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Independent Project Evaluation of the
Health and Livelihoods Cluster

**AFG/I87 Strengthening Provincial Capacity for
Drug Control Project**

Afghanistan

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This publication has not been formally edited.

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Note – This evaluation report is part of a wider cluster exercise also covering law enforcement and criminal justice projects in Afghanistan. Those two cluster reports as well as the overarching summary cluster report are available separately at:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/independent-project-evaluations-2013.html>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

UNODC's work in health and alternative livelihoods in Afghanistan addresses important problems in the country by means of its Strategic Framework. The projects in this Cluster are implemented in locations with sometimes great difficulties, from prisons to poppy cultivating areas. The latter are often in the most remote areas of Afghanistan with poor infrastructure and sometimes hostile inhabitants.

UNODC's COAFG runs projects in this Cluster to advocate the problem of drug use and production with the Government of Afghanistan so as to mobilize recognition of the problems in this regard. Overcoming drug and crime problems requires a multi-sectoral approach involving law enforcement, alternative livelihoods, and demand reduction. Projects in this Cluster work in two of these sectors while, at the same time, relying on activities in the law enforcement sector to make certain areas safe enough to work in and to encourage the Government's resolve to deal effectively with drug problems.

The Projects

This evaluation was tasked only with assessing one project in this Cluster (AFG/I87 – Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control Project). Other projects deal with demand reduction and are out of the scope of this evaluation exercise. As a part of COAFG's advocacy initiative to raise the importance accorded to drug control, I87 primarily was designed to increase the capacity of the MCN while, at the same time although to a lesser degree, introduce alternative livelihood projects at the local level. Much of the focus on alternative livelihoods occurred after a critical midterm evaluation of I87 in 2010 that led to important changes in its focus and implementation. The total approved budget was US\$17.6 million. The donors were Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Political Will

UNODC has managed, including through this project, to strengthen the political will of the Government of Afghanistan regarding the need to deal with drug problems. At the same time, UNODC has gained the cooperation of much of the international community in supporting counter narcotics issues. Through this, the project in this Cluster has been funded to a level by which it was able to function satisfactorily and satisfy the Evaluation Team that objectives were substantially achieved.

UNODC Processes

The role of UNODC Headquarters in providing support to the projects administered in Afghanistan was determined through a desk review and in-depth discussion with COAFG staff as

well as access to an IDM report regarding many of these issues. These served to give the Evaluation Team a satisfactory understanding of the processes involved.

From the point of view of the project staff for this Cluster, there are too many delays, too much red tape, and too lengthy processes in recruitment, grants, and procurement to facilitate effective project implementation. From the point of view of Headquarters, they are following Secretariat procedures which may be less appropriate in field operations than of a specialized agency, such as UNDP.

What is necessary is a cooperative resolve to bring these two visions of UNODC together so that counter narcotics work in Afghanistan can grow. This support is necessary to support the growth of political will in the country and also to encourage Afghanistan to allocate more resources to addressing drug-related problems.

Conclusion

The I87 Project, which was evaluated in this cluster in detail, has been implemented satisfactorily. It has made significant contributions to Afghanistan CN programme. Despite the difficult security environment in which they were implemented, UNODC's Strategic Framework Programme, they have broadly met expectations by increasing the number of seizures, prosecutions and convictions of narcotics traffickers.

UNODC, in its work in this Cluster, has introduced methodologies in reducing poppy cultivation pioneered through its work in Southeast Asia. UNODC has also introduced more profound and comprehensive (and gender balanced) drug treatment programmes that are new to Afghanistan (although these are beyond the scope of the Regional Programme). UNODC has strengthened MCN to where it is much better able to function on its own.

There is much more that UNODC can do and much more work in Counter Narcotics before both use and cultivation decline significantly. However, UNODC as an agency has the institutional knowledge of how to carry out this work based on its experience in other countries. In particular, UNODC can use its experience in building up local-level capacity to managing alternatives to poppy cultivation as well as to control drug use. This will contribute effectively to the sustainability of drug control in Afghanistan.

The following matrix highlights the key evidence-based findings and the subsequent recommendations deduced in this cluster evaluation.

SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings:¹ problems and issues identified	Evidence (sources that substantiate findings)	Recommendations²
Critical		
Genuine mainstreaming is a policy priority for COAFG, but COAFG has not devised a comprehensive strategy towards addressing poverty and crime.	Interviews with MCN officials and documentation review.	COAFG should conduct more research into the causes of poppy growing, including its links to poverty and crime and build this into its 'genuine mainstreaming' strategy.
There is a lack of recognition in Afghanistan that UNODC, as an agency, is well-suited for alternative livelihoods work implementation.	Documentation review, discussions with representatives of other international agencies.	COAFG needs to publicize UNODC's successful AL work elsewhere in Asia and promote the idea that this approach can be implemented in Afghanistan either by UNODC or other agencies.
Actions should be taken if the research on the causes of poppy growing shows that poverty and food insecurity (and not criminal activity) are significant causes.	Documentary review, interviews with key staff and MCN.	COAFG should work with MCN to devise a national Anti-Poverty Plan specific to opium poppy control focussing on areas where poverty and food insecurity are the key causes.
COAFG has little authority in recruitment, grants, and procurement for activities to meet their indicators.	Talks with donors, review of documents, including IDM 2013 report on mission to Afghanistan.	Since the IDM report demonstrates UNODC's determination to be an implementing agency, Headquarters and COAFG need to cooperatively devise means whereby project objectives can be achieved

¹ A finding uses evidence from data collection to allow for a factual statement.

² Recommendations are proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a project/programme; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. For accuracy and credibility, recommendations should be the logical implications of the findings and conclusions.

		effectively while adhering to UNODC's mandate and regulations.
Important		
National staff in Kabul and in project areas hold low level fiscal authority, which means financial decisions of any consequence must be referred to the Country Office which itself may often have to then refer to Vienna.	Discussions with COAFG international and national staff, documentation review, and talks with donors.	COAFG should make it a matter of policy to train key staff, promote learning by doing, and using local staff in increasingly responsible positions. COAFG should draw up, in a collaborative process with key involvement of key local staff, a monitoring methodology starting with AL work in the provinces for which proven approaches have already been managed by UNODC in other countries.
Awareness of UNODC's work in developing alternative livelihoods successfully elsewhere in Asia its replicability and implementation in Afghanistan either by UNODC or other agencies is not high.	Documentary review, personal experience of two Evaluators with UNODC work experience in AL in Lao PDR & Myanmar.	COAFG works with MCN to expand AL work in Afghanistan both by UNODC and with other development agencies. This should start with one or two medium-level projects to demonstrate effectiveness and sustainability.
COAFG's mainstreaming efforts with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) to build links to DDR in alternative livelihood activities are not sufficiently advanced.	Documentary review of DDR work in AL in Southeast Asia and discussions with key UNODC staff.	COAFG should expand projects that combine AL and DDR objectives (with such components as vocational training).
COAFG's mainstreaming efforts with the MCN and other relevant government agencies to both explore the link between poverty, poor health (including HIV) and with opium poppy cultivation, are not sufficiently advanced. Drug production have close link with poverty but in	Documentary review of reports linking poverty, poor health, and poppy cultivation.	COAFG should commission a study of how applicable this finding is to Afghanistan. If the links are verified, new projects and mainstreaming should be designed to address this issue.

<p>Afghanistan fortunately HIV cases are very rare so people not consider it is a big issue in the country</p>		
<p>Important</p>		
<p>COAFG's alternative livelihoods activities implemented in villages have worked well on the limited pilot scale so far attempted. They have reduced poppy-growing in a cost-effective manner, and are well-accepted by villagers.</p>	<p>Interviews with MCN officials, villagers and local government officials in areas with AL work and documentation review.</p>	<p>COAFG should work with MCN to devise national AL plan with clear goals for expansion of work by UNODC and other agencies throughout the country.</p>
<p>Donors do not have a satisfactory understanding of project challenges and the rationale for certain courses of action. This had led to problems such as donors making demands on the projects that are impossible to carry out or not providing support when it would be entirely justified.</p>	<p>Talks with donors, review of documents, including IDM 2013 report on mission to Afghanistan.</p>	<p>To respond to donor comments, COAFG needs to make a stronger effort to treat donors similar to co-implementers and keep them more aware of project operations, challenges, and the advisability of revisions.</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

The combining of health and livelihoods into a programmatic structure is mandated by UNODC Headquarters. Discussions with members of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) indicated that several key members of the Afghan Government did not directly perceive any linkage to the needs of Afghan society.

Activities under this Sub-Programme address drug addiction as well as provide HIV/AIDS education among injecting drug users (among whom the infection remains relatively low). Approximately 8 per cent of the Afghan population between 15 and 64 use drugs, a sizeable number of which is female. There are estimated to be over 120,000 heroin users in the country (among the highest rates of usage in the world). Drug dependence treatment and relapse prevention is provided through action teams in different provinces and also through outreach activities to publicize the effects of the use of opiates.

In addition, UNODC promotes the identification and development of alternative livelihoods based on opium poppy cultivation so as to promote a better quality of life. UNODC works with the MCN in coordinating the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) through research and information-sharing. In addition, UNODC has made use of its experience in Southeast Asia to introduce gender-sensitive approaches to making a living that, over time, can be developed into viable alternative livelihoods.

AFG/I87 –Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control Project

Duration: 7 years 2006-2013

Provinces: Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Kunduz.

Donors: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Funding: Total received and approved budget US\$17.6 million, of which US\$16.3 million was disbursed by September, 2012 (as a part of increasing the visibility of UNODC to do AL work, UNODC should indicate how much of this is used directly with the target population, how much for MCN, and how much for support costs).

The Overall Project Objective is to support and enhance provincial (MCN) capacity. The main activities aim to create effective institutional structures for drug control and provide technical expertise on the National Drug Control Strategy implementation process in cooperation with relevant stakeholders including government line departments and international organizations (running their own development programmes such as the World Bank's National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) National Area Based Development Programme).

After the Midterm Evaluation of the project in 2010, a major project revision added a new objective on alternative livelihoods. Pilot projects were established in various areas, including saffron production training, canal dredging (and lining the banks with trees to prevent them from silting up), and land stabilization. Attention has also been given to rehabilitation activities for former women drug users.

The contextual documents have one clear consistent message: there must be more Afghani ownership of development activities in policy formulation, implementation and budgetary control. To this end, UNODC is promoting the concept of “genuine mainstreaming”, which comprises having government, multi-lateral, and bilateral agencies incorporating tangible CN activities into policies, programmes, and projects.

Evaluation

Scope

The portion of the Evaluation report assesses one Alternative Livelihood project individually but also considers its contribution to the COAFG Sub-Programme on Health and Livelihood as a whole. The evaluation analyzes this Sub-Programme using the same framework for the project evaluations and comments on linkages and contributions to the Strategic Programme Framework (SPF) and the new Country Programme.

The evaluation of this Cluster examined how appropriate it was for the situation in Afghanistan, how the project within contributed to dealing with issues and challenges in the country, and recommends what improvements could be made to the implementation of activities within the Cluster.

Methodology

The field mission in Afghanistan by the evaluator was for three weeks in September (including travel from and back to home country). During this time, the cluster evaluator visited several provinces where he was able to go to some activity sites.

Limitations

Because none of the eight projects evaluated on this mission were primarily concerned with drug treatment, the evaluator did not visit any drug treatment sites. Although the Team Leader did observe some DDR work and talked to some relevant UNODC officials, no detailed assessment was possible. His discussions with key individuals at UNODC and also with Government counterparts form the basis of this discussion of the Health and Livelihood Cluster. The evaluator also made use of external literature, including material on DDR projects, other interviews, field visit observations as well as input from the Team Leader regarding his interviews and field visits. As a result, the evaluator could triangulate and cross reference the data he collected.

Another limitation was that security constraints limited opportunities to discuss matters in depth with villagers. The Mission was allowed no more than of 30 minutes at each village visited. Although warmly received by all villagers met, who wanted to discuss the progress of Project activities and of their concerns, security concerns over an international UN official in the village

and possible threats to him overrode the evaluator's desire to discuss activities further in depth. Security concerns also limited the number and geographical location of villages visited. Only a few of the safest villages could be visited. This resulted perhaps in a biased sample of villages and villager opinion since it is possible that the safest areas were those with the most successful Project activities

Linkages to SPF/new Country Programme

All the outcomes of the projects in this cluster are linked to the SPF and to the new Country Programme. For Afghanistan to develop further, it needs to reduce poppy production and drug addiction. The lead agency in this undertaking is the MCN. I87 contributes directly to strengthening this Ministry, by enhancing the capacity of the staff, and expanding its reach in the provinces where its work is needed most.

The SPF groups outcomes and activities under Compact Benchmarks. The following outcomes, activities, and targets are linked more directly to the work of I87.

Compact (Benchmark 6.3): D design and implement programmes to achieve a sustained annual reduction in the amount of land under poppy and other drug cultivation by the strengthening and diversification of licit livelihoods and other counter-narcotics measures.

According to the SPF, because bilateral donors invested heavily in AL, UNODC would focus on advisory services in capacity building and advise relevant government institutions in policy development and mainstreaming of alternative livelihood at the central and provincial level.

The Country Programme's sub-programme on Health and Alternative Livelihoods has three outcomes and several outputs. Because output 3 is directly relevant to I87, its activities are listed:

(a) Outcome 1: Increased access to quality drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services.

(b) Outcome 2: Increased access to quality HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services for drug users (with a focus on IDUs), prisoners and persons vulnerable to human trafficking.

(c) Outcome 3: Wider coverage of alternative livelihoods for drug affected communities.

(i) Output 3.1: Integrated/multifaceted AL demonstration projects aimed at breaking households' linkages with the illicit drug economies.

(ii) Output 3.2: Strengthened MCN capacity on AL policy, project planning and monitoring at central and provincial levels.

(iii) Output 3.2: Improved coordination and genuine mainstreaming of AL-related strategies and programmes in Government, and among Government, multilateral/bilateral donors, and the private sector.

The health component of this cluster addresses addiction, particularly the injecting drug use that is a high risk factor for HIV/AIDS. In 2009, there were only 636 HIV cases in Afghanistan but this almost doubled to 1,250 in 2010 (Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) ca. 2010, p. 7). Although the prevalence of HIV remains quite low (and relatively low among injecting drug users (IDUs)), the fact that the number increased so rapidly indicates that this issue must be addressed.

The work under this cluster does go beyond IDU to address problems faced by marginalized groups including homeless and migrant populations as well as returning refugees, mostly from Iran and Pakistan. Women and children are accorded special importance in these initiatives. Project activities include providing directly or through other agencies the long-term rehabilitation care needed after individuals are detoxified but not fully free of the psychological aspects of addiction and thus at risk to re-addiction.

However, government officials in Afghanistan do not see the link between health and alternative development embodied in the makeup of this cluster. In the MoPH's National AIDS Control Program (2011-2015), there is only indirect reference to any links between alternative livelihoods and drug demand reduction. Similarly, key individuals in the MCN do not see the link between the two in any productive way.

There are UNODC projects in other countries, namely the Lao PDR and Myanmar, which have effectively linked alternative livelihoods and drug demand reduction. Drug users treated as a part of the project are taught vocational skills such as tailoring, carpentry, and agricultural skills. Not enough activities of this sort are being carried out in the alternative livelihoods projects in Afghanistan.

I think it has value to link Alternative livelihood with MOPH because addicted people after getting treatment should find a vocational training and support to make busy to earn income and not fall on drug again. The chain of development and detoxification should be followed till the person feels economically and physically free from poverty and addiction in the society. That will help completely curing and satisfaction of addicted people.

UNODC projects in other countries have also shown a direct link between poppy cultivation and poverty. If this can be confirmed as the case in Afghanistan, UNODC can use this to expand the scope of its programme. If this is the case also, and since poverty contributes to poor health, UNODC will be able to mainstream its anti-narcotics more effectively such as with the MoPH.

Here according to our observation 80% of farmers producing 30% of poppy due to poverty and food insecurity problem but 20% of big land lords farmers (Norco entrepreneurs) who are producing 70% of poppy in Afghanistan growing poppy for gaining high income and drug trafficking. Therefore for the poor and disparate farmers who are growing poppy due to poverty need to have support programs or intervention to save them from poverty to stop poppy production.

Contributions to SPF/new Country Programme

While I87 was the only project formally evaluated in this mission, the Evaluation Team did examine the rest of this cluster through a desk study and a few interviews. Based on this, the Team is confident that all the projects in this cluster all contribute to the new Country Programme

primarily through their innovative achievements in addressing rural poverty and mainstreaming counter narcotic activities. The projects also contribute because they support the MCN so that it appears more relevant and authoritative in the eyes of the Afghan people.

By reducing cultivation which contributes to reduced addiction, the projects in this cluster can be expected to contribute to better health, political stability, a more diversified economy, and, eventually, more income from their cash crops.

As the MCN gains in stature, it will provide more services and be more effective in achieving its goal of reducing drug production and use. As this occurs it will lend increased credence to the government.

UNODC through this cluster and projects and approaches from elsewhere its programme has pioneered the idea in Afghanistan that counter narcotics is a cross cutting issue that needs to be (genuinely) mainstreamed. Although work in other countries in Asia has shown that there is a correlation between opium poppy cultivation and poverty (for most farmers) this issue was not studied to any significant degree in Afghanistan.

Challenges/Limitations to Cluster Implementation

Perhaps the major limitation to project implementation is the security situation in the country that limits the movement of international and national staff, although the latter for various reasons have somewhat more flexibility in where they can travel and who they can see. These are discussed amply in other sections of this report (and feature significantly in each project evaluation in every cluster).

Another limitation arises out of UNODC being a member of the UN Secretariat. As such it is mandated primarily to monitor compliance to the UN drug and crime control conventions rather than support project implementation.

This situation results in time-consuming and overly bureaucratic procurement and tendering systems for project implementation. This situation also contributes to the low level fiscal authority held by project staff by which financial decisions of any consequence must be referred to the Country Office which itself may often have to then refer to Vienna. At a time when the UNODC's assistance to Afghanistan is growing and the Afghanistan Government is increasingly more appreciative of this agency, constraints such as this pose unnecessary obstacles to both project implementation and the growth of the agency not just in Afghanistan but in other countries where similar conditions prevail.

Related to this is the approach within the UNODC system that controls (and/or unintentionally impedes) access to project accomplishments, even to donors. Although donors are granted access to ProFi reports, more than one donor commented that the information in it is often not sufficiently detailed to give them a satisfactory understanding of project challenges and rationale. This had led to problems such as donors making demands on the projects that are impossible to carry out or not providing support when it would be helpful to the project.

The third important limitation is self-imposed low level role for implementation of alternative livelihood projects in local areas, namely that this is covered under just one output of one project.

Notwithstanding the security risks, the I87 Project has made clear advances technically and won the confidence of local villagers in several provinces. This shows that this limitation is unnecessary and ought to be removed.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

The relevance of this Cluster to the situation in Afghanistan is clearly appropriate. Drug demand reduction and treatment as well as alternative livelihoods address major problems in Afghan society encompassing corruption, addiction, and crime. Drug demand reduction and alternative livelihoods comprise two of the three pillars of UNODC's projects in Southeast Asia that successfully reduced poppy cultivation. This approach worked because alternative livelihoods and demand reduction were linked integrally with law enforcement which implies a strong commitment by the government to address poppy cultivation. It is not yet clear to what extent this commitment exists in Kabul and, sometimes more importantly, in certain cultivating provinces in Afghanistan but that does not reduce the relevance of the approach to being implemented in this country.

Poppy production in Afghanistan according to our observations depends on AL(poverty, unemployment, gaining high income)=60%, Drug demands=20% and Law enforcement 20%

Effectiveness

The projects in this Cluster have been effective in making good use of comparatively limited funds to achieve significant results. Much of this has been brought about in the alternative livelihoods work (i.e., I87 objective 4, at the village level) by involving the people at the local level. Villagers and local officials met in the course of the Evaluation were almost entirely enthusiastic about the work that gave them income generating opportunities leading them to talk about how they wished to expand operations.

Drug addiction, where the projects operated, was reduced through the work, something barely addressed by other international agencies and for which the Government has only limited funds.

Efficiency

In terms of efficiency, there were no obvious less costly intervention modalities than those used in the project. Regarding government transparency and accountability, all Project reports are publicly available. The Project consistently raises and addresses problems of accountability with junior and senior Government staff but not always with complete success (the provision of sufficient operating funds at the provincial level is a continuing problem).

Impact

The impact of the Project has been satisfactory. Through I87, service at the provincial level has been greatly improved through the provision of infrastructure and equipment and of Technical Advisors (TAs) to the Provincial Directorate of Counter Narcotics (PDCN). The community development process of the Project gives the rights to villagers in selecting development options

although this is constrained by UNODC's lack of procedures to allow direct villager implementation. Leadership skills for driving alternative livelihoods at the institutional and individual levels have also been improved.

The result has been to raise the profile of the MCN and PDCN. This is significant because MCN is a new ministry with a limited profile but a heavy responsibility under the National Counter Narcotics Strategy (NCNS). The Project has thus been effective overall in accomplishing this objective.

But it was not enough according to the problem of CN in different provinces. From my point of view there are a need to classified provinces according to poppy production reasons. For those provinces which are growing poppy due to poverty and food insecurity proper program of intervention for long term should be design and implemented to get end result. For those provinces which growing poppy for gaining income, wealth accumulation and mafia LE program should be implemented parallel other AL programs.

Skills in income generation, land stabilization, planning, and new agricultural techniques have been greatly enhanced within the limited range of Project activities. At the same time the Project assisted the MCN in carrying out its drug control mandate especially at the provincial level.

Sustainability

A major impediment to sustainability of the Project is the problem of insufficient Government funds. The operational budget comes from Government revenue which is low. One result is that some funds from donors may be channeled into supporting routine operational funds. This means that funding operational costs will depend on continuing donor contributions.

The Project interventions have the potential for scaling up and replication. Local communities and women have been much involved in project formulation. Community consultations, in combination with alternative livelihoods, are effective counter narcotics mechanisms. "Genuine mainstreaming" within the Government is occurring more through higher level policy formulation and implementation and appears to be effective. See below for further discussion of these issues.

All livelihood initiatives were well received by everyone interviewed. Most importantly, villagers from the four villages visited were particularly enthusiastic and requested an expansion of the programme. At Kohsan, representatives from 11 villages were present; at another site, representatives from a neighboring village were also present. Following is the discussion of UNODC work to eliminate poppy cultivation.

The existing projects and programs of UNODC are small and not tangible against high demands of people and poppy problems. MCN expected to expands UNODC projects with having one or two type of intervention in national level

Partnerships

The Project has actively and effectively partnered with other agencies. Coordination between the Government, UNODC and other implementing partners has been effective. The Project has been

instrumental in holding regular coordination meetings with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) Technical Working Group which involves all relevant actors, including Government agencies. Work by I87 and the drug treatment work has helped solidify the Project's strong links with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Other useful partnerships have been between COAFG and WFP, UNIDO, MAIL, and MRRD.

Other Criteria (human rights, gender, innovation)

UNODC work in this Cluster has actively supported human rights through its work with both men and women in its AL and drug addiction work. The drug demand work has dealt with the high rate of female addiction in a proactive manner that is achieving results. Just by recognizing the problem of female addiction, UNODC has led to the Government recognizing that this is an issue that needs to be solved to prevent the spread of drug addiction and related problems.

The sole project within this Cluster, the I87 Project, which was evaluated in detail, made significant contributions to Afghanistan's counter narcotics efforts. Despite the difficult security environment in which this project was implemented, the work done in Kabul and then extended to the provinces, broadly met expectations by increasing the number of seizures, prosecutions and convictions of narcotics traffickers.

UNODC, in its work in this Cluster, has introduced methodologies in reducing poppy cultivation pioneered in its work in Southeast Asia. UNODC has also introduced more profound and comprehensive (and gender balanced) drug treatment programmes that are new to Afghanistan. UNODC has strengthened MCN to where it is much better able to function on its own.

There is much more that UNODC can do and much more work in counter narcotics before both use and cultivation decline significantly. However, UNODC as an agency has the institutional knowledge of how to carry out this work based on its experience in other countries. In particular, UNODC can use its experience in building up local-level capacity to managing alternatives to poppy cultivation as well as to control drug use. This will contribute effectively to the sustainability of drug control in Afghanistan.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Critical

(a) Now that genuine mainstreaming of counter narcotics work is being achieved, COAFG should find how to expand operations with the MCN in coordination with other development agencies.

(b) While continuing to advocate for the genuine mainstreaming of counter narcotics, COAFG should expand its approach to addressing poverty and crime.

(c) There is a lack of recognition that UNODC, as an agency, is well-suited for alternative livelihoods implementation.

(d) If UNODC is to be an implementing agency, it needs to find ways to grant more authority to COAFG in recruitment, grants, and procurement for activities to meet indicators.

(e) MCN expected to have one or two program national wise on AL to be continued for long term to bring changes on life of farmers and production to bring really sustainable declining in poppy production.

Important

(a) COAFG should delegate more authority to national staff in Kabul and in project areas.

(b) One early step COAFG should take in this delegation of authority is to establish a national-level monitoring and evaluation mechanism making ample use of national staff.

(c) COAFG needs to create a greater awareness of UNODC's successful work in developing alternative livelihoods elsewhere in Asia and that this approach can be implemented in Afghanistan either by UNODC or other agencies.

(d) COAFG should step up mainstreaming efforts with the MoPH and the MCN to build links to DDR in alternative livelihood activities.

(e) COAFG should conduct more evidence-based research into the causes of poverty and poppy cultivation, including the link between poverty, poor health (including HIV) and opium poppy production. Findings should then be incorporated into its genuine mainstreaming strategy.

(f) COAFG should do a research on finding which type of projects or intervention was very successful, less successful and fail in provinces and the base of finding should launch one or two program in national level to be sustainable, economically effective and have direct effect on live of farmers and subsequently declining poppy production.

General

(a) COAFG should work with MCN to scale up alternative livelihood activities at the local level either through UNODC implementation or in collaboration with other agencies.

(b) Alternative livelihoods and drug demand reduction national staff should proactively cooperate in building joint operations whereby a more comprehensive approach to drug addiction by poppy cultivators can be taken.

(c) UNODC in Vienna and in Kabul need to treat donors similar to co-implementers and to keep them informed of project progress and challenges. Furthermore, close cooperation with donors is encouraged to avoid unrealistic expectations as to how quickly and effectively projects can be implemented.

ANNEX I. RECORD OF INTERVIEWS AND MEETINGS

Name	Position
Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu	Country Representative, Afghanistan, UNODC.
Ms. Ashita Mittal	Dept. Country Representative, Afghanistan, UNODC
Mr. Andrea Mancini	Afghan Programme Officer, RSWCA, UNODC.
Ms Madeeha Bajwa	Research Reporting Officer, Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, UNODC.
Ms. Jelena Bjelica	External Relations Officer, UNODC.
Ms. Alina	Head, Procurement Section, UNODC, Afghanistan.
Dr. Jeremy Milsom	Senior Adviser (Counter Narcotics Programme), UNODC.
Mr. Homayoon Faizad	Provincial Relations Director, MCN.
Mr. Nayeem Rostaie	Head, Provincial Administration, MCN.
Dr. Najib Maik.	AL Technical Advisor, MCN
Mr. Ahmed Ali Hassam	AL Acting Director, MCN.
Mr. Khalid	Sharia Law Advisor, MCN
Mr. M. Saboor Shirzad	Head AL, MAIL.
Ms Roya Shafaq	AL Project Associate (Women's Affairs), I87
Mr. Ahmad Zubair Farouqi	National Project Coordinator (Capacity Building), I87.
Mr. Hamdullah Hamdard	National Project Coordinator (AL), I87.
Mr. Muhammad Fida	Project Associate, Capacity Building and AL, I87.
Mr. Mohammad Alam Ghaleb	Eastern Region Coordinator based in Jalalabad, I87.
Mr. Lutf Rahman Lutfi	Northern Region Coordinator based in Mazar-e-Sharif, I87.
Mr. Fazal Mohammad Fazli	Southern Region Coordinator based in Kandahar, I87
Mr. Ahmed Wahid Fayeed	Western Region Coordinator based in Herat, I87.
Mr. Mohammad Hussain Jalili	Badakhshan Coordinator, I87.
Mr. Abdul Ghafar Ishaqza	National Site Engineer, I87.
Ms Shukria Mahzooz	National Project Assistant, I87.
Mr. Mohommad Usman	Project Manager, Advanced Business Consulting, IP of I87.
Mr. Usman Hafeez Khawaja	Training and Development Manager, Advanced Business Consulting, IP of I87.
Eng. Shah Wali	Head, DACAAR, IP of I87.
Mr. Irshad Alamyar	Knowledge and Communications Manager, DACAAR, IP of I87.
Mr. Lars Pedersen	Chief of Strategy and Policy, DACAAR, IP of I87.
Ms. Sachiko Furuya	First Secretary, Economic Cooperation Section, Embassy of Japan.
Ms. Katherine Verrier-Frechette	Head, Political Section, Embassy of Canada.
Ms. Grace Lee	Program Analyst, Embassy of Canada.
Ms. Gillian Frost	Embassy of Canada.
Mr. Anssi Kullberg	Dept. Head of Mission, Embassy of Finland.
Mr. Antti Kuusi	Counsellor, Head of Development, Embassy of Finland.
Mr. Klaus Thorup	First Secretary, Embassy of Denmark.
Mr. Tamim Bedar	Programme Officer, Embassy of Denmark.
Mr. Asieluden Jami	Dept. Governor, Herat Province.
Mr. Ghulam Jailani Daqiq	Director, Herat, PDCN.

Prof. Abdullah Faiz	Dean, Faculty Agriculture, Herat University.
Mr. Nasim Jamshidi	Acting Director, PDAIL.
Mr. Zalmai Bultani	Monitoring and Evaluation Associate, Western Region, I87.
Mr. Ahrar Shahir	TA, Herat PCN, I87.
Mr. Abdul Raziq Kiani	Head of DACAAR, Herat, IP of I87.
Mr. Ahmad Farid Karimi	Executive director, RWDOA, Herat, IP of I87.
Mr. Bashir Rashidi	Head of Herat Saffron Council , Herat.
Mr. Alexander Kuzmen	Head of DCU unit, UNAMA, Herat.
Mr. Abdul Qayoum Jamshidi	Dept. Governor, Khosan District, Herat.
Land Stabilisation Association Members (11)	Khosan District, Herat.
Village Leaders	Rabot Pirzada Village, Enjil District, Herat.
Mr. Al Haj Zabihullah Akhtary	Dept. Governor, Balkh Province.
Mr. Mohammad Rahim Rahman Ughly	Director, PDCN, Balkh Province, MCN.
Mr. Ghulam Daud	Head, AL Dept, PDCN, Balkh Province, MCN.
Mr. Mohammad Karim Asad.	Head, Administration, PDCN, Balkh Province, MCN.
Mr. Shahahuddin Atayee	TA, PDCN, Balkh Province, I87.
Ms. Friba Majied and Staff	Director, DoWA, Balkh Province.
Mr. Sventhelin	Head Office, WFP, Balkh (previous cooperative partner with I87).
Mr. Ghulam Sakhi Rezvani	Director, PCN, Jowzjan Province, MCN.
Eng. Abdul Rahseed	Director, DoWM, Jowzjan Province.
Ahmad Zubair Zakir.	TA, PDCN Jowzjan Province, I87.
Members (10)	TWGAL, Jowzjan Province.
CDC Members	Alt-i-Khoja village, Jowzjan Province.
CDC Members	Sofi Qala Village, Jowzjan Province.
Members (13)	DDA, Sheberghan District, Jowzjan Province.

ANNEX II. DESK REVIEW LIST

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- The Kabul Conference Communiqué, A Renewed Commitment by the Afghan Government to the Afghan People: A Renewed Commitment by the International Community to Afghanistan, 20 July 2010.
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- UNODC COAFG, Strengthening Afghan Border Control Capacity in Nimroz AFG J55, Final Report on the use of Canadian Funds, 2010.
- UNODC COAFG, Strengthening Afghan Border Control Capacity in Nimroz AFG J55, Final Report on the use of Canadian Funds, 2009.
- UNODC COAFG, Integrated Border Control Project in Western/South-Western Afghanistan AFG J55, report on the use of Canadian Funds, 2010.

UNODC COAFG, Integrated Border Control Project in Western/South-Western Afghanistan AFG J55, report on the use of Canadian Funds, 2009.

UNODC COAFG, Final Narrative Report for the European Commission Funding

ProFI printouts for AFG /J55.

ANNEX III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Project Implementation Status as of 30 September 2012

No	Project Number	Project Title	Focal Person	Duration		Overall Budget US\$	Approved Budget US\$
				Start	End		
1	AFGI87	Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control	Ahmad Zubair Farouqi	Sep-06	Jun-13	17,629,025	17,629,025
Total						17,629,025	17,629,025
Pledged Funding US\$	Funding shortfall against overall budget	Expenditure Prior to 2011	Imp. rate Prior to 2011	2012			
				Current Approved Allocation	Expenditure Year to Date	Imp. Rate	Balance
17,839,279	210,254	13,735,810	78%	3,545,000	2,520,884	71%	1,024,116
17,839,279	210,254	13,735,810	78%	3,545,000	2,520,884	71%	1,024,116

Funding Available for 2013 & beyond
558,469
558,469

ANNEX IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF MIDTERM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Midterm Review– findings, problems and issues identified	Brief Summary of Midterm Review Recommendations	Assessment of Action Taken since Midterm Review
I87 is mostly efficient with some exceptions (WFP partner dissatisfied)	Educating and training National UNODC staff; more national staff; better interfacing with UN sister-agencies	National staff seems trained adequately for their responsibilities. More national staff employed as TAs (very effective). Regular and effective coordination with other UN agencies—especially in Projects related to I87’s mandate; WFP expressed willingness to work with UNODC.
However, I87 has not proven to be effective in its current operational mode.	MCN dysfunctional in many aspects—cannot well accept UNODC input—high staff turnover after training. AL Data base not useful.	MCN’s abilities and profile now much improved and MCN can now well accept UNODC’s inputs. Training of MCN staff much improved but problem of uncompetitive salaries of trained staff still an issue that is being addressed. AL database transferred to a separate dedicated project.
Hence 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 respondents interviewed (not so in the Provinces). Training courses must be objectively tested. AL pilot projects, firmly attached to CN conditionality, ought to be fielded.	UNODC seemed well-known and respected by nearly all persons interviewed (exceptions: two donors). Kabul training courses now objectively tested and objective testing will now be extended to provinces. AL projects with conditionality are well-known and respected in Kabul and the Provinces.
4.Sustainability of I87 activities is proving to be elusive.	MCN staff limited capabilities; inhibitory MCN working environment. MCN near zero AL capabilities—no AL Director of MCN.	Capabilities of MCN staff much improved (effectively contribute to policy making, report writing and monitoring and evaluation). Capabilities of PDCN staff only partially improved—more improvement needed. AL capabilities significantly improved within MCNs mandate (note: MCN is not an implementing agency). A capable and effective AL Director has been appointed.

5.I87's gender mainstreaming is non-existent.	Hire a female national AL coordinator with women oriented AL pilot projects.	National AL coordinator employed. Women oriented AL projects commenced (see Appendix 2).
6.There is little evidence to suggest that learning from prior evaluations has taken place	Consult evaluations from previous projects in Afghanistan prior to project development.	The Midterm review was consulted and its recommendations incorporated into the revised I87 project.
7.The I87 logframe is not usable in its current form.	Few measurable outcome indicators in the logframe. Train staff to develop robust logframes.	Logframe rewritten in Project revision to include mostly measurable outcomes.

ANNEX V. LIST OF SPECIAL TEMRS AND ACRONYMS

ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development Cluster of Ministries (MCN is one)
CDC	Community Development Council (elected at village level through the NSP programme)
CDP	Community Development Plans (CDPs).
DDA	District Development Assembly (established under NABDP of MRRD but members of DDAs are derived from CDCs)
DDP	District Development Plans (DDPs)
DDC	District Development Council
GPI	Good Performance Initiative (whereby each poppy-free province is given US\$1million per year by another donor for development activities)
IDU	Injecting Drug Users
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MRRD	Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development
MCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NCNS	National Counter Narcotics Strategy
NDCS	National Drug Control Strategy
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
PA	Public Awareness
PDCN	Provincial Directorate of Counter Narcotics
PDP	Provincial Development Plan
PDEW	Provincial Department of Energy and Water
RC	Regional Coordinators (senior UNODC national staff in the Provinces)
SPF	Strategic Programme Framework
TA	Technical advisors
NCNS	National Counter Narcotics Strategy
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

Independent Project Evaluation of the
**Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug
Control**

AFG/187
Afghanistan

July 2013



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project AFGI87 (Strengthening Provincial Capacity for Drug Control) commenced in October 2006 and will conclude in June 2013. The total pledged budget is US\$17.8 million. The total received and approved budget is US\$17.6 million, of which US\$16.3 million was disbursed as of the end of September, 2012.

This Evaluation reviews the period from the Midterm Review of 2010 to September 2012. As a result of the Midterm Review, the Project was revised. The July 2010 Revision is now the current Project Document. The revised Overall Project Objective is “To support and enhance provincial Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) capacity by creating effective institutional structures for drug control and providing technical expertise on the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) implementation/coordination process in cooperation with relevant stakeholders including government line departments and international organizations.”

The Project had four immediate objectives, as follows:

- (a) Objective 1. To strengthen and enhance the coverage and operational capacity of the Provincial Directorates of the MCN in drug control;
- (b) Objective 2. To provide technical support and mentoring to the MCN to build its capacity to manage information and provide analytical reports on its mandated specialist areas;
- (c) Objective 3. Strengthen MCN’s capacity to lead coordinated national Afghan Government counter narcotics Public Awareness (PA) campaigns;
- (d) Objective 4. High impact alternative livelihoods pilot project initiatives developed and implemented in partnership with provincial authorities and other partner agencies.

The Project has mostly achieved its objectives. The Project has assisted MCN to expand its provincial offices to 24 out of 34 Provinces and has built and equipped a Training Centre in Kabul; the Project has assisted with infrastructure, providing equipment and training for MCN and Provincial Directorate of Counter Narcotics (PDCN) staff. The Project has also improved the capacity of MCN and PDCN staff through the assignment of Regional Coordinators and Technical Assistants to the Provinces and to Kabul. The donors are mainly satisfied with Project accomplishments.

Through this Project, the MCN has developed an appropriate illicit drug reduction strategy and MCN has become the lead agency for the Government’s counter narcotics policy, strategy, coordination and monitoring. The mandated government agencies are more effective in implementing drug reduction strategies although room for improvement remains. Women’s activities have progressed well and are appreciated by both female and male villagers.

At the local level, the effects of Project interventions and of poppy eradication need to be better quantified. Training courses are appreciated but more work is needed to fine tune them for specific sector. When this is done it will be possible to identify the kinds of support that areas free of poppy cultivation need to remain drug free.

UNODC's rules and procedures are overly restrictive in providing support to AL activities in villages where creative solutions are needed because of hardship conditions.

From the point of view of the Evaluator who saw Project work in Afghanistan, in order to facilitate development at the village level, UNODC Headquarters and COAFG need to work together to have efficient and effective rules and processes in place. .

The Evaluator also noted that alternative livelihoods activities implemented in villages have worked well on the limited pilot scale so far attempted. They have reduced poppy-growing in a cost-effective manner, and are well-accepted by villagers. For these reasons, UNODC Afghanistan should work with the MCN to scale up such work to cover all of the country.

SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings, problems and issues identified	Supporting evidence	Recommendations
Critical		
The Project, in conjunction with MCN, has developed an appropriate illicit drug reduction strategy.	Field observations; discussions with very wide range of stakeholders from villagers to Government officials, to donors; reports.	COAFG and MCN should scale up AL work immediately. They should consolidate illicit drug reduction strategies in geographical areas to improve exposure. ³ Most importantly the two should continue to respond to villager expressed needs and not to expressed needs of higher authorities.
Areas free of poppy-growing need continuing AL support. Some villagers afraid of being neglected if they stop poppy-growing are at risk of reverting to poppy-growing.	Interviews with villagers, Government and Project Staff.	COAFG should continue PA, DDR, Social Agreements and AL activities in villages which have ceased poppy-production. Concentrate on food production, education, medical facilities, road access and employment opportunities depending on expressed needs of the villagers.
Mandated Government Ministries have grown more	Discussions with Project and Government Officers at all	COAFG should increase needed capacity building.

³ E.g.: Jowzjan Province is extremely dry. No dryland agriculture is possible. Agriculture depends entirely on irrigation water. There is sufficient irrigation water available from streams. The major constraint to improved irrigation and livelihood activities is diverting water from streams to village fields. Irrigation inlets have been destroyed, canals are blocked; more inlets and canals are needed. The province is currently poppy-free but there are pressures to revert to poppy-growing and increased anti-government forces. The Project has commenced two inlet improvement activities in the province under its full poppy-reduction strategy. These are successful and appreciated by villagers. There are about 200 inlets that need improvement in the Province. At an average cost of US\$20,000 per inlet construction (implemented by villagers), US\$4 million would be required to greatly improve livelihood activities for the Province, to continue being poppy-free and to effectively and peacefully counter anti-government forces. The opportunity exists for this province to be a showcase for UNODCs peaceful and effective illicit drug elimination strategy.

A similar situation and strategy is highly recommended for Kohsan District of Herat Province where the Land Stabilisation activity is successful and well appreciated by villagers and Officials and could be readily expanded to cover more villagers affected by the shifting sands problem.

effective in implementing illicit drug reduction strategies.	levels from the field to Kabul HQ; inspection of reports.	
UNODCs rules and procedures can be too lengthy, are not entirely aligned to effective field level implementation and thus restrict efficient development.	Some donors dissatisfied with UNODC (from interviews). AL activities unduly delayed resulting in dissatisfaction with UNODC by villagers, Government officials and Project staff (by interviews– delays confirmed by inspection of correspondence).	UNODC as a whole MUST develop efficient, responsive operational and financial support procedures to allow more effective AL work. More admin and financial authority must be given to Project Manager and to Country Programme. Villagers must be allowed to implement simple activities on the authority of the Project Manager. UNODCs rules should assist, not hinder development.
MCN and PDCN still not fully capable of effectively conducting their mandates.	By interviews with UNODC and Government personnel. Field inspection of facilities.	UNODC HQ and COAFG should provide sufficient operating funds at provincial level. IT facilities need upgrading. Reward and retain competent MCN and PDCN staff.
Important		
Women’s Activities successful and well appreciated by women and villagers.	Observation in the field. Interviews with villagers (male and female), representatives of Women’s associations and Project staff.	COAFG should expand the successful female training and employment programmes of the Project.
Donors generally satisfied with the Project but there are some concerns of implementation and acknowledgement of donor contributions.	By discussion and observation in the field.	COAFG needs to: Complete donor funded activities within schedule (donors do not like delays). Increase visibility specific donor contributions (send specific reports to donor; with photos & PowerPoint; disambiguate donor contributions to an activity; clearly and permanently label donor-supplied equipment). Improve specific communication with donors to ensure local desk officers of donors are familiar with any formal changes that have been made in project

		implementation. Clarify mandate (one donor objected to I87 doing AL).
General		
Effects of Project interventions and of poppy eradication not sufficiently quantified at the village level.	Insufficient relevant reports ⁴ . Mainly anecdotal evidence.	COAFG needs to obtain data on poppy cultivation from Survey Project. Baseline surveys should be conducted in each village. Where baseline surveys exist ⁵ , villages should be resurveyed to quantify the effect of interventions. Surveys should include economic factors and drug addiction.
Monitoring and Evaluation of AL work weak.	Discussions with villagers, project documentation.	COAFG needs to get more active involvement of PDCN in M&E.
Most training courses well appreciated but some improvements necessary.	Interviews with all relevant stakeholders; attendance at one training course.	COAFG needs to expand assessment by examination. Further training to depend on conscientiousness and exam results. Study tours within and outside of Afghanistan recommended. Bonded higher degree external studies recommended for MCN staff. Government trainees should attend training courses full-time (not to be distracted by official duties). Villager training should be mostly hands-on, not classroom.

⁴ Quantitative data are contained in ‘Summary of Evaluation Report of the Project “Soil Stabilisation” conducted in June 2011 by DACAAR’, an IP of I87 in Kohsan District, Herat Province. The 14 villages contained in the Soil Stabilisation Project, grew 5.6 ha of poppy before 2009, and only 0.4 ha in 2011; local’s use of opium reduced by 30 per cent and 80 per cent fewer young men went to Helmand for poppy cultivation.

⁵ Baseline data exists in some Project villages. These were conducted by NGOs under UNODC aegis, e.g. ‘Priority Needs Assessments’ for Badakhshan and Balkh. It is understood that the primary data are with the Project so that the villages could be resurveyed.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Project in the Health and Alternatives Livelihood Cluster was initiated in 2006 to develop the capacity of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), which was set up that year. While other international stakeholders concentrated on developing the Ministry in Kabul, this Project was designed primarily to build capacity at the provincial level in drug control policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The Project is scheduled to finish in June 2013.

The Project has evolved over the years to meet the changing needs of the Ministry and to address gaps not covered by other international stakeholders. In the first three years, the Project focused on: i) physical capacity building for the MCN; ii) technical capacity building through training programmes and; iii) the construction of an AL database system to monitor counter narcotics support.

In 2007, support for the MCN to run counter narcotics PA campaigns was added. Following a Midterm evaluation in 2009, a component to run small AL pilot projects was added in order to acquire knowledge of best practices to share with the Ministry. In its last two years, the Project continues support in all these areas with, among other activities, mentors embedded in the provincial offices, training courses, directorate construction and small innovative implemented activities.

The Project was approved in August 2006 and underwent five revisions with the last revision being administrative in nature with no substantive changes to the Project. About 72 per cent of the budget will be spent on output areas. As of 30 September 2012, US\$16.3 million had been spent.

The Project has four objectives: i) to enhance the coverage and capacity of Provincial Directorates of the MCN; ii) to assist the MCN to manage CN information; iii) to strengthen MCN's capacity in Public awareness on CN; and iv) to initiate high impact alternative livelihood activities.

The Project has mostly achieved its objectives. The Project has assisted MCN to expand its provincial offices to 24 out of 34 Provinces and has built and equipped a Training Centre in Kabul; the Project has substantially assisted with building infrastructure, providing equipment and training for MCN and PDCN staff. The Project has improved the capacity of MCN and PDCN staff through the assignment of 5 Regional Coordinators (RCs) and 10 Technical Assistants to the Provinces and 2 to MCN in Kabul.

Over the life of the Project, MCN and PDCN have gained considerably in influence and capabilities. MCN now has the lead role in the Government's counter narcotics policy, strategy, coordination and monitoring. MCN does not have a mandate to implement alternative livelihoods activities.

An AL database was established in MCN with Project support but information collection and collation proved difficult and the database has been transferred to a new dedicated Project within MCN. The Project has trained MCN and PDCN staff to improve their analytical, reporting and coordination skills. Regular coordination meetings with all other relevant counter narcotics stakeholders and now held, chaired, and reported by MCN and PDCN officers.

PA activities have been well conducted and appear to have contributed towards a willingness of villagers to cease poppy production and illicit drug usage. The Project helped develop a new logo for MCN for use in PA campaigns across Afghanistan.

The Project has commenced many high impact, pilot alternative livelihoods activities with the Government, UN agencies, NGOs and private companies. From field interviews and inspections with villagers, and interviews with implementing partners, Government and Project officials, and from project documentation, nearly all alternative livelihoods activities have been well appreciated by all concerned, especially by villagers.

In conjunction with MCN, the Project has developed an effective strategy to eliminate poppy cultivation. The strategy includes selecting alternative livelihoods activities by villagers and signing agreements with villagers to either reduce poppy cultivation or to keep it from being cultivated again. The strategy calls for developing alternative livelihoods activities with Government agencies to be implemented by partners (often private companies) and includes a villager drug demand reduction programme (in association with drug demand reduction agencies), and eradication in association with Law Enforcement agencies. PA and appropriate alternative livelihoods activities are the first requirements and eradication the last resort. This method has reduced and maintains the cessation of poppy growing without turning villagers against the Government. It is strongly recommended that this method be scaled up.

The Project successfully initiated alternative livelihoods employment development activities and Resource Centres with women. They are appreciated by village women and should be expanded.

The effects of Project interventions on poppy eradication and on livelihood improvement in villages needs improved quantification. Baseline and follow-up surveys need to be conducted; more reports on poppy cultivation in Project villages should be made.

Finally, UNODC needs to be able to identify the impact of donor contributions which then should be clearly and formally conveyed to the donors.

Evaluation methodology

The Evaluation report assesses one Alternative Livelihood project individually but also considers its contribution to the COAFG Sub-Programme on Health and Livelihood as a whole. The evaluation analyzes this Sub-Programme using the same framework for the project evaluations and comments on linkages and contributions to the Strategic Programme Framework and the new Country Programme.

The evaluation of this Cluster examined how appropriate it was for the situation in Afghanistan, how the projects within contributed to dealing with issues in the country, and recommends what improvements could be made to the implementation of activities within the Cluster.

The field mission in Afghanistan by the Alternative Livelihoods evaluator was for three weeks in September (including travel from and back to home country (Australia)). During this time he visited several provinces where he was able to go to some activity sites.

Limitations to the Evaluation

The main limitation to the Evaluation was the inability to discuss matters in depth with villagers. This was due to security concerns. The Mission was allowed a maximum of 30 minutes at each village visited; after preliminaries, and usually with inspections of field activities, this left little time for detailed discussion with villagers. The security officers would insist that the Mission move on out of the village within 30 minutes; we were told that usually 20 minutes is the maximum time allowed.

Although the Evaluator was very warmly received by all villagers met, who wanted to discuss the progress of Project activities and of their concerns, the Mission was informed that the presence of foreign UN officials in a village would be noted by insurgents who might attempt harm against the Evaluator. The Evaluator noted the widespread use of mobile phones by all persons met, including villagers, which, the Evaluator was informed, could serve to inform insurgents. The Evaluator abided by the advice given by security officers.

Related to the above, was the limitation placed on the number and geographical location of villages that were visited. Security had to be arranged before any visit to a village could be made. Only a few villages were visited and then only those villages in the safest areas. This resulted perhaps in a biased sample of villages and villager opinion since the safest areas may conceivably be those with the most successful Project activities for which the villagers and Government officials are very grateful.

To overcome the bias in villagers interviewed, the Mission conscientiously interviewed Project officers from all provinces in which the Project operates, as well as relevant Government, IP and donor personnel. There were few time restrictions on these interviews. Together with a reading of relevant reports, the Mission is of the view that an unbiased and sufficiently complete assessment of the Project was made.

A second limitation was that it was not possible to interview female villagers in a village for cultural reasons. However, female villagers were present and interviewed at the District Development Council (DDC) Meeting, the Women's Organisation and at the Women's Enterprise Centre in Herat and also in Jawzhan Province. All women interviewed answered readily and often forcefully without input from others. Together with information received from other sources, the Mission is of the view that the opinion and needs of women villagers have been accurately represented in this Report.

When interviewees could converse in acceptable English, the Mission usually conducted interviews alone. The local project officer usually acted as translator when needed in other cases. The Mission is of the view that the translator translated honestly and thoroughly and that the interviewees showed no sign of being intimidated by the presence of a translator.

Only 20 days were spent in-country. A large proportion of the time was spent with bureaucratic procedures. It is strongly recommended to streamline bureaucratic procedures. It should be

necessary for Mission members to provide personal detail once only and this information could be transmitted to all agencies requiring this information rather than the Mission members filling in no less than 10 separate forms, most of which contain essentially similar information.

In general, the Country Office, Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and Project officials provided sufficient and timely assistance to ensure the success of this Evaluation Mission.

Challenges/Limitations to Project Implementation

The tight security situation means that senior project officers cannot often, if at all, participate in village community meetings nor stay in villages, which is the most efficient way to understand villagers' perceptions. This restriction also applies in part to local project officials. They put their lives at risk by just visiting those areas and have to rely on second-hand reports of activities. The effect of this restriction is to impede the development of satisfactory participatory community development programmes.

This requires I87 to employ professional people from outside the UN system, such as the monitoring officer in Herat. When someone is employed as a UN officer, regulations restrict that person's movement and more cost is involved to provide security for them. This of course puts that person at a greater personal risk but it does not necessarily negatively affect the implementation of I87.

An unintended consequence of this is that the less security in a District, the more poppy will be grown there as the villagers will be less concerned about breaking Government laws and will be emboldened by anti-government forces to grow more poppy.

The main problem was the unnecessarily restrictive UNODC procedures in implementing AL, something uncharacteristic of successful UNODC practices in Southeast Asia where UNODC played a significant role in ending poppy growing. It is strongly recommended that UNODC give more budgetary approval authority to the Project Manager to facilitate implementation of AL activities by villagers (not by private companies).

Another constraint to I87 is the lack of budgetary support from the Afghanistan Government to PDCN offices. It will be impossible for MCN to fulfill its mandate if sufficient operating funds and IT and Internet facilities are not made available to the provinces. Greater emphasis should be placed on retaining competent MCN and PDCN staff. PDCN offices are not all fully capable of fulfilling their duties and the RC and TA mentoring and formal training of MCN and PDCN staff should be continued and expanded.

With specific regard to objective 4, the long period between submission of a proposal from the Provinces to Kabul, to the awarding of tenders (up to 14 months) causes problems:

^(a) It destroys the trust of villagers in the Project and in the PDCN. Villagers are disenchanted with perceived promises that have not been met. It is reported, understandably, that villagers are suffering from 'survey fatigue', whereby village meetings are frequently held by

Government and Agency Staff with the implied promise of development, but the villagers do not see any result⁶

(b) Some donors complained of the inordinate delay in implementing UNODC projects and the problems this causes with their budgeting. Donors generally require their funds to be spent within a specified time, often to fit in with their financial year.

(c) Project inefficiency. The bureaucracy is greatly increased by the long approval process; time which the Project could more profitably spend on extra development activities.

Under UNODC's rules, CDCs and DDAs cannot tender for the following reasons:

(a) They do not hold valid Company Business Licences;

(b) They are not registered with the Department of Economy;

(c) They must present a Bank Statement to indicate they have adequate financial resources to perform the services;

(d) They must provide a Bank guarantee of 10 per cent of the contract value before signing a tender contract;

(e) They must have access to the Internet for on-line submission of bids.

These regulations preclude DDAs from tendering.

⁶ There was no indication of 'survey fatigue' during the mission since all the villages visited were in active receipt of interventions from the Project for which the villagers are very appreciative. This comment applies to villages which have not yet received implied interventions and to which Project staff have some trepidation of entering because the villagers are disappointed. This is an unnecessary security risk for Project Staff.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Assessment of Project Objectives and Effectiveness of Implementation

The original Overall Project Objective was 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. Under the Project Revision, the Overall Project Objective was much more specifically tied to the PDCN) of the MCN thus: ‘To support and enhance provincial MCN capacity by creating effective institutional structures for drug control and providing technical expertise on the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) implementation / coordination process in cooperation with relevant stakeholders including government line departments and international organizations’.

Project I87 has four immediate objectives, as follows:

- (a) Objective 1: To strengthen and enhance the coverage and operational capacity of the Provincial Directorates of the MCN in drug control;
- (b) Objective 2: To provide technical support and mentoring to the MCN to build its capacity to manage information and provide analytical reports on its mandated specialist areas;
- (c) Objective 3: Strengthen MCN’s capacity to lead coordinated national GoIRA counter narcotics Public Awareness (PA) campaigns;
- (d) Objective 4: High impact alternative livelihoods pilot project initiatives developed and implemented in partnership with provincial authorities and other partner agencies.

The NDCS (2012-2016) has the overall vision of making Afghanistan free of illicit drug cultivation, production, trafficking and addiction. The NDCS makes the MCN the lead counter narcotics agency in policy and programming. MCN is to develop budgets for CN interventions that would be allocated to line ministries for particular implementation. MCN is not an implementing agency but it coordinates and reports on counter narcotics activities. The overall goals of the NDCS that are pertinent to I87 are:

- (a) To reduce poppy cultivation 25 per cent from the 2011 level, and to
- (b) Expand public awareness to the village level.

Of the four strategic areas of the NDCS, the strategy ‘Strengthen and Diversify Legal Rural Livelihoods’ is particularly pertinent to I87 especially the component of ‘Targeted Alternative Livelihood Interventions’.

I87 has one international and three national professional staff in Kabul, and five Regional coordinators (RCs) in the Provinces. The Project also funds 12 Technical Advisors to MCN and PDCN as outlined later.

The RCs have been fully funded by I87 but are responsible for all UNODC's activities in the Provinces as well as for I87 activities. However, an agreement has been recently made to co-share RC costs with other UNODC projects.

Assessment by Project Objectives

Assessment of Objective 1 (Strengthen and enhance the coverage and operational capacity of the Provincial Directorates of the MCN in drug control)

Achievements⁷

- (a) Construction of office buildings for the MCN provincial directorates in Balkh, Nangahar, Badakhshan, and a training centre in Kabul (2007-2010).
- (b) Renovation and equipping of MCN provincial directorate in Kandahar.
- (c) Provision of full package of equipment to Training Centre in Kabul (2010).
- (d) Provision of vehicles, IT equipment, furniture, and other necessary office equipment to 15 provincial directorates of MCN (2007-2011).
- (e) On-going construction of MCN offices in Ghor and Farah provinces.

The MCN staff of provincial directorates has good operational capacity and has worked well to achieve the mandate of MCN at the provincial level.

Provincial offices of the MCN are now present in all provinces. Infrastructure, equipment, training courses, and TAs were provided according to the plan but provision of computers was not adequate.

I87 Project Staff are gradually co-locating in the PDCN buildings which is greatly assisting the coordination between I87 and PDCN and in mentoring by I87 staff.

This Objective has been well fulfilled by I87. However, the ability of MCN and PDCN to sustainably and effectively utilize these physical inputs is questionable and will be elaborated later.

One shortcoming was observed regarding the provision of equipment to beneficiaries. Instead of being clearly and permanently labeled, the equipment merely had a paper label stating that the donor country had provided the funds. For all major provision of equipment, donor inputs should be recognized. UNODC also should be able to provide permanent plaques that also mention the role UNODC played in providing the equipment. In general UNODC is unnecessarily lax in publicizing itself in a situation where modesty is counter-productive,

Objective 2. To provide technical support and mentoring to the MCN to build its capacity to manage information and provide analytical reports on its mandated specialist areas.

Achievements⁷

- (a) An AL database unit was established at the MCN. The unit has: i) collected data from alternative livelihoods focal points of various counter narcotics stakeholders, analyzed it and entered it into the database; ii) held regular coordination meetings with several Ministries and entered data from these Ministries into the database; iii) collected data from 1,032 AL projects

⁷ From Project PowerPoint presentation prepared by Jeremy Milsom, dated June, 2012.

from 34 provinces; and, iv) produced reports on planned and completed projects in the AL sector (2008-2011).

(b) Salaries were provided to 16 staff in 8 provincial offices to help MCN start operations. This support was incorporated into the recurrent costs of MCN and these individual staff members are now paid by GoIRA (2008-2010).

(c) Many training courses have been conducted over the years from English and IT to management and M&E (2007-2010).

Ongoing:

(a) The AL database unit was developed, upgraded and transferred in June, 2012 to the new UNODC/MCN research project (2011-2012)

(b) 12 Advisors/mentors were recruited by the project and are supporting MCN in technical areas. Ten are working in the provinces and two in Kabul. (2011-2012)

(c) A training program was provided MCN (Central/provincial) (2011-2012).

Achievements:

(a) Just as the project provided physical inputs to allow MCN to expand from 14 to 24 provinces⁸, the staff support, training and mentoring conducted under this objective helped establish a strong MCN staff at the provincial level

(b) UNODC and MCN at the provincial level have managed liaison, coordination and communication among UN agencies, aid organizations, stakeholders and government concerned departments, maintaining and sharing counter narcotics information and promoting counter narcotics issues.

(c) The two Kabul-based advisers have supported the MCN on policy development, advocacy for genuine mainstreaming of counter narcotics, and on technical working groups and coordination initiatives.

Assessment of Objective 2 (Technical Support for Managing Information)

The AL database was much criticised by the Midterm Review for being incomplete and ineffective. The database has been transferred to a new Project (U04) under MCN with a dedicated staff. Difficulties in obtaining full data, especially from AL activities conducted by other major agencies, remains. However, it is understood that data collection has markedly improved by the involvement of PDCN and UNODC in monthly UNAMA coordination meetings and by the formation and operation of Technical Working Groups for Alternative Livelihoods (TWGAL) by the PDCNs under I87 mentoring.

The database was largely used by administrators and politicians. It is unlikely the database contributed much towards avoiding duplication in development or even significantly informing donors and other development agencies. Development options appear to be obtained from Provincial Development Plans (PDPs) and Community Development Plans (CDPs) which are

⁸ MCN has recently opened offices in all 34 provinces.

independent of the AL database. However, the transfer of the database to a separate dedicated project is sensible.

There is a need for a complete country-wide AL database and this may be achieved under a dedicated project which is within the mandate of MCN.

The most notable achievement under this Objective is the assignment of 10 Technical Advisers (TAs) to PDCN and two TAs to MCN in Kabul. These advisors are well regarded by MCN and PDCN officials. The TAs work with the Directors of PDCN and their Section Heads and with MCN Department Heads. MCN, Kabul strongly supports the TA scheme and has publicly requested upgrading support to include⁹:

- (a) Transportation facilities for TAs;
- (b) DSA for TAs at UNODC rates;
- (c) Increased salary of Provincial TA according to UN policy;
- (d) Direct UN contract for Advisors;
- (e) Communications costs (none available at present);
- (f) Office equipment;
- (g) Budgets for conferences and trainings for TAs (understood to mean including costs for all trainings conducted by TAs).

The ability of the PDCN staff, including the Provincial Directors, was poor at the start of the mentoring process. Few, if any, could use a computer. Reports were sent irregularly, were incomplete, and went by mail to Kabul. Other line Ministries were unaware of the existence of PDCN. PDCN could, generally speaking, not satisfactorily organize and conduct meetings with other agencies.

The situation is much changed now. The Directors of PDCN now can prepare and send reports by email. PDCN conducts monthly meetings with line Ministries and monthly WG meetings (including NGOs and other International Agencies) in all facets under MCN's mandate (including AL). The TA's have conducted ad hoc English and Computer Literacy courses for PDCN staff and the Project has signed a contract with a private company to extend its Management course training from Kabul to the provinces.

There are three major concerns under this Objective:

(a) Coverage. I87's mentors do not cover all PDCNs and the 10 TAs are often split between two provinces. The Department Heads need more training but they are constrained by the lack of operating funds and especially Internet access as outlined in '(c)', below.

(b) Dependency. It appears that some Directors of PDCN and their staff are becoming too dependent on the TA's and rely on the TA to prepare and transmit monthly summative reports to Kabul. The TA's are withdrawing from more routine organization and reporting of meetings but,

⁹ PowerPoint presentation at MCN on 3 September 2012. The Project is not in a position to accede to all such requests, but the requests indicate the importance MCN attaches to the TA system.

once they have been mentoring for about a year or so, should start to withdraw from monthly reporting as well and to give greater responsibility to the PDCN.

(c) Operating (Recurrent) costs. A continual complaint is the lack of operating funds for PDCN from MCN, Kabul. As well as requesting support for basic stationery, funds for snacks during meetings, vehicle fuel, and Internet costs were requested.

Internet access in the Provinces appears to be poor. Few Internet lines are available in each Province and PDCN Department Heads only rarely have access. Even RCs have poor access and some use their own Internet at their own expense for official correspondence; PDCN's official reports are also sometimes sent by private RC email.

Objective 3. Strengthen MCN's capacity to lead coordinated national GoIRA counter narcotics PA campaigns.

Achievements⁷

(a) Public information and drug awareness campaigns conducted in the northern provinces of Balkh, Faryab and Baghlan and southern province of Kandahar by MCN & UNODC (2010).

(b) Rapid assessment of drug decision-making processes in six provinces conducted, which supported the development of counter narcotics messages and incorporation on counter narcotics elements into later AL initiatives (2010).

(c) Support to MCN campaigns by previous advisors (2008-2010).

(d) Development of a national CNPI brand and MCN logo (2011).

Ongoing:

(a) Continued support for CNPI in accordance with new MCN national strategy and utilising new national CNPI brand. (2011-2012)

Achievements:

(a) Hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries reached with counter narcotics messages through the support of the project.

(b) CNPI brand established which will allow a unified campaign across Afghanistan with buy-in from national and international actors.

(c) A new brand or official logo was prepared for the MCN (CNPI).

(d) The CNPI brand for the first time allows a unified campaign across Afghanistan.

(e) The brand was launched on 26 June 2011, World Drug Day.

Assessment of Objective 3 (Public Advocacy)

All persons interviewed were clearly aware of the CN messages. It is noteworthy that CN messages were clearly understood by all persons, including villagers, associated with all AL activities that were inspected. It is too early yet to assess the impact of the CNPI brand but its logo is in increasingly wide use and no adverse comments were encountered during the Mission.

This Objective appears to have largely achieved its aims, most especially where Public Awareness has been incorporated with successful AL activities.

Again, this Objective was greatly appreciated by all persons interviewed. It is a vital to achieving the goal of reduced illicit drug production. Posters and brochures were inspected at the village, district and provincial level and their meaning and intent appeared to be clear to all present.

Objective 4. High impact alternative livelihoods (AL) pilot project initiatives developed and implemented in partnership with provincial authorities and other partner agencies.

Achievements⁷

- (a) Western Provinces (through the Joint Action and Mobilization)
 - (i) Training programs, irrigation rehabilitation, baseline studies, para-vet training, involving many agencies including (UNODC, UNAMA, MCN, MAIL, WHO, WFP, IOM and local NGOs).
 - (ii) UNODC, ABFO: Integrated Pest Management in Herat Province.
 - (iii) UNODC, MCN, RWDOA: Training for saffron cultivation in Herat Province.
- (b) North (Jawzjan Province)
 - (i) Baba Ali Canal rehabilitation, 27 kilometres, 12 villages.
- (c) North-East (Badakhshan Province)
 - (i) Eight watershed initiatives (Darayem, Argo, Tishkan and Yamgan Districts).
- (d) South (Kandahar Province)
 - (i) Vocational training for former prisoners and farmers involved in illicit economy.
- (e) Central (Kabul Province)
 - (i) Support for 4th year social research methods course at Kabul University

Ongoing:

- (a) Western Provinces (through the Joint Action and Mobilization)
 - (i) UNODC, DACAAR: Land stabilization Project, Kohsan
 - (ii) Training of Trainers for diversified livelihoods: Western Region, introducing innovative techniques regarding cultivation, harvesting, processing, and packaging of farm products for effective marketing to Master Farmers from 20 Districts in Ghor, Farah and Herat Provinces.
 - (iii) Jujube Production: Improvement and expansion of jujube production for alternative income in Farah Province.
 - (iv) Oilseed Production: Watershed protection and oilseed production in Ghor Province
- (b) North (Jawzjan and Sar-i-Pul Provinces)
 - (i) Four irrigation rehabilitation initiatives for areas at risk of returning to poppy.
- (c) Northeast (Badakhshan Province)
 - (i) Four more watershed initiatives (Kishim, Jurm, Yamgan and Zebak Districts).

- (ii) Gabion protection to increase agricultural land (Drayem District).
- (d) East (Nangahar Province)
 - (i) Vocational training for former female addicts (Behsood and Surkhrud Districts).
 - (ii) Kariz (irrigation canals) cleaning/protection walls in seven communities
- (e) South (Kandahar Province)
 - (i) Support for MCN / MAIL Tarnak farm (Daman District)

All follow the UNODC Community approach to CN using ‘Social Contracts’ and having communities lead CN in their own villages.

Effectiveness

Overall the Project has been effective. While PDCN offices have not yet been adequately assisted, they will be by the new Capacity Building Project (K65). A Central Training Facility was constructed and is both operational and being used. The operational capacity of the PDCNs varies with many being far from fully effective. PDCN staff abilities often remain poor and all suffer from a lack of sufficient operational funds. At the MCN Kabul level, skills have been greatly improved in policy formulation, planning, management and analysis. At the provincial level these skills have been significantly improved.

Regarding alternative livelihoods, Social Agreements have been signed with villagers who participate in livelihood activities. These Agreements require a significant reduction in poppy cultivation or require that villagers refrain from restarting poppy cultivation if they have already stopped. Discussions with all persons concerned, including villagers, suggest that the Agreements are faithfully adhered to.

One major factor impeding the effectiveness of the Project was regarding financial arrangements. The AL Evaluator recognizes the position of UNODC as a member of the Secretariat and, thus, not designed primarily for project implementation. The following remarks, though, are told from the point of view of the I87 Project staff which is disappointed in the support it receives.

For example, on 21 June, 2012, the Project Manager officially wrote to Vienna asking permission to award a grant of US\$34,844 contract directly to the Dari Nor District Development Assembly (DDA) in Nangana Province to construct an irrigation intake in Omer Qala village. A full draft contract was attached to the request which involved implementation by the Community Development Council (CDC) and monitoring and control by the DDA under UNODC aegis. This form of AL development is highly recommended but at the time of writing (October, 2012) the Project had not been advised as to whether the proposal would be approved.¹⁰ It is recommended that the Project Manager be given immediate authority to approve and pay for such activities.

The Project would also like to be able to sign contractual agreements with villager groups, rather than private companies as mandated by UNODC regulations, to carry out development work.

¹⁰ The request was eventually denied.

The reasons are that villager groups, who would benefit directly from the work, would use better quality materials. Villagers complain of the unsatisfactory grade of rocks supplied by Companies (driven by the profit motive) for canal lining, and of poor quality saffron corms¹¹. Villager groups would provide better quality workmanship. Private companies do not build canals to the same standard as the villagers do. Villagers told the alternative livelihoods Evaluator that cement is mixed with soil to save Company costs. It was frequently stated that villagers have a vested interest in the outcome and will more conscientiously implement activities. In canal rehabilitation, the villagers are well supported by Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) engineers.

Using CDCs to Implement Community Projects

The use of CDCs for implementing community can be justified in several ways. These include:

(a) Greater income provided for poor villagers. The village receives more income if the activities are directly implemented by them rather than through a Private Company.

(b) Greater Project Efficiency. Villagers can implement projects cheaper than private companies¹². The Mission was informed that private companies often collude in that a company awarded the tender on the lowest cost, will rescind and cause the contract to be rewarded to the next highest bidder which is in collusion with the first company.

(c) Capacity building for villagers. Villagers are in a better position to sustainably continue an AL intervention if the villagers do the work themselves. This may involve some training of villagers. In the case of canal construction, it should be noted that the designs of the canals are made by the Provincial Departments of Energy and Water (PDEWs) before tenders are advertised, so that technical expertise for the canal design is the same for the Private Company tender and for the villagers.

Another example of the lack of authority possessed by Project staff for implementing projects is that the Project Manager at present can only authorize and spend the miniscule amount of US\$350, an astonishingly counter-intuitive figure given that the project budget is over US\$20 million.¹³ Similarly ineffective and a barrier to efficiency is the UNODC regulation that RCs have an Imprest Account of only US\$2,500 of which more than half is for routine office costs. This sometimes results in delays in field visits or the RC advances his own funds until the account is replenished.

¹¹ RWDOA (2011). 'Final Report for Integrated Saffron Production, Extension and Marketing Training, Herat Province. UNODC provided the training but corms were supplied by a private supplier funded by another donor.

¹² An example is the Baba Ali irrigation rehabilitation scheme in Jowzjam Province. The estimated cost was US\$19,300. There were 14 tenders of which the lowest bid was US\$29,147. The local DDA submitted an application to complete the job for US\$21,676. Under the existing UNDP rules in place at that time, the DDA was awarded the contract and the job was successfully completed on time with the MRRD monitoring the work (Relevant paper work sighted by the Mission). Subsequent to UNODC rules being operative, DDAs are no longer awarded contracts.

¹³ UNODC has a long and successful record of prompt implementation of interventions in Southeast Asia and from personal experience, the Mission can testify that successful Community-based development interventions can be commenced in a village within one day of developing a community development plan, the development of which also need only take one day. This leads to increased rapport with villagers and increased efficiency of implementation.

The villagers, Government officials, and COAFG staff told the AL Evaluator that they would welcome a faster approval process than the process now in place that, from their point of view, appears wasteful and sometimes counterproductive. By eliminating the lengthy bureaucratic procedures that UNODC headquarters must follow, this will build a high rapport with villagers, overcome 'survey fatigue', and facilitate a mutually beneficial working relationship.

These matters and their impact on eliminating opium poppy cultivation are of sufficient importance for a detailed discussion in this Report which is in the following section.

Relevance

The Project is directly relevant to the needs of Afghanistan. Dealing with opium cultivation addresses one of the major problems of Afghanistan that contributes to addiction, corruption, and crime.

Impact

The impact of the Project has been satisfactory. Service at the provincial level has been greatly improved by the provision of infrastructure and equipment and of TAs to the PDCN. The community development process of the Project gives the rights to villagers in selecting their development options although this right and service is constrained by UNODC's lack of procedures to allow direct implementation by villagers.

Leadership skills for driving AL at the institutional and individual levels have been improved through the introduction of the community development process which places priority on villagers' felt needs. However, it is uncertain how successful the PDCN will be in resisting pressure from higher level authorities to implement activities not of highest priority to villagers once UNODC mentoring ceases.

The construction and equipping of the PDCN buildings and the Training Centre in Kabul are very highly appreciated by all relevant persons interviewed. The buildings and Training Centre are all well used. Buildings and equipment that were seen appear to be satisfactory.

The result has been to raise the profile of the MCN and PDCN. This is significant because MCN is a new ministry with limited profile but a heavy responsibility under the National Counter Narcotics Strategy (NCNS). The Project has thus been quite effective overall in accomplishing this objective.

In terms of efficiency, there were no obvious less costly intervention modalities than those used in the project. Regarding government transparency and accountability, all Project reports are publicly available. The Project consistently raises and addresses problems of accountability with junior and senior Government staff but not always with complete success (the provision of sufficient operating funds at the provincial level is a continuing problem).

To maximize its impact, the Project has actively and effectively partnered with other agencies. Coordination between the Government, UNODC and other implementing partners has been effective. The Project has been instrumental in holding regular coordination meetings with the

UNAMA Technical Working group which involves all relevant actors, including Government agencies.

Skills in income generation, land stabilization, planning, and new agricultural techniques have been greatly enhanced within the limited range of Project activities. At the same time the Project assisted the MCN in carrying out its drug control mandate especially at the provincial level.

As time passed, and especially after responding to the Project Revision of 2010, there has been a marked improvement in designing projects that addressed local economic problems. Through this the Project has greatly influenced policy and intellectual approaches to eliminating illicit drug production (to be fully discussed below).

Security constraints on effectiveness are discussed elsewhere. External corruption that may specifically effect project activities, are the disappearance of essential equipment (some computers purchased for PCDN, for example), the failure of operating funds to reach the provinces (there are rumors of paid favors are required to facilitate PDCN offices receiving their line ministry budgets), and poppy fields not being eradicated if bribes are paid (according to several independent reports). There is also the problem of rent-seeking, namely introducing activities especially at the provincial level that benefit senior officials rather than villagers (the Good Performance Initiative, GPI, was often mentioned in this regard). Nepotism also results sometimes in less-competent persons being appointed to Government positions.

Another problem was that of insufficient Government funds. The operational budget comes from Government revenue which is low. One result is that some funds from donors may be channeled into supporting routine operational funds. This means that funding operational costs will depend on continuing donor contributions. MCN does not fully utilize donor funds and has had its own budget reduced as a result.

Although for various reasons the Evaluator could not visit a large number of villages, he did visit four and while there met with representatives of several other Project villages. In all cases the local people expressed very positive feelings and appreciation for the Project activities. UNODC assistance has improved the capacity of the community to generate income and be drug free.

Sustainability

Regarding sustainability, the national government is taking the lead in developing and implementing frameworks and strategies for eradicating illicit drug production, demand reduction, and drug trafficking. It should be noted that drug demand reduction and trafficking are outside the mandate of I87.

Similarly, the Project interventions have the potential for scaling up and replication. This is discussed in the recommendations section. As for the recommendations of the Midterm Review, a table on page 16 discusses this in detail. Local communities and women have been much involved in project formulation. A local woman is now on the I87 staff and she participates in project formulation and advises on women's affairs and helps solidify the Project's strong links with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Community consultations, in combination with alternative livelihoods, are effective counter narcotics mechanisms. "Genuine mainstreaming" within the

Government is occurring more through higher level policy formulation and implementation and appears to be effective. See below for further discussion of these issues.

All livelihood initiatives were well received by everyone interviewed. Most importantly, villagers from the four villages visited were particularly enthusiastic and requested an expansion of the programme. At Kohsan, representatives from 11 villages were present; at another site, representatives from a neighboring village were also present. Following is the discussion of UNODC work to eliminate poppy cultivation.

Permanent Elimination of Poppy Cultivation

From discussions with villagers and other concerned persons, it is clear that the continuing restriction on poppy growing depends mainly on continuing support for appropriate alternative livelihood activities at the village level. All villagers interviewed strongly hinted that they would revert to poppy growing if effective alternative livelihoods activities were not implemented in their villages. Some villagers volunteered that they were receiving exhortations from the Taliban to resume poppy growing and that those who did so would be protected by the Taliban.

In this matter, Afghanistan is different from the situation in Southeast Asia where two members of the Evaluation Team have had first-hand experience in the elimination of poppy cultivation in UNODC (and UNFDAC, UNDCP) projects in northern Thailand, northern Vietnam, Laos and the Wa Region of Myanmar and have observed similar areas in southern China.

In these countries, the central or local Government had much greater control of the poppy-growing areas than the central or local Government has control in Afghanistan. While effective alternative livelihoods activities were introduced by UNODC and other actors as part of the strategy to stop poppy-cultivation in Southeast Asia, it is not, in the opinion of the Mission, the main factor for the cessation of poppy growing in those countries. It is in the opinion of the Mission that effective coercion from the central or local Government was one important factor and that alternative livelihoods and also drug demand reduction were very useful adjuncts to alleviating economic hardship and overcoming addiction.¹⁴ Successful alternative livelihoods activities reduced resentment towards the central Government and allowed the cessation of poppy growing to be more peaceful. In these conditions, drug treatment was very effective with many villages signing Social Contracts banning the use of opium for everything including medicine (such as one Evaluation Team member saw in several villages in Nonghet District, Xieng Khouang Province, Lao PDR in 2003).

From frequent discussions with ex-poppy growing villagers in Southeast Asia, the Evaluation Team also believes that in Southeast Asia, many ex-growers living in former growing would revert to poppy cultivation if there was not effective Government prohibition against poppy-growing. In most places, especially Afghanistan, opium production is still the most rational

¹⁴ Renard, Ronald D. (ca. 2008) *Mainstreaming Alternative Development in Thailand, Lao PDR and Myanmar: a Process of Learning* reached a similar conclusion: in relation to Thailand, he wrote (p.56): 'With the threat of eradication or legal punishment, farmers were much more willing to stop growing the poppy. After thirteen years of an increasing amount of development initiatives in the hills, no appreciable decline in opium had been observed. The Government realized that AD itself would not be able to reduce cultivation effectively'.

livelihood activity for villagers for the reasons of ease of production, less need of water in a dry environment, fast return after sowing, ease of transport to markets, and a reliable and consistent market, with high farm-gate prices. There are notable exceptions to this generalization in areas of very profitable alternative livelihoods activities¹⁵

The claim that ex-poppy growing villagers would prefer to revert to poppy-growing is not inconsistent with the claim that, at least in some instances, poppy-free villages are more prosperous than poppy-growing villages. In Laos, more opium was consumed in poppy-growing villages than in non-poppy-growing villages. Together with the reduced ability of villagers to work if addicted to opium, this led to poppy-growing villages being poorer than non-poppy-growing villages.¹⁶

In Afghanistan, there is anecdotal evidence of increased drug addiction in non-poppy-growing villages. This was attributed to the younger men in non-poppy-growing villages seeking employment elsewhere, within Afghanistan and in neighboring countries, where drugs are freely available and where there is little social pressure and villager-elder authority to prevent addiction. It is likely in Afghanistan that poppy-growing villages are more economically viable than poppy-free villages, especially in the absence of suitable alternative livelihoods activities.

Villagers during the Mission consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of support or even broken promises to villages by the central government. The GPI programme was especially criticised. By the GPI programme, a province is given US\$1 million per year if it is deemed as poppy-free. 'Poppy-free' is taken to mean that less than 100 hectares of poppy was grown in that province. Villagers are aware of the grant but state that none of the US\$1 million reaches them but is used for Provincial infrastructure and the like.

Effective alternative livelihoods activities must be introduced to villages to continue reducing poppy-growing in Afghanistan until such time as the central Government is sufficiently strong to continue the restriction on poppy-cultivation by force alone. It is significant that in Afghanistan, it appears that the greater the control the Government has of a province, the less poppy is grown in there. This is probably due to two causes: greater government control allows more alternative

¹⁵ In Afghanistan, saffron production appears to be more profitable than poppy-growing but saffron production suffers from start-up obstacles, *namely* that it takes about three years from planting until an economic return is made from saffron (compared to less than 6 months for poppy); saffron production is more sophisticated than opium production (requires very careful and hygienic collection of stigmas and careful, immediate and complete drying which opium production does not); and marketing saffron is less certain than opium (concerns of swamping a restricted local market and difficulty of competing with production from neighboring countries, compare the ease of marketing opium). In some ways this is comparable to coffee cultivation which was much promoted in Thailand from the 1980s (at one point the Thai King's Royal Project stopped promoting village-level cultivation because of the difficulties in maintain quality control). However, at present coffee production in the Thai hills is a growth industry managed by former poppy growers. Such development, though takes time, training, security, and political stability.

¹⁶ Renard, *Mainstreaming*, pp.72-73: in Laos, in 2005, poppy-growers had an annual cash income of US\$139 compared to US\$231 for non-poppy-growers. The reasons given for this discrepancy were that non-poppy growers had a more diverse economy and that the rate of opium addiction was greater in poppy-growing villages such that, in poppy-growing villages, people worked less hard and less effectively and consumed an appreciable amount of their agricultural produce (opium) which could not be sold.

livelihoods to be initiated more effectively (access to villages easier due to improved security) and the government can more effectively and safely enforce eradication. In any case, effective alternative livelihoods activities are necessary after the forced elimination of poppy-growing to maintain human welfare and a peaceful transition out of poppy-growing.

Since the Afghan Government does not have effective control over much of its territory, and because of the humanitarian aspects of profitable alternative livelihoods activities, it is important that UNODC expands its alternative livelihoods programmer to promote its poppy-reduction strategy to other agencies which have greater financial capabilities than UNODC has to raise more funds for its own projects.

I87's Poppy Elimination Strategy

The strategy adopted by I87 in poppy-elimination is as follows:¹⁷

(a) Initial PA of the harm from, and illegality of, poppy-growing and illicit drug consumption. Village Imams assist in advising villagers of the restrictions on poppy-growing and drug consumption under Islamic Law.

(b) The identification by villagers of suitable alternative livelihoods activities. This is done by RC's, in cooperation with PDCN, assessing possible activities from the Provincial Development Plan. The Plan is drawn up by the Provincial Development Council, chaired by the Governor, based on proposals arising from District Development Plans (DDPs), other line Ministries, the Central Government and the Governor's Office. The DDP's are approved by the District Development Assemblies which are chaired by the District Governor. The CDC programme was originally established under the World Bank funded National Solidarity Programme (NSP). DDA members comprise representatives from CDCs.

Some District plans draw on Community Development Plans (CDPs). These are devised by the Community Development Councils made of persons democratically elected village representatives under a participatory programme developed by the NSP. This Programme allocates development funds to a village based on CDPs. NSP activities are implemented by CDCs, that is, the villagers themselves, and the NSP is generally regarded as successful.

CDP activities are not automatically included in PDPs; they must be approved by the PDC often after representations by CDC or DDA members. However, it appears that activities most important and appropriate to villagers are eventually included in PDPs without too much delay if villagers are somewhat persistent.

Not all PDP activities are based at the village level. However, the Regional Coordinators (RCs) and PDCN only choose activities from the PDPs that have a CN component, are applicable to villagers, and are within the mandate of I87 and MCN. The selected activities are then discussed with, and approved by, the villagers concerned before a formal proposal is made¹⁸. By this method, albeit cumbersome, a participatory mode of development is achieved.

¹⁷ This policy was formulated in conjunction with MCN which is based on MCN's Food Zone Strategy which is, in turn, based on an early United Kingdom Project.

¹⁸ Some I87 AL activities do not arise from direct villager requests and are not formally approved by villagers. These are activities that originate from higher level Government authorities but all activities conducted by I87 appear in PDPs and are formally approved by PDCs, ARD and Department of Economy.

Although cumbersome, this method is accepted as necessary by all participants as it ensures Afghan Government involvement and responsibility for the development process.

(c) Development of the alternative livelihoods proposal. I87 and the PDCN then consult the relevant line Ministries in developing a detailed proposal including detailed budgeting. This proposal is then signed off by the PDCs, the Agriculture and Rural Development Cluster of Ministries (ARD) and the Department of Economy and sent to I87 and MCN HQ in Kabul for approval.

Each alternative livelihoods proposal must be included in the following year's budget, so proposals are usually submitted to Kabul towards the end of each calendar year. Proposals less than US\$40,000 may be approved by UNODC Kabul; proposals above US\$40,000 must be approved by UNODC Vienna. Should it not be possible to implement a proposal, an alternative proposal must be made during that year within budget constraints.

Once a proposal is approved, the activity is put to tender. The average time from submission of proposals to tender selection is about 3 months for UNODC Kabul, and about 7 months for UNODC Vienna. In the extreme, Vienna has taken 14 months to approve a tender¹⁹.

(d) The Social Agreement. All I87 AL activities are accompanied by an agreement, signed by all participating villagers that they will not resume growing poppy if they already have stopped or will greatly reduce poppy if poppy is still grown in that village. These agreements are signed off by the Village leaders and the village Imam and are mostly adhered to.

(e) DDR activities. Where requested by villagers, I87 coordinates with the Drug Demand Reduction Section to initiate drug demand activities. This will reduce the village's dependence on opium and will enhance the ability of the village to reduce poppy cultivation.

(f) Eradication/ enforcement. PDCN, with mentoring from I87, will report non-compliance with the Social Agreement to District Authorities with the view to forced eradication. Eradication is a last resort and is seldom resorted to, but the threat of enforcement is considered a significant factor in the elimination of poppy-growing.

Assessment of Poppy Elimination Strategy

MCN and I87 do not, by themselves, implement alternative livelihoods activities. MCN implements AL activities through the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) cluster line ministries, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD). MCN's role is in policy formulation, monitoring and coordination. I87 implements alternative livelihoods activities through different agencies including NGOs and private companies.

UNODC (with UNFDAC and UNDCP) has a long, successful and proud record of implementing alternative livelihoods activities in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar since 1972. I87 does not implement alternative livelihoods activities because of limited field staff. Part of the reason for not employing field staff to implement alternative livelihoods activities is the greater security

¹⁹ This extreme delay was in relation to a Ministry Agricultural Farm in Kandahar and was not a community-based proposal. However, community-based proposals still take months to approve and this is unacceptable for the reasons outlined in the text.

risk UNODC staff face in the field and the additional security costs needed to maintain such staff. Rather, 187 sub-contracts alternative livelihoods implementation to NGOs and private companies.

At least one donor embassy complained to the alternative livelihoods Evaluator that UNODC was exceeding its mandate by actually implementing activities. UNODC staff explained in response that there were discussions underway to resolve this. In the opinion of the Evaluator, there are times when UNODC implementation is appropriate and effective.

The above strategy has worked well on the limited pilot scale so far attempted. It has reduced poppy-growing where poppy is growing and prevented the reversion to poppy in villages already stopped poppy-growing. The strategy is well accepted by villagers and all officials interviewed and seems effective in countering anti-Government forces. Compared to some other strategies²⁰ it is cost effective. The strategy is ready for scaling-up to cover all Afghanistan by UNODC or larger agencies using the UNODC approach.

²⁰ E.g. the US implemented project in Helmand Province whereby almost US\$1.3 billion was spent in one district in one year. Poppy replacement projects were included in the Project package although most of the costs were for security. Poppy cultivation in Helmand Province was reduced by about one-third (it is not clear how much money was spent on all of Helmand Province) (<http://blogs.reuters.com/david-rohde/2012/06/01/little-america-an-afghan-town-an-american-dream-and-the-folly-of-for-ProFit-war/>) (<http://blogs.reuters.com/david-rohde/2012/06/01/little-america-an-afghan-town-an-american-dream-and-the-folly-of-for-ProFit-war/>) but more recent sources do not expect the reduction in poppy cultivation areas to be sustained.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The most significant impact of the Project has been in the MCN and PDCN gaining considerably in influence and capabilities. MCN now plays the lead role in the Government's counter narcotics policy, strategy, coordination and monitoring. Through this, there has been the recognition that drug issues in general as well as poppy cultivation, use, and sales in particular, are a crucial issue for Afghanistan to resolve. The Project helped develop a new logo for MCN for use in PA campaigns across Afghanistan.

In this regard the PA activities conducted at the local level have contributed towards villagers being more willing than before to cease poppy production and illicit drug usage. This is an important accomplishment that should be built on in future activities. The expansion of activities to the provinces spread the Counter Narcotics message far more widely than ever before. Since it was presented in culturally-appropriate ways designed in part by the national Afghan staff of UNODC, the impact (although this was not measured in any concrete or scientific manner) is sure to have been profound.

The Project also successfully initiated AL employment development activities and Resource Centres with women. The most significant activities and future plans are as follows:

- (a) health care training with World Health Organisation (WHO) (2 districts, Herat)
- (b) agricultural nursery training/women's resource centre/business development (Kohsan District / Herat)
- (c) tailoring training in Nangana and Shindand (Herat)
- (d) Counter-Narcotics Awareness campaigns
- (e) Some participation in Government training activities
- (f) 280 women trained in saffron cultivation
- (g) UNODC plans UNODC plans to develop a series of women's resource centres to be linked to a Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)/MCN agricultural value-added -added training centre in Herat (in K63 programme).

Besides the PA campaigns which were very innovative for Afghanistan, the Project initiated a balanced approach to drug use using alternative livelihoods and drug demand reduction work together with law enforcement.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Critical

(a) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to have rules in place that facilitate and not hinder development at the village level.

Important

(a) Since the alternative livelihoods activities implemented in villages have worked well on the limited pilot scale so far attempted, have reduced poppy-growing in a cost-effective manner, and is well-accepted by villagers, UNODC Afghanistan should work with the MCN to scale up such work to cover all of Afghanistan.

General

(a) COAFG should help MCN establish a complete country-wide alternative livelihoods database either under the dedicated project to which it now is being implemented under the mandate of MCN or in some other appropriate way.

(b) UNODC as a whole should streamline approval process for field interventions. Suggested solutions to these problems include: 1) Increase the amount that the Project Manager to approve and pay for interventions up from US\$350 to US\$40,000 and 2) Increase the amount of the RC Imprest account to a figure the Country Office feels appropriate.

(c) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to approve tenders up to US\$100,000.

(d) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to find how to reduce the time needed to approve tenders to two months for amounts over US\$100,000.

(e) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to facilitate the use of local non-commercial entities as IPs when properly vetted by the Country Office.

(f) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to enable projects to directly contract CDCs and DDAs. As noted above, a DDA activity was successfully implemented through the Project and that NSP activities were successfully implemented by DDAs and CDCs²¹.

(g) UNODC Headquarters should work with COAFG to develop a system of grants to CDCs/DDAs at a level the Country Office feels appropriate in order that better quality materials and better workmanship will be utilised.

²¹ Since Government oversight is inadequate as yet, it is not recommended to award contracts through Government entities. DDAs, while receiving Government sanction, are elected from CDCs and represent villager interests.