible enough to accommodate any adjustment necessary due to the volatile political and security situation of Afghanistan and produce the best possible output.

15. The suggested key methods for the conduct of the evaluation will be, but should not be limited to, the following:

(a) A historical and contextual review of each of the thematic areas, e.g. the problem of illicit drugs in Afghanistan, as well as a review of any current special conditions in Afghanistan that require allowances to be made;

(b) A comprehensive desk review of external and internal policy, programme and project documents (including evaluation reports) relevant to UNODC assistance to Afghanistan. This will include a review of official documents, budgets, reports, websites and publications that deal with UNODC assistance to Afghanistan;

(c) Review the country programme and project planning, implementation and monitoring mechanisms;

(d) An extensive round of interviews and focus group discussions with the key stakeholders (Government, donors, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), United Nations organizations etc.) at both national and subnational levels and UNODC staff at headquarters and in the Afghanistan Country Office;

(e) Interviews of former representatives and former employees of UNODC (where possible) who can provide insights about some of the early challenges;

(f) Field visits to the selected project sites to gain first-hand information of the benefits received due to UNODC interventions;

(g) A survey among staff members of the UNODC Afghanistan Country Office involved in project implementation and project support.

16. The evaluation will be a participatory process that will give due importance to self-assessment by stakeholders involved in programme design and implementation. All information will, to the largest possible extent, be triangulated (use of three or more sources of information to verify and substantiate an assessment) and validated. Findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned should be clearly action-oriented and feed into major decision-making for future strategy and programme development.

17. The suggested selection criteria for field visits (one or more of the following criteria) are:

- (a) The maturity of the programme, project or intervention within the country programme;
- (b) The wealth of experience and the chances of generating interesting lessons;
- (c) Strategic interest of the programme, project or intervention;
- (d) Significant UNODC contribution, both financial and human resources.

VI. Evaluation team

18. The evaluation will be carried out by a technical team of six international consultants and an Evaluation Officer of the Independent Evaluation Unit.

19. One of the consultants, who has demonstrated experience in development evaluation, the United Nations system and the specific area of alternative development, will be the Team Leader.

20. The five other consultants will be specialized in relation to specific thematic areas (one on law enforcement and prevention of drug trafficking, one on the rule of law, one on drug demand reduction and two on illicit crop monitoring).

A. Responsibilities and qualifications of the Team Leader

21. The key responsibilities of the Team Leader include:

- (a) Developing the evaluation framework with detailed methods, tools and techniques;
- (b) Leading the evaluation process;
- (c) Assigning responsibilities to team members;
- (d) Ensuring adherence to the terms of reference and writing and disseminating reports;
- (e) In addition, the Team Leader is responsible for evaluation of cross-cutting issues, such as alignment of the country programme with national, United Nations Development Assistance Framework and UNODC strategies, partnerships etc.

22. The qualifications required of the Team Leader are as follows:

- (a) Preferably an advanced university degree in social science or other relevant discipline, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, social statistics, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis;
- (b) Design and management of evaluation processes, including evaluation processes involving multiple stakeholders and post-conflict situations;
- (c) Policy planning and policy analysis;
- (d) Social science research in alternative development;
- (e) Previous work, research and evaluation experience in Afghanistan (desirable);
- (f) Knowledge of the United Nations or international development organizations (preferable);

- (g) Understanding of gender considerations;
- (h) Fluency in English and excellent writing skills.

B. Responsibilities and qualifications of the consultants

23. The key responsibilities of the team members are to:
- (a) Support the evaluation Team Leader in developing evaluation methods and tools;
 - (b) Conduct evaluation of policy, strategy and interventions in their specific thematic area;
 - (c) Write the thematic area report and perform any other tasks given by the Team Leader.
24. The qualifications required of the team members are as follows:
- (a) Preferably have an advanced university degree specific to the thematic area under evaluation or other relevant discipline. Specialized training in areas such as evaluation; quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis would be an asset;
 - (b) Must have experience in planning, programme management and evaluation of projects, programmes and policy in the broader rule of law sphere, including criminal justice systems;
 - (c) Previous work, research and evaluation experience in Afghanistan (desirable);
 - (d) Knowledge of the United Nations or international development organizations (desirable);
 - (e) Understanding of gender considerations;
 - (f) Fluency in English and excellent writing skills.
25. The Evaluation Officers of the Independent Evaluation Unit will work as full members of the team and will bring to the team knowledge of country programme evaluation methodology and knowledge of UNODC operations and its thematic areas.

VII. Management arrangements and deliverables

26. The Independent Evaluation Unit will manage the evaluation and ensure coordination and liaison with the relevant regional desk at headquarters. The Independent Evaluation Unit Task Manager, in consultation with the Chief of the Unit, will lead the process, in close consultation with the regional desk and the country management team (Representative and Evaluation Focal Person). The Chief of the Independent Evaluation Unit and the Task Manager will also ensure substantive supervision of all members of the evaluation team and determine the team composition.
27. The UNODC Country Office will play a lead role in dialogue and interaction with stakeholders on the findings and recommendations, support the evaluation team in liaison with the key partners and discussions with the team, and make available to the team all relevant material. The country office will provide support for logistics and planning.

28. The Independent Evaluation Unit will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the evaluation. These will include costs related to participation of the evaluation consultants and the staff members of the Unit and to any stakeholder workshops during the evaluation mission.

A. Key deliverables

29. The evaluation team is expected to deliver key outputs shown in the table below.

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
An inception report containing an assessment of the terms of reference and a description of the final evaluation methodology and instruments	The Team Leader will be in charge of drafting the report, with inputs from the other four team members on their specific thematic area.
Draft reports of thematic evaluations	Each of the five team members will prepare a report covering his specific thematic area.
Final reports of thematic evaluations	Each of the five team members will prepare a report covering his specific thematic area.
Draft country assistance evaluation report	The Team Leader will be in charge of drafting the report, with inputs from the other four team members on their specific thematic area.
Final country assistance evaluation report	The Team Leader will be in charge of drafting the report, with inputs from the other four team members on their specific thematic area.

30. The evaluation team members will hold a feedback session and present the initial findings in a workshop format to the country management team after completion of the field mission in Afghanistan. The evaluation Task Manager and the Chief of the Independent Evaluation Unit will attend and participate in the presentation and feedback workshop.

31. Once the Team Leader submits the first draft evaluation report, the report will be examined by the Independent Evaluation Unit for quality and fulfilment of the terms of reference.

32. The Independent Evaluation Unit will organize a dissemination session to present the draft report at UNODC headquarters and to the Afghanistan Country Office and stakeholders for feedback, comments and any correction of potential errors or omissions.

33. The Team Leader will receive the comments of the Independent Evaluation Unit and UNODC programme staff and stakeholders and, subject to agreement with the comments made, will adjust the report accordingly and send the final report to the Independent Evaluation Unit.

B. Timetable and key milestones

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
March-May 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circulation of the draft terms of reference to the relevant headquarters desk and Country Office for comments
May-July 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalization of terms of reference• Recruitment of consultants• Briefing on Afghanistan country programme at headquarters• Assessment of terms of reference and development of evaluation methodology, with appropriate instruments
July-November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent review by the evaluation team (headquarters and country mission)• Team Leader travels to London to meet the peer reviewer
November-December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission of draft report by the evaluation team• Briefing on draft evaluation findings and recommendations• Circulation of draft report for feedback
February 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission of final report

C. Payment

34. The consultants will be issued a consultancy contract and paid in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures.

35. A lump sum payment will be made in three instalments:

(a) First payment will be made upon signing the contract (travel expenses and 75 per cent of daily subsistence allowance);

(b) Second payment (50 per cent of the consultancy fee and 25 per cent of daily subsistence allowance) will be made upon receipt of the draft report by the Independent Evaluation Unit;

(c) The third and final payment (50 per cent, i.e. remaining, fee) will be made only after completion of the respective tasks and receipt of the final report and its clearance by the Independent Evaluation Unit.



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