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# TECHNICAL REPORT

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS ASSESSMENT – DRAFT

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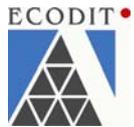
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# **CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS ASSESSEMENT – BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR NEPA**

MARCH 2008

## **DISCLAIMER**

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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## ACRONYMS

Abbreviations and acronyms have been kept to a minimum in the text of this document. Where abbreviations or acronyms have been used, they are accompanied by their full expression the first time they appear, unless they are commonly used and generally understood abbreviations such as NGO, kg, etc. However, in order to facilitate understanding of the acronyms used, a complete list is included here.

To be added.





**Executive Summary**

**To Be Added....**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (NEPA)

In January 2005, the Department of Environment was separated from the MIWRE and declared an independent department and then in May 2005 granted independent status as the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). The restructuring and institutional development of NEPA involves the priorities outlined in the National Development Framework. In relation to environment, the National Development Budget states the following:

“The establishment of a national environmental framework and an operational agency will require developing a national environmental framework, which will include policy, legislative and regulatory aspects, establishing agreed environmental standards, and environmental impact assessment procedures and establishing an environmental agency, with staff and capacity to raise environmental awareness, implement environmental policy and regulations.”

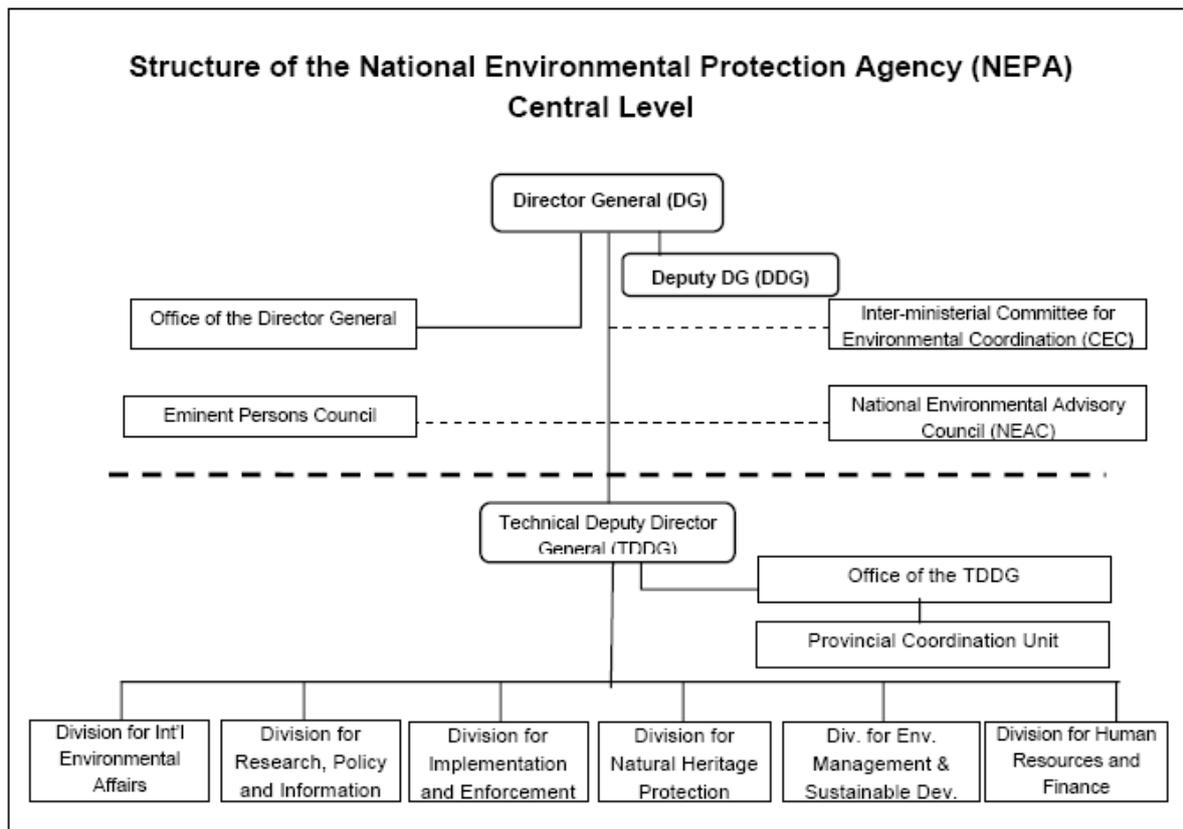
The Mission of NEPA is “to protect the environmental integrity of Afghanistan and support sustainable development of Afghanistan’s natural resources through the provision of effective environmental guidance and management services.”

To achieve this vision, the purpose of NEPA is defined in four key areas:

- Coordinate environmental affairs at international, national and sub-national level.
- Develop and implement environmental law, policies and strategies in order to integrate environmental issues and sustainable development approaches into the legal and regulatory frameworks of Afghanistan.
- Provide environmental management services in the areas of environmental impact assessment, air and water quality, waste management, pollution control and permitting of activities that impact the environment.
- Provide communication and outreach for environmental information to ensure awareness of the environment specifically for the needs of Afghanistan.

The organization structure of the NEPA at the central level is demonstrated as follows.

**Figure 1: Structure of the NEPA at the Central Level (Source: UNEP 2007)**



NEPA is currently going through a change in structure from 8 Regional Hubs to establishing a NEPA Office in each of the 34 provinces. All of the 34 NEPA field offices will report directly to NEPA HQ in Kabul.

## 1.2 BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR NEPA (BSP/NEPA)

ECODIT ([www.ecodit.com](http://www.ecodit.com)), a USA based private small business specializing in environmental consulting and institutional capacity building, has been awarded the Task Order for the USAID funded Biodiversity Support Program for the National Environmental Protection Agency (BSP/NEPA), effective 01NOV07. The mandate of the project is to provide institutional capacity building to Afghanistan’s National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). All activities will be directly linked to biodiversity conservation and in alignment with USAID’s Biodiversity Attribute: [Biodiversity Conservation: A Guide for USAID Staff and Partners, FY2005 \(6.81MB PDF\)](#). There is a 100% requirement for the biodiversity attribution and 30% for the forest attribution.

The project will be implemented over a 32 month period. The staff consists of 2 long term expatriates, approximately 10 short term international/national consultants, and 10 full time technical Afghan national staff. Five of these Afghan nationals will be hired with a variety of technical backgrounds, go through extensive training throughout the life of the project and transfer over to NEPA at project completion.

In accordance with Subtask 1.1, this report presents the data collected during the Capacity Building Assessment carried out by the Organizational Strengthening Specialist (OSS). The report will identify the overall capacity building needs of NEPA, and more specifically, identify the areas where the BSP/NEPA can provide support. Much work has already been done by other stakeholders working with NEPA,

therefore areas where the BSP/NEPA can coordinate with those stakeholders will be identified. This will be critical in avoiding overlap and gaps in work carried out by the BSP/NEPA.

This assessment is based largely on communication with the NEPA HQ Divisions and the Kabul Hub. It was not possible to consult with all of the 8 Regional Hubs at this time. Any capacity building initiatives must consider the provinces, since there has been a tendency to overlook the provinces in the past. This is especially critical since the NEPA structure will be changing from 8 Regional Hubs to a NEPA office in each of the 34 provinces, with plans to hire approximately 300 new employees. Capacity Building needs will be high for the provinces during the next few years and must be a focus.

The following five Tasks and 20 Subtasks provide the framework for activities within the BSP/NEPA.

**Table 1: BSP/NEPA Tasks and Subtasks**

TASKS	SUBTASKS
<b>Task #1 Institutional Strengthening</b>	
Subtask 1.1)	Conduct a rapid capacity-building needs assessment
Subtask 1.2)	Develop environmental assessment center and strengthen its capabilities
Subtask 1.3)	Assist in developing management and administrative systems and funding mechanisms
Subtask 1.4)	Assist NEPA to develop procedures and rules required to fulfill its mandate
Subtask 1.5)	Assist in establishing a “green environment” technical oversight office
Subtask 1.6)	Develop and deliver short training courses and regional study tours
Subtask 1.7)	Assist in selecting two candidates for scholarships to a Master’s program in environmental assessment
<b>Task #2 National Coordination of Environmental Programs</b>	
Subtask 2.1)	Assist in expanding membership of the Committee for Environmental Coordination (revised; see section 2.2)
Subtask 2.2)	Provide technical and financial assistance to the Committee
<b>Task #3 Public Outreach and Education</b>	
Subtask 3.1)	Assess communications needs
Subtask 3.2)	Establish an information resource center at NEPA
Subtask 3.3)	Support the production of publications and multi-media outreach
Subtask 3.4)	Work with NEPA to improve environmental education
Subtask 3.5)	Train NEPA and other stakeholders on environmental public education and outreach
<b>Task #4 Environmental Regulation and Financing</b>	
Subtask 4.1)	Regulation
Subtask 4.2)	Financing
<b>Task #5 Community-based Resource Management</b>	
Subtask 5.1)	Design the CBRM small grants program and establish an advisory committee
Subtask 5.2)	Prepare and issue requests for applications
Subtask 5.3)	Award grants and build NGO capacity

TASKS	SUBTASKS
Subtask 5.4)	Monitor grant implementation and build NEPA capacity

**BIODIVERSITY ATTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS**

All activities of the Biodiversity Support Program for NEPA must be attributable to biodiversity conservation, as part of regulatory compliance by USAID to funding requirements. The BSP/NEPA team is required to ensure that 100 percent of task order activities (and funding) meets the biodiversity attribution requirements including that approximately 30 percent of activities (and funding) affects forested ecosystems.

**1.3 CAPACITY BUILDING WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF AFGHANISTAN**

Almost thirty years of war in Afghanistan has caused great destruction to its environment, social stability, and economy. The present security concerns continue to limit progress and cause destruction. Since the end of the Taliban regime in 2001, billions of dollars have been pouring into the country in an effort to support the development and stabilization within Afghanistan. Even though benefits have resulted from the many donor organizations, projects and funds entering the country, it can also be said this effort has limited development in certain ways. Below are a few points referencing some of the challenges facing a country attempting to rebuild itself under the supportive arm of international donor organizations. Some of these obstacles cause one to rethink the development paradigm and to be creative in ones thinking while initiating capacity building initiatives in such a reality.

1. Dependency
 

A culture of dependency has evolved from the years of donor activity in the country. A couple simple examples of this are 1. Most government staff expect to be paid DSA when attending a workshop or training and this has resulted in the wrong people attending trainings for the wrong reasons, 2. Many have lost a personal drive to initiate an activity unless there is donor money backing them. Within NEPA there exists a lot of talent and much capacity building could be done from within without additional resources, yet staff have a mentality that nothing can be done without donor support and funding.
2. Corruption
 

Corruption exists on many levels, but with an influx of billions of donor dollars, corruption is increasingly occurring at the national and international level. The funds do not always make it to the intended parties or activities. After years of war and struggling for survival day to day, this feeling of struggle still exists since there is no guarantee of a stable economy. Furthermore, there is no guarantee how long donors will continue to have a presence within the country, therefore many feel they need to get or take what they can now.
3. The Donor Agenda
 

Among the donor organizations exists a level of competition, which results in limited co-operation and coordination. Some donor projects have been developed without consulting other similar programs and even, at times, without consulting properly the Afghanistan People which the money is meant to support. There have been examples of donors putting limitations and requirements on their funding that force Afghan Government agencies to do work against their original mandate or work that is not the most productive or sustainable for them. One example of this has been government agencies developing work plans in a very opportunistic manner, so not based on any institutional system, but entirely based on which donor funds are available.
4. Outsourcing

A limiting factor to building capacity is that much work is outsourced. Some work is outsourced in the traditional sense, such as when NEPA must take materials to a printing shop to produce awareness building materials, due to lack of equipment in-house. Other times, work is outsourced, but not in the traditional sense. It occurs within the donor context, such as when an international donor is drafting legislation for NEPA, but not building NEPA's capacity to draft the legislation. Often, due to time limitations, donors will be rushed to complete an activity; therefore more focused on the deliverable than on the transfer of knowledge and skills.

#### 5. Security

Security issues are still a very serious issue in Afghanistan. This has limited movement and activities on many fronts. It is not uncommon for workshops/trainings to be cancelled or postponed because of a security issue. There is normally more cost involved in carrying out such events because of security. Since the security issues limit movement, this can prevent staff from attending available trainings. For example, women are not able to travel to certain locations and at certain times due to security; therefore if this is not considered while planning a training program, this population of staff is already automatically denied access to capacity building initiatives.

The BSP/NEPA Training initiatives will take all of the above into consideration while planning and implementing their capacity building activities.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The approach the BSP/NEPA Organizational Strengthening Specialist (OSS) used to carry out the rapid capacity building needs assessment for NEPA within the context of the Biodiversity Support Program was:

1. Understanding NEPA's overall structure and the original intent of how each Division was structured to support the Mission of NEPA.
2. Identifying the general strengths and weaknesses of NEPA as a whole, thus identifying gaps in capacity.
3. Identifying the general strengths and weaknesses of each division within NEPA, thus identifying the gaps in capacity.
4. Carrying out consultations with key stakeholders working with NEPA in an attempt to learn from their past experiences and to discuss potential areas of co-operation.
5. Identifying the most critical needs of NEPA which can be addressed in the capacity building component of the BSP/NEPA.

The Organizational Strengthening Specialist (OSS) utilized a variety of data collecting methods in an effort to capture the most accurate information. This was consciously planned because it was obvious that some NEPA staff were trying to control their responses in order to attempt to get their 'gift list' from the project. Moreover, there exists a layer of discomfort for staff to speak openly about their concerns as relates to their specific job or NEPA as an institution. Each data collection method targeted a different sort of data, but there was also some overlap of data collected in each method. This overlap allowed for comparison, validation and a better assessment of the true situation. Below briefly explains each method used, its overall target and some of the issues that were experienced with the data collection methods.

### 2.1 INTERVIEWS – GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL

Interviews were carried out with each Division at NEPA HQ and the Kabul Hub:

- Division of International Environmental Affairs
- Division of Research, Policy and Information

- Division of Natural Heritage
- Division of Implementation and Enforcement
- Division of Assessment and Sustainable Development
- Division of Human Resources and Finance
- The Kabul Hub

On average, there were 5 or more staff members for each session. The goal of the interviews was to evaluate the level of general understanding which exists among staff members on such topics as: NEPA's Mission; the Environmental Law; Biodiversity and its relevance to their division's work; work plans; and NEPA's capacity (Annex). This was also a critical activity to get a broader understanding of each Division's mandate and how they all fit into one institutional system. In addition to group interviews, individual interviews were carried out. The OSS chose not to include specific names of those interviewed, because staff were more willing to speak openly if they knew the responses were all anonymous.

### 2.1.1 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH METHOD:

These interviews were very informative, but were limited in a few ways:

- Some information was lost in translation because it was not possible to have a professional level interpreter present for the interviews.
- Interviews carried out in a group tended to result in general group consensus on a response, rather than the actual opinions of individual staff. Some staff did not want to speak up or against what another was saying and a few individuals had much stronger influence over the final responses. The group answer was fine as one piece of data, but the goal was also for individuals to speak openly about their views in a group environment. Individual interviews were also carried out and this format allowed many to speak a bit more openly.
- The OSS was limited in communication with the provincial NEPA offices; therefore most information related to provincial NEPA office capacity levels had to be determined by discussions with HQ and the Kabul Hub. It is recommended that consultations be carried out in some of the provinces with NEPA offices when the BSP/NEPA is able to initiate such an effort.

## 2.2 WRITTEN SURVEY

Based on the responses from the interviews, a survey was developed (Annex). The survey focused on similar topics and tried to clarify a few issues that came up during the interviews. For example, most staff did not know how to define biodiversity, and even after it was defined for them, they struggled with recognizing the connection between biodiversity and their division's mandate. Question 1 on the survey made an effort to clarify this. Question 1 provided options for this question, and the OSS observed whether or not the staff recognized the possible connections. The survey was interpreted into Dari, which also allowed the OSS to confirm certain responses from the interviews, where a professional interpreter was not available.

Interesting to note that the two main obstacles identified from this survey as preventing work progress were vehicles and levels of coordination. This was quite different than the expansive list given during interviews. The activities and discussion carried out during the workshops allowed for a much more focused level of identification. This demonstrates the importance of utilizing a mix of data collecting methods.

### 2.2.1 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH METHOD:

- Surveys were handed out to randomly selected people, but with a balance between Jr. and Sr. level staff. The goal was to get individual opinions, and this was explained clearly to each staff member that received a survey. Despite the explanation of how to respond to the survey, a few consulted their supervisors to ask what response to give, others made it a group activity, some simply passed the survey onto another person and some just decided not to do it.

## 2.3 WORKSHOP FOR JUNIOR/SENIOR LEVEL STAFF

Junior level staff participated in a one day workshop, which was followed up with group assignments. Four groups were formed from the Junior level workshop and during the following week, each group had to develop a plan for their ideal training program. The OSS met with all groups at the NEPA library to discuss their ideas. Additionally, a couple of the Junior level staff volunteered to support the facilitation of the next workshop, which included the Senior level staff. The OSS worked with these volunteers to focus and prepare their presentations for the Senior level staff. The second workshop was originally planned for one day, but continued into a two day workshop. Junior and Senior level staff both attended this workshop. (Annex)

There were many reasons the Workshops contributed greatly to the effort to assess current capacity levels within NEPA:

- A professional level interpreter was present for both workshops, which allowed for clear and accurate communication.
- The Junior level staff workshop allowed for Junior staff to speak openly outside of their work environment.
- The second workshop brought together Junior and Senior level staff. This allowed the Junior level staff to express their views to their Senior Managers and it provided an opportunity for Junior and Senior level staff to discuss key issues jointly, which does not always happen in their current work environment.
- The workshops included discussion on some of the topics from the other data collecting methods, and with a professional interpreter present, some of the data was able to be verified. In addition to confirming some of the previously collected data, the participants carried out a Capacity Building Exercise (Annex). This exercise allowed each division to identify their capacity needs relative to their 1387 work plan and 5 year work plan activities. There was also some discussion on Training programs and an anonymous survey (Annex) was handed out to all participants so that they could provide their views on training experiences at NEPA. A Training Committee was recently formed at NEPA in 2007; therefore all surveys will be handed over to them for review.
- This type of forum was a great opportunity to observe the reactions of the Divisions to each other's responses about their work plans and capacity levels, as well as the interaction of Junior and Senior level staff. This was very telling of levels of coordination and communication systems within NEPA, plus a good demonstration of the various understandings the staff have of certain topics.

### 2.3.1 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH METHOD:

- A few staff were absent on the second day of the Junior and Senior level workshop.
- Not all staff had a clear understanding of the Capacity Building Exercise.

## 2.4 OBSERVATION

The OSS observed behavior during all methods of data collection. To watch the interaction of staff within a Division and among Divisions was very telling, as far as levels of coordination,

company culture and management. Even how one went about responding to a question, participating in the workshop and answering a survey provided much critical insight into the organization.

Moreover, the OSS visited NEPA on a regular basis over a two month time period. Outside of more formal data collection methods, less formal conversations and interactions with staff in their own work environment was very telling as far as levels and needs of capacity within the organization.

#### **2.4.1 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH METHOD:**

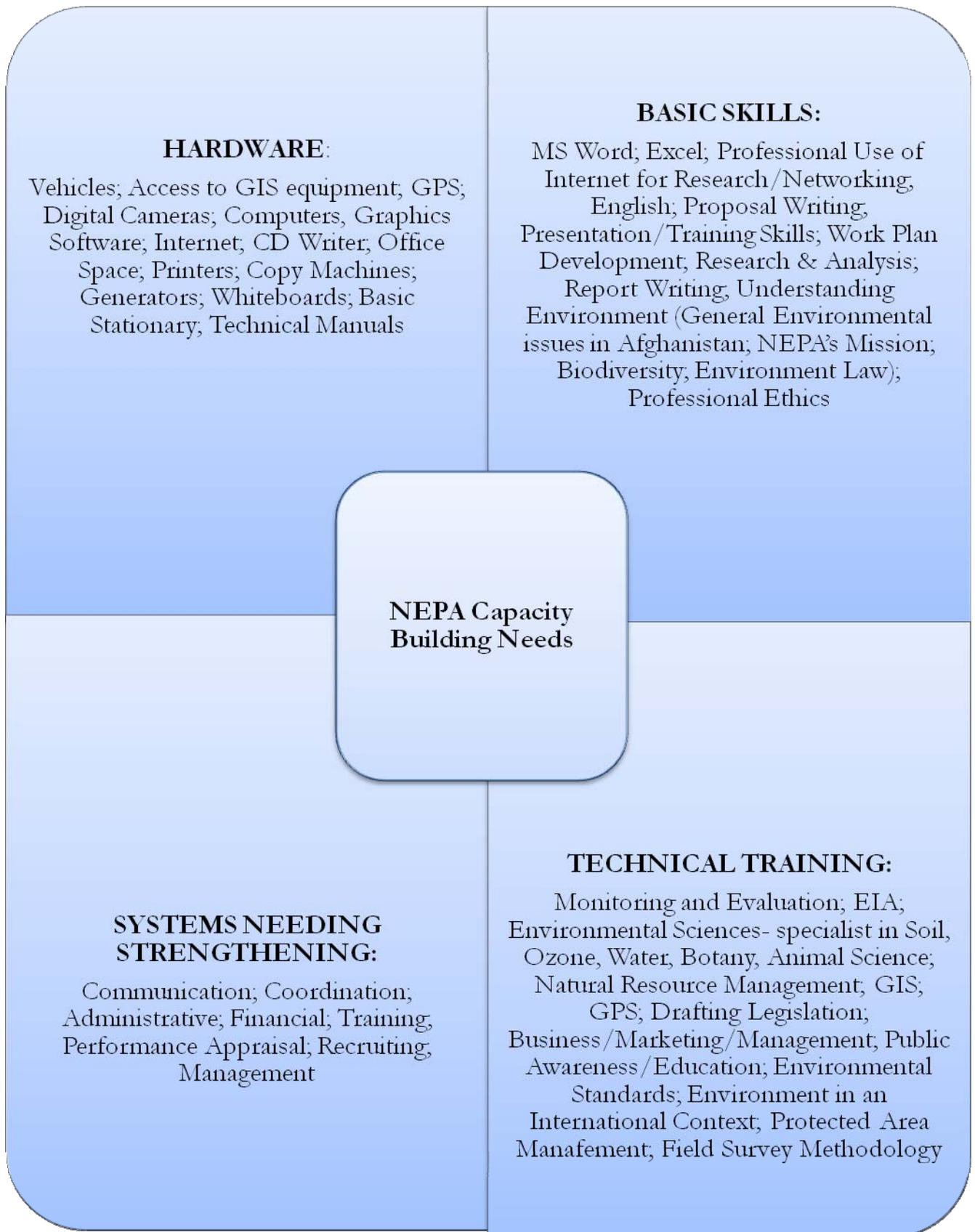
- There was no access to a professional level interpreter on these visits.

### **2.5 INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

The OSS carried out interviews with key stakeholders working with NEPA in order to learn of their experience and views on NEPA's capacity, as well as discuss potential areas of collaboration to support NEPA's capacity building initiatives. Interviews were carried out with: ACC, WCS, UNEP, ADB, WB, ICIMOD and CDP. A survey was collected from UNDP. (Annex)

## **3. GENERAL FINDINGS**

The Capacity needs could almost be said to be unlimited at this time in NEPA's development. This Snapshot of NEPA's capacity needs represent feedback received directly from NEPA staff, as well as other key stakeholders during the capacity building needs assessment. A summary of current capacity and potential resolutions are given. Section 4 will present capacity needs per Division, including the Kabul Hub. Section 5 presents an assessment of NEPA's priority capacity needs and recommendations for capacity building initiatives. This section will be more specific as to areas of Capacity Needs where the BSP/NEPA can provide support, as well as potential partnership capacity building initiatives with other international organizations.



**Figure 2:** NEPA Capacity Building Needs

### 3.1 COMPANY CULTURE

Company Culture is a very important element of an institution to understand when assessing capacity. The Culture of any business, whether public or private, is a representation of the norms, values, and behaviors of the staff. These norms, values and behaviors can greatly impact how work is carried out and the level of productivity. The culture of an institution must be one possessing an interest and will to succeed and develop for any capacity building initiatives to be beneficial and sustainable for that institution.

There is a negative mindset which seems to have been institutionalized within NEPA. Staff readily list off the problems for why work cannot be done. Even during interviews when asked not to say anything negative, but to specifically name one positive item about a certain component of the work, they automatically still named the negative. If pushed and shown what some of the positives are, a change of attitude is clearly noticed. This may not seem important to overall institutional strengthening, but it is a key item. Once people recognize what they do have, and see the potential in what they do have, they realize what can actually be accomplished even with limited resources (space, funds, skills...). Once this is accepted, then it is easier and more productive to build on these positives. If only negatives are the focus, much is lost and potential areas of growth will not be realized.

The Capacity Building Exercise carried out during the Junior/Senior level workshop (Annex) had each Division and the Kabul Hub first focus on identifying their current resources and strengths. And more than just writing this on paper, discussion was encouraged on this topic. Activities such as this can start to influence company culture and their way of viewing their work on a daily basis, which can lead to more productivity in work flow.

As mentioned earlier, there exists a dependency on donor funds. The staff state that if the donor money is not available, then no work can be accomplished. Work plans have been developed which will not be able to be carried out if donor funds are not found. Work is put on hold in the hopes that donors will come in and provide more funding. This reality has almost created a parent-child type of relationship. NEPA does not demonstrate a pro-active approach to their planning or work implementation.

There is a pool of highly educated people working within NEPA, which is a great asset to the organization. Contrary to this, motivation levels are very low. A few select individuals have shown enthusiasm to learn and work beyond what is expected of their position, but this is rare. The majority of staff appear to be showing up to work on a daily basis without an individual work plan, thus resulting in them sitting idle. Many have lost confidence in co-workers; therefore do not even try to involve them because they think they are not capable. Due to the low salary rates, many staff show up, sign in and then leave for their second job. All these factors impact the ability to grow a work environment that encourages innovative thinking, strong co-operative and trusting working relationships, as well as allowing staff to feel pride and motivation in their work.

#### 3.1.1 POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:

- The below points should be included in any training:
  - a. Encouraging a new mindset.
  - b. Ability to recognize and utilize strengths in current situation.
  - c. How to take initiative and create a culture of 'thinking out of the box'.

- d. Understanding professional ethics and how it can be applied to daily work within NEPA.

These do not have to be the main topic of focus, but strategies for how to incorporate such a perspective in any training must be a focus. It is true that the lack of donor funding is a problem for the development of NEPA, but there is still much which can be done internally without requiring additional resources.

- The BSP/NEPA will try to encourage such a mindset in all trainings and work it carries out with NEPA.

## 3.2 BASIC SKILLS:

- MS Word,
- Excel,
- Professional Use of Internet for Research/Networking,
- English,
- Proposal Writing,
- Presentation/Training Skills,
- Research & Analysis,
- Understanding Individual Work Plan Development and how it fits into the overall Mission of NEPA,
- Report Writing,
- Understanding Environment (NEPA's Mission, Biodiversity, Environment Law).

There exist quite a variation in skill/knowledge levels among staff relative to these, but overall there is a great need to improve the NEPA staff's ability in all of these areas. These are all areas that NEPA staff identified as areas they would like to receive training, which is significant because it demonstrates their will to learn and they recognize the relevance of these skills in their work.

Several NEPA staff stated that they do not even know what 'Environment' is, therefore certainly did not have a clear understanding of NEPA's Mission or the Environment Law. During the interviews, the OSS asked the question, "What is NEPA's Mission" and there was such a range of responses, only a couple staff actually knew how to explain NEPA's Mission properly. The Junior and the Junior/Senior level workshops both included a discussion on NEPA's Mission and how it should be linked to the development of annual work plans. As mentioned earlier, some work plans were being developed in a more opportunistic manner based on donor funding and not based on a logical progression of understanding the overall mission, vision, strategy, goals, and action plan of NEPA. It was very informative to observe the reactions and comments to such a discussion in a group setting. There was not a lot of difference between the Junior and Senior level staff in reference to understanding this structure. The understanding of NEPA's Mission in the context of developing annual Work Plans is critical to the growth and sustainability of the organization. If donor funds and projects were not there tomorrow, NEPA would struggle with how to organize itself and possibly be a failed institution.

### 3.2.1 POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:

- Courses Offered  
Courses in all the above areas are needed, but should be part of a larger training program.
- Work Plans  
Individual Work Plans do not exist at NEPA. First there needs to be a guarantee that Division level work plans are being developed in an appropriate manner, then from this, individual work plans should be developed for each staff member. These

should be linked to a training program, as well as a performance appraisal system. This is an important step in identifying the baseline of skill/knowledge levels in each division and where training programs need to be focused. (Annex)

- **Internal Mentoring**  
As mentioned, there is quite a variation of skill level in these areas; therefore NEPA should consider establishing a Mentoring Program. For example, some staff are fluent in English - one possibility is that they meet with a few individuals interested in learning during lunch time once or twice a week and practice basic conversation. The same can be done with improving computer skills. It is possible for a staff member to meet with another staff member at a computer for 30 minutes per day or even once a week to practice basic computer skills. This can be a very informal system, but it is one that can be initiated without additional resources, and can have a great impact on staff development and motivation levels. This should not take the place of more formal courses, but can supplement. Moreover, it will encourage a company value of support and team work.
- **Orientation Programs**  
It is recommended that NEPA establish regular training programs that will work to get all staff up to a minimum set of knowledge and skills. This should be done as soon as possible since NEPA has a target to hire approximately 300 new employees. All current staff should go through the training and there should be quarterly or annual follow-up review sessions. One such program is suggested in Section 5.1.

### 3.3 TECHNICAL TRAINING:

- Monitoring and Evaluation,
- EIA,
- Environmental Sciences- specialist in Soil, Ozone, Water, Botany, Animal Science,
- Natural Resource Management,
- GIS,
- GPS,
- Drafting Legislation,
- Business/Marketing,
- Public Awareness/Education (How to better target messages etc.),
- Setting Environmental Standards,
- Environment in an International Context (MEAs etc.),
- Field Survey Methods,
- Mining.

Through conversations with NEPA staff, the above list of technical training needs was identified.

#### 3.3.1 POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:

- University Scholarships for NEPA staff,
- Short Training Courses,
- Improved capability in carrying out academic level research.

### 3.4 SYSTEMS:

- Communication,
- Coordination,

- Administrative,
- Financial,
- Recruiting,
- Training,
- Management,
- Performance Appraisal.

The above were all systems identified by NEPA and through consultations with key stakeholders as weak. For the purpose of this assessment, the systems will be grouped as follows:

### **3.4.1 MANAGEMENT (COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION)**

#### **3.4.1.1 Coordination**

Management is naturally a part of all these systems, but this section will focus on the responsibility of management in areas of coordination and communication. Coordination is very limited among Divisions, Ministries, Donors and other organizations. Overall NEPA named ‘coordination’ as the greatest obstacle in carrying out their work effectively. This response held true in all the data collection methods. Some of the reasons are obvious: limited resources resulting in increased competition; limited understanding of the roles of others and how they are linked; corruption; lack of enforcement and the desire to have ‘bragging rights’.

##### **3.4.1.1.A DIVISION LEVEL:**

It is critical that each Division recognize and understand their role and the links between their work and the work of other divisions. Currently, there is a lack of understanding – some divisions appear to be doing the work that others should be doing and some do not have a clear understanding of what is expected of them – this leads to overlap and gaps. Specific examples will not be identified here, because this is an institutional problem and it would not be fair to appear to place the blame on one specific staff member or division. The OSS found it quite surprising that a task obviously in one division’s mandate was being carried out by another, and the division that should be carrying out the task was not aware.

##### **3.4.1.1.B MINISTRY AND DONOR LEVEL:**

Enforcement is needed to encourage coordination among Ministries and Donors. Attempts at awareness building on the need to coordinate have been carried out, but these have been met with either flat out corruption (i.e. asking for bribes) or have simply been ignored. Alone NEPA cannot solve the problem of limited coordination among other government Ministries and international organizations, but they can do their best to build awareness on what their role is and what support is required from their partners to successfully carry out their mandate.

A few examples of lack of coordination are:

- All International Donor Projects are required to go through the Division of International Environmental Affairs while implementing their project, but this channel of communication and coordination is not recognized by many. Even in some instances it has been recognized, but simply ignored.

- The lack of Capacity in Parliament and the Ministry of Justice limits NEPA's capabilities in certain areas. Strategies need to be developed for building communication and functional coordination systems among valued partners. NEPA could consider integrating some of these partners into their own trainings and other capacity building activities.
- NEPA has faced obstacles while attempting to coordinate activities with the Ministry of Higher Education.
- There is quite a bit of tension between NEPA and the MoAIL. This tension could be contributed to the lack of understanding on the roles of each and the feeling that they are in competition with each other to receive donor support, because of the appeared similarity of their mandates.

#### **3.4.1.1.C POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:**

- Targeted Awareness Campaigns can go a long way in improving coordination.
- Roles need to be clarified and work plans more focused.
- Enforcement measures tightened.
- Improved communication systems that encourage information sharing.

#### **3.4.1.2 Communication:**

Communication is an essential part of any level of coordination. The communication system existing within NEPA is weak in three key areas:

- There is not an adequate flow of information horizontally nor vertically.
- The quality, timeliness and utility of information shared are weak.
- The degree to which information is used to improve organizational performance is not being measured.

#### **3.4.1.3 Potential Resolutions:**

- Regular staff meetings and minutes shared.
- Fact Sheets utilized, i.e. updates on donor projects in the form of fact sheets can be passed around on a monthly basis.
- More interaction among divisions, i.e. begin lunch lecture series where Divisions take turns giving brief talks on their work.
- NEPA Website.
- A well established Reporting System, i.e. staff attending trainings should be required to report on the session.
- Internet Access and NEPA Email addresses.

### **3.4.2 HUMAN RESOURCES (RECRUITING, TRAINING, PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL)**

NEPA's Human Resource Department is key to any discussion on training and capacity. If the Human Resource Department is not functional, there is no base for the institution. NEPA's overall structure is in the process of changing from 8 Provincial Regional Hubs to establishing a NEPA office in each one of the 34 provinces, all reporting directly to NEPA HQ. This will require that approximately 300 more staff be hired. It is critical that the NEPA HR Department be strengthened at this point in time.

Some key areas of responsibility for a Human Resource Department are:

- Recruitment

- Staff Development
- Staff Deployment
- Drafting internal policies and regulations
- Compensation
- Opportunities for Professional Advancement
- Personnel Evaluation
- Grievance and Conflict Resolution

At the present time, these systems are extremely weak or even non-existent in some cases.

#### **3.4.2.1 Recruiting**

In theory, NEPA HR is handling recruitment, but in reality there is still great influence by some to hire friends and family. A recruitment system must be set up that provides an equal opportunity for all to apply and a proper evaluation of the person's qualification by an appropriate committee.

#### **3.4.2.2 Grievance**

Currently, there does not exist a proper channel for staff to file a grievance. If one spends a few days at NEPA, this is very obvious. Staff that are experiencing problems will go to the person they think will listen, but sometimes they are just told there is nothing that can be done or to handle it themselves. Moreover, regardless of actual position, some staff within NEPA have more political authority than others and this is what tends to determine an outcome. Even at formal workshops, staff do not feel comfortable expressing their true views on issues at work. This was the reason anonymous surveys were handed out and individual interviews were carried out during the BSP/NEPA capacity building assessment. A few staff felt that even if they complained or provided constructive criticism, nothing would ever change. Even during the individual interviews, some feared their names would be identified. There needs to be an identified chain of command where staff can file a grievance and expect that their issue will be treated in a fair and just manner. If functional systems are not established and enforced, an institution in any sector will never be able to sustain itself. A grievance system is critical to encouraging a participatory environment within NEPA. Such a system is also extremely important in providing one mechanism that can reduce the impacts of sexual harassment and discrimination in the work place. Such a system must be enforced, it cannot be only on paper.

#### **3.4.2.3 Training**

NEPA does not have a training plan nor program established. The training provided to the staff is based on donor funding, which can be quite sporadic. Moreover, the training offered from donors may be based more on their agenda than on the actual needs of NEPA. For this reason, NEPA must be more proactive about its training activities. The staff have made the following complaints about the current training 'system' within NEPA.

Problems:

- Unfair selection process,

- No accountability for those who attend trainings,
- No relation between the staff's actual job position and the training,
- No reporting,
- No training plan,
- Less opportunities for women (this may be based more on the location and timing of a training, not that NEPA is unwilling to provide opportunity),
- DSA tends to be the motivation for attending,
- The staff are not given the opportunity to assess the trainings received,
- No follow-up on training sessions.

The staff recommend that the following elements be a focus when carrying out future training initiatives at NEPA:

- Focus on professional development,
- Need individual and division training plans,
- NEPA should be pro-active about the training initiatives,
- Selection process must be fair,
- Need a guaranteed commitment from those participating in the trainings,
- Accountability must be enforced for those involved in training activities,
- Follow-up is important,
- Monitoring of training activities is necessary,
- Training sessions offered should be relevant to the work,
- Consider having follow-up trainings within HQ,
- Need a training system established.

The workshop brought to light that even though some actions have been taken to improve the training occurring within NEPA, most staff were unaware of these changes. A Training Committee was established several months ago in an effort to guarantee a more fair selection process. A memo was sent to the staff about this new committee, but still most staff were unaware. The Training Committee is made up of Mr. Baheer, Deputy Director; Mr. Mansoori, Legal Advisor; and Mr. Hamdard, Director of the Division of International Environmental Affairs. The Training Committee has made significant efforts to establish a more fair selection process. The NEPA staff provided feedback on the establishment of the Training Committee and they felt that the structure should be re-evaluated. The suggestion is that the committee members should be selected based on a fair representation of staff determined by grade, division, and gender. Anonymous surveys ([Annex](#)) asking questions about the current situation of training within NEPA were handed out to NEPA staff and all of these will be turned over to the Training Committee for their review and consideration.

**3.4.2.3.A POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:**

- NEPA should establish a training plan, internal policy and program. The BSP/NEPA can support this initiative – more information provided in Section 5.1.
- After a training program is established, prepare an employee manual on the topic.
- Individual work plans should contain individual training plans.

**3.4.3 ADMINISTRATIVE**

The current administrative system is very weak within NEPA. It is weak in many areas, but one basic example is that there is not a standardized electronic system for filing data and the system of organizing paper files is rather sloppy. The limitation of space and computers certainly contributes to this issue. A couple very demonstrative examples are:

- When requesting a staff roster from HR, this was impossible to acquire.
- When requesting a current work plan from divisions, staff scrambled to figure out where to find and it took on average one to two full days to get a copy.

**3.4.3.1 Potential Resolutions:**

- Experts who can set up the administration of NEPA, including management, reporting lines and such. Much of this is in PRR already, but it's not being implemented in practice. Most beneficial would be to have a consultant that can sit full-time in NEPA and improve compliance with their institutional documents
- Consultant that can provide regulatory support is needed, in terms of the development of systems and processes for managing applications for permits/ licenses, public consultations, compliance and enforcement and such.
- Clay Miller with the EPA has been focusing on strengthening the administrative system within NEPA; therefore any work in this area should be closely coordinated with him.

**3.4.4 FINANCIAL**

There is not a standardized financial system within NEPA. The fact that the Afghan government is a centralized system is a limiting factor in properly managing budgets and carrying out financial transactions. Even small requests, such as one for paper supplies, must be approved by the Ministry of Finance for purchase. This process can take much time and use much paper.

At the present time, the Finance Department uses Excel and MS Word to carry out all NEPA financial transactions. There is an established central financial system at the Ministry of Finance and the NEPA Finance Department would much prefer to be connected to this system. The Finance Department has not been able to connect to the system at the Ministry of Finance because they do not have access to internet. The Finance Department staff are very capable, but are limited by the lack of equipment and a weak system.

**3.4.4.1 Potential Resolutions:**

- Individual staff training certainly is beneficial, but it is felt NEPA will require a long-term consultant working from within to get improved financial systems functional. Any consultant that does support this effort must be familiar with the Afghan Soviet style public sector finance system. For this reason, a qualified National consultant would be more effective.
- Provide full access to internet for the NEPA Finance Department..
- Funding for appropriate equipment, such as software and computers.

**3.4.5 HARDWARE**

NEPA has identified the following as priority hardware needs, even though the actual needs go beyond this list.

**3.4.5.1 Vehicles**

The limitation of access to vehicles was one of the most heard complaints from NEPA staff. The lack of vehicles has limited their ability to carry out field work, including work in Kabul, and has prevented some from attending meetings/workshops and such. Currently, NEPA has six vehicles, but each is designated for Senior level staff. There is a transportation section which is supposed to mobilize bus transportation for basic travel around Kabul, but this is not a very dependable system. Even when requests have been made for bus transportation, buses do not always show up. The Human Resource Department is tasked with organizing bus transportation, but does not fully carry out this responsibility when required. A break in communication channels and limited understanding of roles by all staff have added to this problem.

**3.4.5.1.A POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:**

- The obvious way to solve this problem would be for NEPA to acquire new vehicles, but funding is a limiting factor. The BSP/NEPA is not able to provide vehicles for NEPA under the current terms of the contract.
- Establish an improved system for scheduling vehicle use (bus and trucks) based on actual need.
- Improved coordination with the provincial offices could reduce the need for HQ NEPA staff to travel to the field.

**3.4.5.2 GIS**

UNEP has equipped NEPA with a functional GIS Lab, but currently it is not being utilized. UNEP and WCS have trained NEPA staff in GIS, but several left the organization after completing the training. Improper use of equipment, theft and the lack of a qualified individual to manage the lab, have resulted in the lab being closed. There is also an issue of ownership with the lab since UNEP currently has authority and has not fully turned over the lab to NEPA.

**3.4.5.2.A POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:**

- The MoAIL has a fully functioning GIS Lab with qualified staff. Moreover, they regularly provide trainings. NEPA could benefit from making initial contact with the MoAIL to learn more of how they manage their lab, utilize the data in their work and what

trainings are available. Possibly, MoAIL's GIS Lab could act as a model for NEPA and as a key partner in building their capabilities in this area. There does exist a level of political tension between these two government organizations, which has limited past cooperation. BSP/NEPA has the potential to initiate such a dialogue. ICIMOD and WCS have agreed to support this effort. The BSP/NEPA will not have a qualified GIS specialist on staff, but still can provide support for increasing NEPA's ability to use their GIS equipment productively through building awareness on how critical a tool GIS can be with Biodiversity Initiatives. UNEP will have to be consulted before any action is taken related to the use of the GIS equipment within NEPA, but a consultation with UNEP confirmed they are open to such initiatives.

### 3.4.5.3 ICT/Office Equipment - Computers/Internet,

The lack of computers is a great disadvantage for NEPA. On average, each division has 2 to 3 computers, but keep in mind, each division has anywhere from 8 to 20 people. Among the computers which NEPA does have, several will not be fully functioning on a regular basis. Many staff not only sit in the office without a computer or desk, but they sit there with no paper or pen. This not only limits the staff's ability to productively work, this limits the ability to establish and standardize electronic databases, administrative and financial systems.

Internet is not available for staff the full work day. Some staff have access for 2 to 3 hours, others never have access due to lack of computers. The lack of internet limits staff's ability to communicate with national/international organizations and to carry out research. Many of the staff and even the Directors do not possess an email address. In some instances those without email request the sender to email a fellow staff member, even in another office, and the message will get to them. This is quite a huge limitation in today's technological world.

All basic office equipment which is much needed to improve work productivity. One issue with purchasing items for NEPA staff such as basic stationary is that the government is still a very centralized system and approval must be given by the Ministry of Finance for even basic stationary supplies.

The following list other priority hardware in this category:

- **Graphics Software and CD Writer**  
Both are important material for awareness building efforts and marketing.
- **Generators,**  
Critical in a country where electric power is so limited.
- **Digital Cameras and GPS**  
Critical materials for field work which can support monitoring efforts.
- **Technical Manuals**  
Technical Manuals are very limited for NEPA staff. There is a library which contains 5000 publications, yet most in English. The library will be discussed more in Section 4.2.4.

#### 3.4.5.3A POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:

- Funding is available for the internet to be offered during working hours. The reason internet is being limited is because some staff were going to unprofessional websites (porn, downloading music...). The OSS

strongly recommends that courses on professional ethics be part of NEPA's regular training protocol and staff should go through a series of such courses.

- The best situation would be to find funding that could provide each staff member with a functional computer. If this cannot be done, a computer lab should be established. A computer lab was implemented before in the NEPA office, but was not successful because again, staff were viewing unprofessional websites and parts of the computers went missing. This problem is an issue of management and professional behavior. A computer lab can be established, two managers should be trained to oversee the use of the lab and the lab should require staff to sign up for specific time slots depending on their work needs. This again demonstrates the need for a course on Professional Ethics. This lab can also host other equipment, that must be a shared resource, such as printers, photocopiers and such.

#### 3.4.5.4 Office Space,

NEPA is currently sharing an office building with the Ministry of Energy and Water. Space is a very big issue, some offices contain up to twenty staff in one room that should comfortably fit four or five staff. NEPA does have plans to build and move into a much larger office, but the completion of this new office could be two or three years from now. Desks are also very limited and up to two to three people can be found sharing one desk. Even if more desks were available at this time, the current office space does not allow for them to be used. NEPA staff stated the space problem as a reason they were not able to carry out workshops/trainings.

##### 3.4.5.4.A POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS:

- The BSP/NEPA is not able to solve the issue of office work space, but has offered to NEPA the use of the BSP/NEPA workshop room for NEPA to carry out some of their workshops/trainings. CDP also has venues available for use and at much cheaper rates than the hotel conference rooms. These venues are available to USAID funded projects.
- UNEP has a large workshop room which is available to NEPA staff.
- The space issue may not be solved, but could be softened if Directors experiment with a variety of ways to set-up and utilize the work available space for their staff.

## 4. CAPACITY NEEDS PER DIVISION:

This section is a summary of data collected during Interviews and from the Capacity Building Exercise [\(Annex\)](#) carried out at the workshops. The section is divided by Division, including the Kabul Hub.

The Capacity Building Exercise consisted of 5 parts: 1. Current Capacity Level of the Division; 2. A timeline based on their 1387 work plan; 3. Identified Gaps in Capacity for 1387; 4. Identified Gaps from their 5 year work plan; 5. Comments on the work of other organizations and general feedback. The

Capacity Building Exercise provided quite a bit of data, but not all staff fully understood how to carry out the exercise. For this reason, the data must be assessed relative to the data collected in by other methods.

## 4.1 DIVISION: NATURAL HERITAGE

### 4.1.1 MANDATE: (CITE \_\_\_\_\_)

#### Division of Natural Heritage Protection

The division of Natural Heritage Protection is responsible for the Agency's activities regarding issues concerning the sustainable use and management of natural resources and the protection of valuable natural environments and biological diversity. The division has particular responsibility for issues concerning area protection, natural conservation and land management, wildlife management and the protection of wetlands, lakes and watercourses.

#### Protected Areas Management

This section promotes the expedient and cost-efficient management and monitoring of protected areas, as well as implementation of area protection with special emphasis on forest and wetlands reserves in order to achieve favorable preservation status and fulfill other preservation objectives of the NEPA. This section is also responsible for the management of NEPA properties, and outdoor recreation and spatial planning.

#### Environmental Quality Objectives

This section includes wildlife, aquatic and terrestrial environmental management functions:

#### Wildlife Management

This sub-section promotes the sustainable management of naturally occurring populations of animals with special emphasis on birds and mammals, medicinal and economically valuable naturally occurring flora, as well as efficient species protection to promote healthy biological diversity in the country.

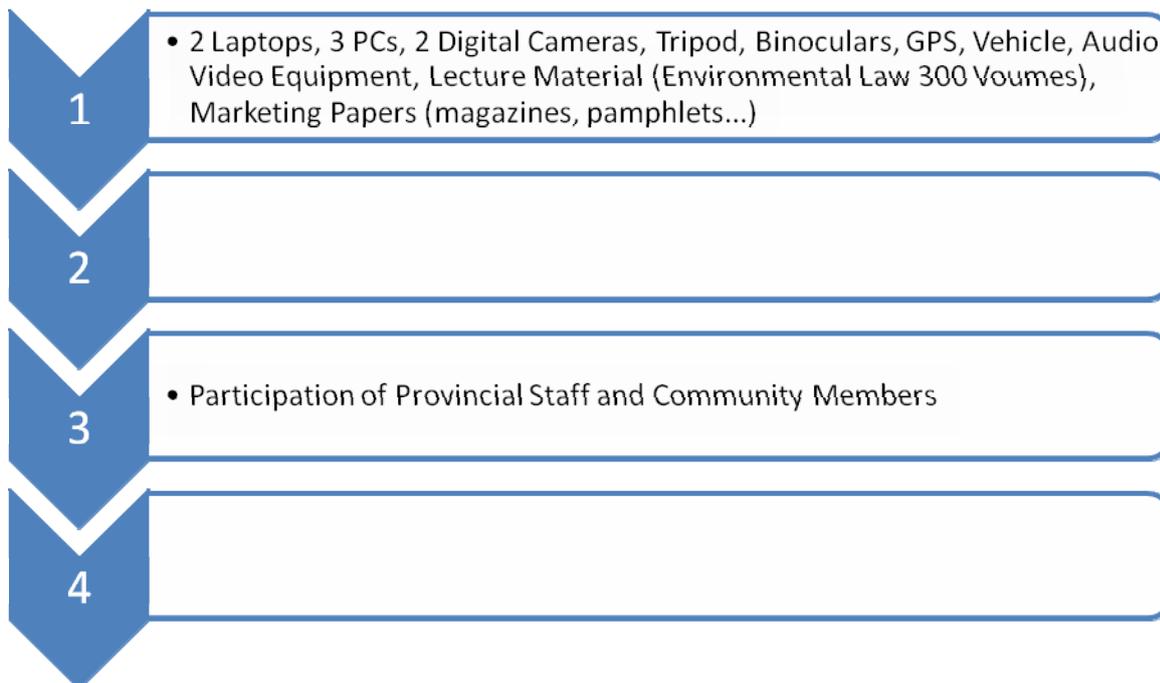
#### Aquatic Environment

This sub-section contributes to the achievement of the aquatic environmental quality objectives of the country (to be adopted): thriving wetlands, flourishing lakes and lively streams, and also helps to strengthen the conditions for healthy biological diversity in aquatic environments.

#### Terrestrial Environment

This sub-section contributes to the achievement of the terrestrial environmental quality objectives of the country (to be adopted): a magnificent mountain environment, healthy forests, and a varied agricultural landscape, and also helps to preserve and strengthen the conditions for healthy biological diversity in the country.

**4.1.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.1.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:**

- Field Equipment and computers.
- Female Staff to carry out data collection among female community members. This may be realized in increased coordination with provincial offices and guarantee they have females enumerators on staff.
- Increased coordination with the provincial offices may decrease the limit of HQ staff to travel to the field, since vehicles is an overall limitation among all divisions. This effort will require that all provincial staff are well trained in survey methodologies.

**4.2 DIVISION: RESEARCH, POLICY AND INFORMATION**

**4.2.1 MANDATE:**

**Division of Research, Policy and Information**

This division will house the research, policy, information exchange functions of the NEPA.

**Research**

This section administers government and donors’ appropriations earmarked for environmental and wildlife research, and is responsible for overview, coordination and evaluation of environmental research on behalf of the NEPA. An Environmental Research Council (ERC) could be created to advise this section.

**Policy**

This section will be responsible for the overall policy design and strategic decisions of the agency based on original research and available information. This section is also responsible for advising the agency in preparing policy recommendations to the government and other external counterparts.

### **Information**

This section is responsible for the Agency's strategic information both externally and internally.

### **Environmental Education and Awareness**

This sub-section is in charge of the development of environmental education and awareness materials, public environmental awareness raising campaigns and programs.

### **Publication and Outreach**

This sub-section is in charge of the production, distribution and marketing of the Agency's environmental publications and to maintain relations with the media, to develop and distribute public reports and materials and provide support activities for events such as Nowruz, and World Environment Day.

### **NEPA Website**

This sub-section is responsible for the development and maintenance of the contents of the NEPA Website.

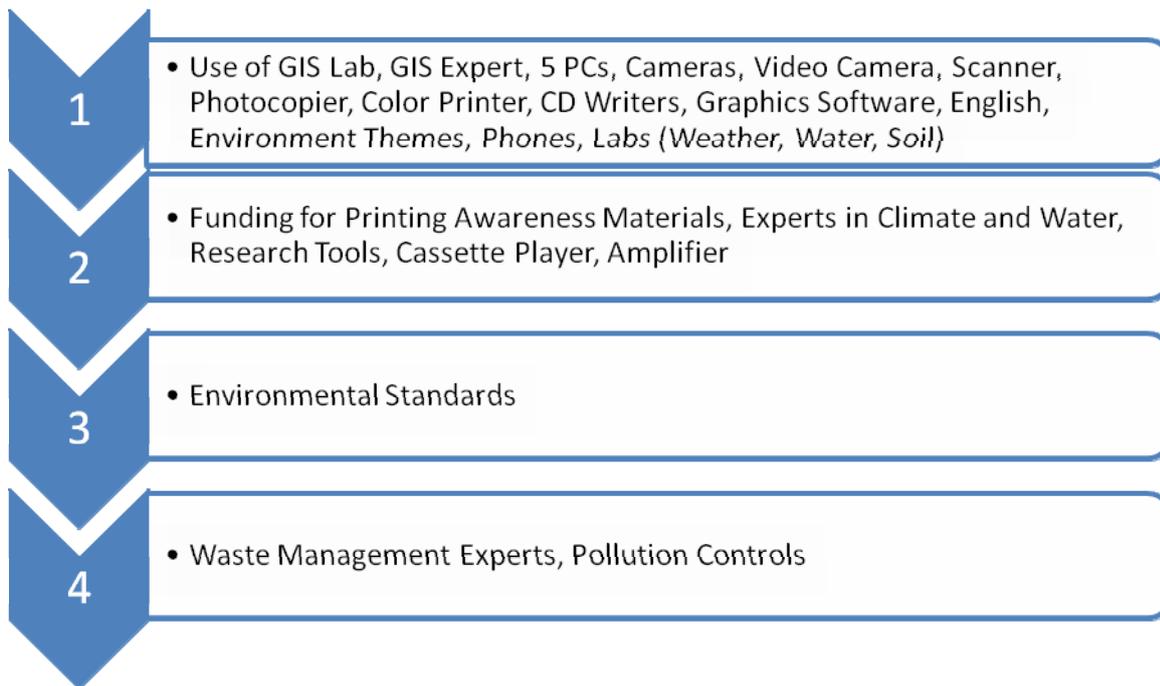
### **Library**

This sub-section is responsible for the management of the Agency's library, which is the National Resource Library for the external environment.

### **GIS and Data Management**

This sub-section is responsible for the management of Geographic Information System (GIS) and the operation of the GIS laboratory.

**4.2.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.2.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:**

- Improved coordination with Ministries. They have not experience adequate corporation with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, Information and Culture. The Ministry of Higher Education, Information and Culture has a good working relationship with the private sector and TV stations, therefore the Division of Policy, Research and Information feel they are a necessary partner.
- Express interest to carry out workshops with each Division. Possible limitation is space.
- They have limited budget for production
- Need more training on how to target and develop a message, i.e. they understand the need to target sub-literate communities, therefore are open to and want more information on developing messages at this level, i.e. through use of theater or radio
- Need support with translation and distribution
- Struggle with strategy for how to introduce a Culture of Environment

**4.2.4 LIBRARY**

The NEPA library currently contains 5,000 publications focusing on a range of topics within the environmental sector (Annex). The majority of these publications are written in English and about 500 of them are written in Farsi. NEPA does not have money allocated within its own budget for library development. The Asia Foundation has contributed the majority of funds and materials for the library’s development and they continue to do so on an annual basis. UNEP has also donated a small portion of materials.

Two full time staff work in the NEPA library, one specializing in library management and the other specializing in IT. There is also one staff member in the Division of Research, Policy and Information that went through a 2 month training course in library management. This staff member is not currently working in the library, but is available to provide support if need be. On average six to seven people visit the library daily. The

NEPA Librarian keeps a registration book of all visitors and a record of all those that borrow materials. There is not an electronic record of either of these.

The library has one computer, which is available to the staff to use for research. The one problem is that the internet is not guaranteed at all times and in reality, functions a small percentage of the time. People can search books visually, but there is not a searchable library paper or electronic card catalog system. There is an electronic list of all publications, but the password is currently lost, therefore a copy of this list has not been obtained as of yet. A copier is in the library, but there is no printer.

The Division of Research, Policy and Information produces materials such as magazines, newsletters and posters on a regular basis; the library keeps all such materials available for staff. The library does not archive these materials; therefore if past publications are needed, they must be acquired from the Division of Research, Policy and Information. With the exception of the above mentioned activity, there seems to be minimal communication between the library and the other Divisions, as far as materials available and needed which would support their work.

#### **Strategies for Addressing Capacity Needs:**

1. The BSP/NEPA has initiated a survey that will allow users of the library to provide feedback on key issues such as: materials and services needed relative to work demands; frequency of visits; and reasons for visits (Annex). This survey will be handed out to all those entering the library. No time limit was set on how long the surveys will be available, because it was agreed this was a rather simple, yet effective way to tract the needs and opinions of all library users. This system will allow the NEPA library to keep on file an updated list of materials that users request, so that when donor funds are available, a list of books and other professional publications needed can easily be prepared.

2. The NEPA library can establish relationships with University libraries. If certain materials are not available at the NEPA library, a system could be established where the NEPA librarian could contact a University library to see if they have the specified publication. If they do have the material needed, either the staff member needing the material can be referred to that library or the NEPA library could borrow the material for a short time. This suggestion was made to the NEPA librarian, and he said that he was not familiar with the University libraries since many students actually come to NEPA to borrow their material. A discussion with a representative of Kabul University confirms that there is a well stocked library on campus. Professional and academic level publications are very limited within the country; therefore it would be of great benefit to all if information centers, such as libraries, could form a strong network that would expand the access to such materials for professional staff and students. It is recommended that the NEPA library staff initiate such an effort. Initial contact has already taken place between the University and the NEPA library.

3. The NEPA library could begin to build a network with other libraries, NGOs, government resource centers and private companies. This network would allow members to stay up-to-date on materials of each member and allow for such materials to be borrowed on a short term basis. For example, NEPA may not be able to afford or have access to materials in a certain field, but a NGO may have such materials – this NGO may not be able to afford to give the books to NEPA, but could lend them out for two or three weeks. NEPA can then announce through a memo to all NEPA staff that this material is available for a specified time period in the NEPA library. This is a similar concept to special exhibits which Museums regularly promote. This is a great method to expand access to critical information despite limited resources.

4. Access to the internet is critical to be able to carry out professional level research. The NEPA library does not have guaranteed internet service. It is suggested that the one computer existing in the library have access to the internet during all business hours. Those using the internet during business hours should be carefully monitored to avoid personal and unprofessional activity being carried out on the internet. It is also recommended that due to limited internet access and a great demand by staff for such a service, that those using the internet in the library should be able to record the purpose of their research and time limits should be set for each user when demand is high. When internet is available, the NEPA librarian could develop information sheets that would help staff carry out research on the internet, such a sheet could include essential websites as:

[www.aginternetwork.org](http://www.aginternetwork.org) (A User ID and Password is required for this site; the OSS has given this information to the NEPA librarian who will manage the access of staff to this website)

[www.oaresciences.org](http://www.oaresciences.org)

5. The NEPA librarian was open to the idea of hosting once a week or once a month lectures on various topics. One suggestion is that 'lunch time lectures' be held on key environmental issues, current work activity within NEPA, or topics more relative to how to utilize the library for professional level research. The ability to carry out professional and academic level research is limited among NEPA staff, therefore a longer course on this topic is highly recommended. This is also a problem among many young Afghan students; it may be beneficial for NEPA to attempt to coordinate such a course with Kabul Universities, since many of these students will be future employees of NEPA.

6. It is recommended that a full inventory of all library materials be cataloged electronically and in hardcopy.

7. All materials produced by the Information Department of the Division of Research, Policy and Information should be archived within the library.

8. The NEPA library should include write-ups in the NEPA newsletter and begin a practice of sending out memos to NEPA staff to keep them informed of new materials, potential research materials available within the library, events, and special focus articles on summaries of some of their available materials – this could spark the interest of some readers and bring them to the library.

9. The NEPA library would benefit greatly from a printer so that library users can print out some of their research and the NEPA library staff can print out their catalog and registration material.

10. A full assessment of access to professional and academic materials has not yet been carried out, but the assumption is that there is very limited access for those working in the provinces. The NEPA library staff should try to develop a plan that could link their resources with the provinces and provide them support in increasing their access to such material.

11. When NEPA completes their website, it would be beneficial to include a searchable database of all materials available in the library.

12. As NEPA's training program becomes more institutionalized, it will be very beneficial for a system of communication to be established between the Training Committee and Library Staff. If this is done, then materials available in the library can be coordinated with upcoming trainings. The library can provide a list of relevant materials that could supplement training programs, they can provide references for other sources to supplement training programs, or they can attempt to add relevant material to their inventory that will be available to the staff during the training period.

## **4.3 DIVISION: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.3.1 MANDATE:**

#### **Division of Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development**

The Division of Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development is responsible for the Agency's activities regarding the collection and building-up of knowledge on the state of the environment and on what action is being taken to protect it. The national environmental quality objectives (to be adopted) are followed up and evaluated by this division, so that Afghanistan can fulfill its national goals of a sustainable development, as well as report environmental information to international conventions.

#### **Environmental Impact Assessment and Permitting**

This section will screen, assess and monitor the environmental impacts of development projects and other activities, which are likely to have significant environmental impacts and may undermine sustainable development and threaten human livelihoods. The section will also be responsible for assessing applications for authorization to undertake activities that are likely to have adverse environmental impacts, issuing appropriate permits, enforcing the conditions of those permits, conducting environmental audits and reporting on compliance issues. The section will also develop administrative procedures, processes and guidelines.

#### **Sustainable Development**

The Sustainable Development Section is responsible for the Agency's activities regarding the development of sustainable systems for production, consumption, communications, energy, water supply, wastewater and waste, as well as issues connected with local and regional environmental programs, evaluations and environmental economics.

#### **Cleaner Production and Sustainable Consumption**

This sub-section deals with issues regarding the environmental impact of production and consumption, lifecycle analyses (LCA), green public procurement issues and consumer issues. It will work with building and construction issues as well as chemicals, wastewater and waste.

This sub-section will also help to develop strategies for the efficient use of energy, deal with infrastructure issues as well as the use of IT to promote sustainable development, coordinate the Agency's activities concerning climate change and is responsible for the Climate Change Information Project (to be undertaken), and conduct evaluations and develops instruments within its area of responsibility.

**Strategic Environmental Planning**

This sub-section helps to develop strategies for the efficient management of land, water and the built environment. Transforming national environmental objectives into regional and local action programs also falls within this sub-section's remit as do issues regarding the environmental aspects of the Government's regional growth strategies, and Agenda 21.

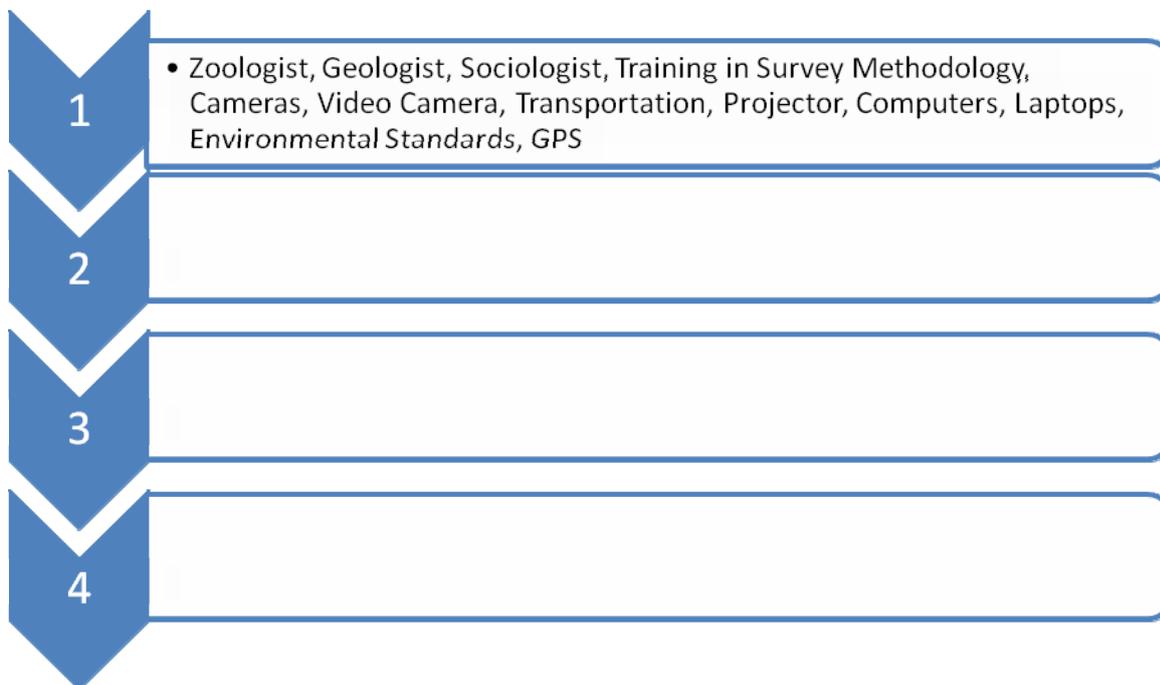
**Evaluation and Environmental Economics**

This sub-section deals with socio-economic issues, including employment, growth and the environment. It also develops economic instruments and carries out cost/benefit analyses. It is also responsible for general evaluations of environmental efforts made in society, with the emphasis on evaluation.

**Environmental Monitoring**

This sub-section is responsible for the running and development of the environmental monitoring program, which aims to describe the current state of the environment and identify trends. It adopts monitoring techniques so that international reporting requirements as regards environmental quality are fulfilled to the best possible degree and the need for data to further efforts with the environmental quality objectives is met.

**4.3.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.3.3 EIA UNIT CAPACITY:**

The EIA unit of this Division needs support with developing their capacity to be the EIA Authority.

Belinda Bowling, Environmental Law and International Conventions Expert with UNEP, has provided the below information on the current status of the implementation of the EIA Policy.

1. Environment Law, 2007 sets the legal framework.
2. EIA Policy, 2007 (issued by Executive Order, so already in effect) describes the interim situation, as well as the ultimate goal for EIA.
3. EIA Regulations, 2008 were approved by the Cabinet ten days ago. They set out the interim arrangements for EIA pending development of capacity in-house (i.e. for approx. 5 years). At a much later stage, the EIA Board of Experts will be established.
4. EIA Administrative Guidelines, 2008 (which will be issued by EO once the EIA Regulations have been published in the Gazette).

Belinda stated, “there are not really regulatory gaps at the present time, save for sector guidelines”. She feels the priority for any capacity building effort is that NEPA needs to learn to administer the above mentioned instruments.

Moreover she explains, “The only EIA support I would recommend at this stage, pending the arrival of UNEP's new EIA and Pollution Control staff member, is setting up the systems and processes envisioned in the EIA Regulations. I don't think an EIA centre is a good idea as it doesn't dovetail into the existing framework at all”.

A discussion with the Division of Assessment and Sustainable Development provided the following information:

Ten staff members have been trained in how to carry out EIAs, but one has since left NEPA; therefore there are currently nine staff members at NEPA capable of working with EIAs. They feel they have had adequate classroom training, but more practical experience is much needed. Their current level of understanding the new EIA Policy and Regulations is at a “medium level”. When an EIA arrives at NEPA, there does not appear to be a well-established system for how this EIA is processed. For example, some EIAs have been lost for weeks on desks outside of this division.

As mentioned above, this Division feels they will benefit the most from practical training. This can be realized in the form of a Study Tour to other countries that have well-established EIA procedures or with a qualified consultant working in-house with them. This consultant can support them in setting up a system in-house to process EIAs in accordance with the new Regulations. The consultant can walk the staff through step by step using actual EIAs.

The EIA NEPA team has processed approximately twenty EIAs during 2007 in a variety of sectors: agriculture, roads, mines, irrigation and dams. They express the concern that their understanding of these various sectors is limited. There seems to be some confusion as to their role with reviewing and monitoring EIAs verses actually going to the field to carry out an EIA. It is important that training focus on clarifying their role in accordance with the Environmental Law and the EIA Policy. Even though their role is not to go to the field to carry out the actual EIA, it still could be very educational for the staff to go with a mentor to the field and watch how an EIA is properly carried out. This experience will help them understand the entire process, thus enabling them to review EIAs with a much broader understanding.

## 4.4 DIVISION: INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

### 4.4.1 MANDATE:

#### Division of International Environmental Affairs

This division coordinates the Agency's international activities, especially those concerning Afghanistan's international commitments, various conventions and co-operation with the Central Asian and South -Asian countries, as well as other developed and developing countries. The following sections will constitute this division:

#### International Legal Affairs

This section will be responsible for coordinating Afghanistan's obligations under international environmental laws and agreements. Currently, this includes obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. The integration of multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEA) into the work of the Environment Function and relevant line ministries will be an important initial function of this section. This section will need to be responsible for the development and coordination of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) projects.

The section also works on drafting new legislation and amendments to the Environmental Management Act.

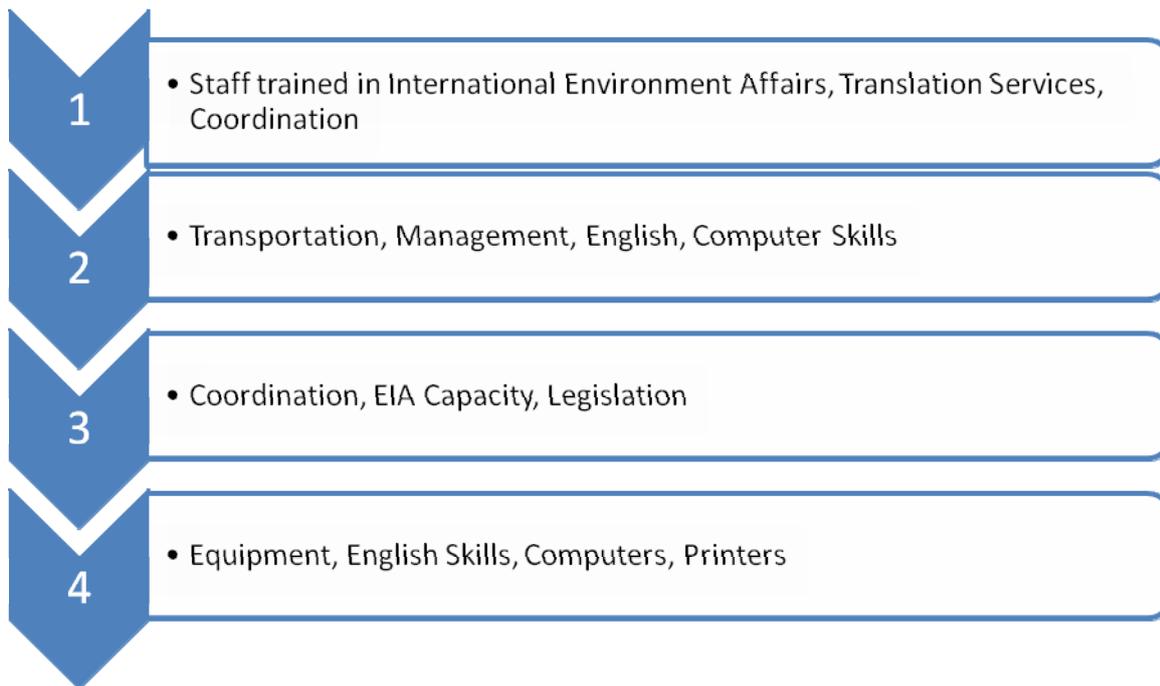
#### International Projects

This section will be responsible for coordinating and administering projects funded by international agencies, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors.

#### International Relations

This section will be responsible for establishing and maintaining relations with international agencies, and for managing international relations of the NEPA. This section is also responsible for the international reporting.

**4.4.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.4.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:**

- Need Trainers and Facilitators,
- Staff trained in Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs),
- Staff familiar with Environment in International Context,
- Coordination with line Ministries and the Parliament.

**4.5 DIVISION: IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

**4.5.1 MANDATE:**

**Division of Implementation and Enforcement**

This Division of Implementation and Enforcement is responsible for the Agency's activities regarding the implementation and application of environmental legislation, including issues concerning enforcement, fees and sanctions. This division also coordinates the Agency's judicial activities regarding GIRA directives. Following sections constitute this division:

**Legal Affairs**

This section is responsible for guidance, development and application relating to environmental law issues concerning the regulatory framework in its entirety, and assists other sections and the Agency in general with legal assessments. It works in close cooperation with policy section, and also the international legal affairs section seeking their advice and provides them with feedback.

**Inspection, Auditing and Enforcement**

This section is responsible for guidance, development and application relating to environmental law issues concerning the enforcement and sanctions systems, environmental reporting and other general policy and system issues in connection with enforcement work.

### **Water and Land Use**

This sub-section is responsible for guidance, development and application relating to environmental law issues concerning water and land activities, facilities for infrastructure and other operations, the environmental impact of which is primarily caused by modified use of land or water areas.

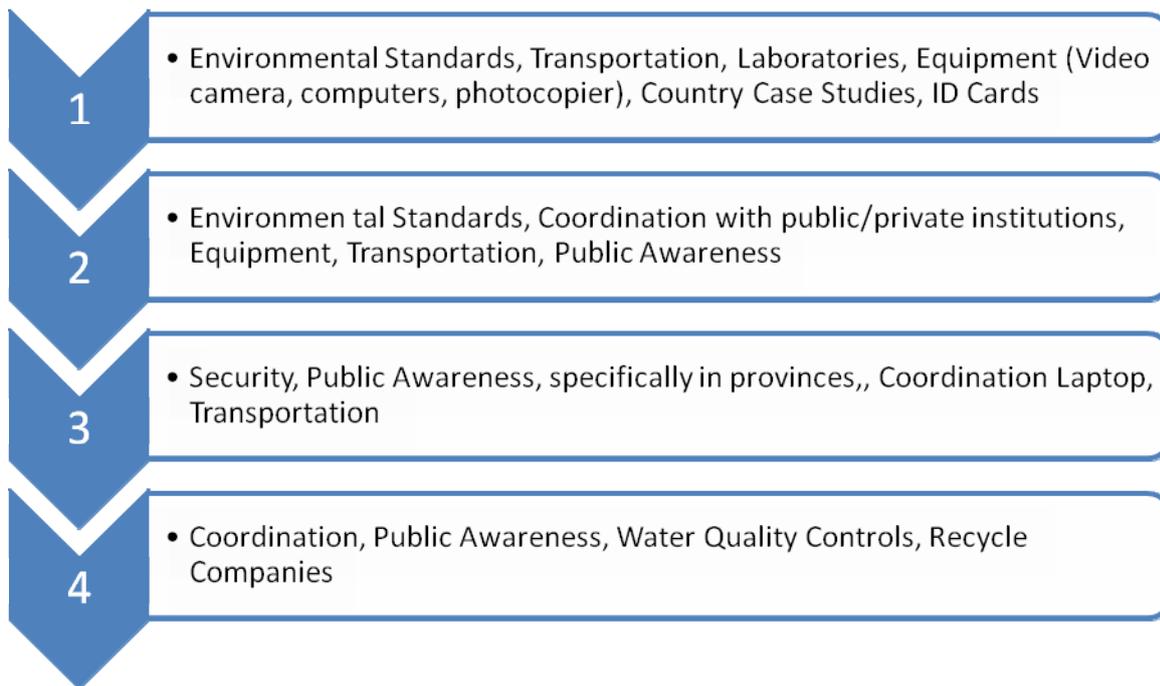
### **Industry and Remediation**

This sub-section is responsible for guidance, development and application relating to environmental law issues concerning environmentally hazardous industrial operations, waste landfills and contaminated sites. This section is also responsible for the management, guidance and follow-up of government projects to clean up and remediate such areas. It also deals with those types of facilities, where the conditions are most favorable for reducing air emissions and discharges into water and for improving energy and resource efficiency.

### **Products and Waste**

This sub-section is responsible for guidance, development and application relating to environmental law issues concerning products, waste and producer responsibility.

**4.5.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.5.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:**

- Environmental Standards (Fuel, Soil, Water, Air, Solid Waste),
- The ability to draft legislation,
- Improved Coordination with Police, Ministry of Justice and Provincial Offices and other key stakeholders,
- More Female Staff that can travel to the field; currently, they state this is limited by security,
- Currently, the Division of Implementation and Enforcement state they are only at 50% of capacity to handle all cases. Their ability to be effective in the provinces is even less, currently there is 1 province that has 2 people with law background adequate to carry out the work,
- Laboratories for Soil, Water and Weather analysis.

**4.6 DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE**

**4.6.1 MANDATE:**

**Division of Human Resources and Finance**

This division will be responsible for administration, financial management, personnel management and human resource development functions.

**Human Resources**

The Human Resources Section is responsible for issues concerning personnel, capacity building and skills development, as well as central personnel administration. This section will also deal with issues concerning administrative policy and law. It will also be responsible for the Agency’s Registrations Office, Records Office and will manage central procurement issues.

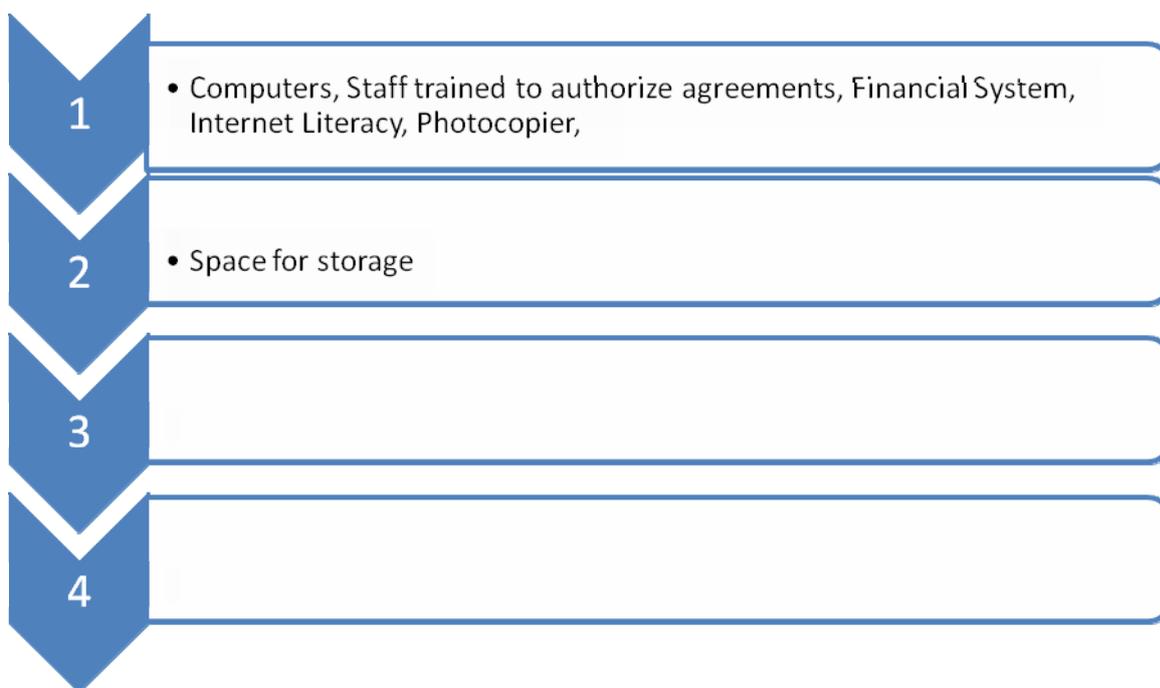
**Administration and Operational Support**

This section is responsible for the Agency’s internal service, internal printing office, supplies, premises, conference facilities, reception, switchboard, purchasing, vehicle fleet management, building maintenance, filing, and documentation and coordination of international study visits. This section will also be responsible for the management, support and development of the Agency’s IT systems and maintenance of the NEPA website on the internet in cooperation with the information section of the research, policy and information division.

**Finance Section**

This section is responsible for the Agency’s central financial administration, including issues connected to preparation of budget, allocation of funds, budgeting and accounting, treasury, disbursement of funds for operations and activities and preparation of financial statements. The section also administrates wages and salaries, as well as traveling expense claims.

**4.6.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER**



**4.6.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:**

- Human Resources needs to strengthen the following systems: Recruitment, Training, Personnel Development, Logistics
- Finance is currently using MS WORD and Excel to carry out its Financial Transactions. They would prefer to be linked with the system of the Ministry of Finance, but require dependable internet for this.

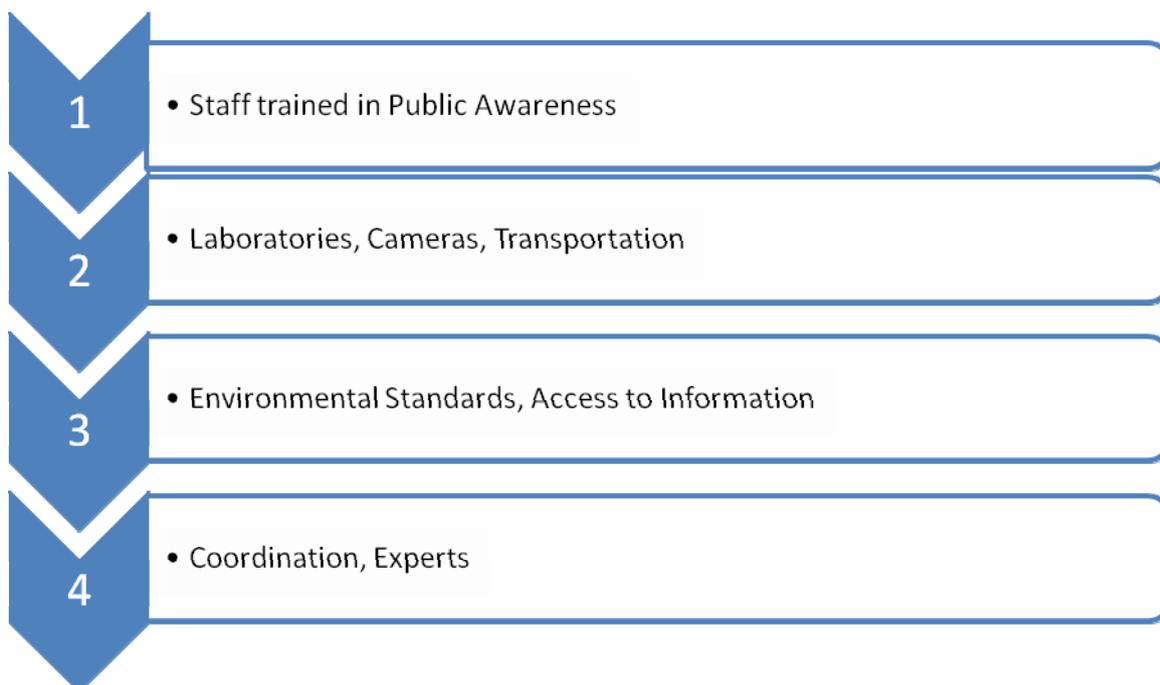
## 4.7 DIVISION: KABUL PROVINCIAL HUB

### 4.7.1 MANDATE:

#### Kabul Hub:

This hub covers the NEPA offices in the provinces of Kabul, Wardak, Parwan, Kapisa, Panjshir and Ghazni. The Kabul Hub have staff that work in the same divisions as NEPA HQ with the same mandates, yet focus on the above mentioned provinces.

### 4.7.2 1387 CAPACITY NEEDS BY QUARTER



### 4.7.3 GENERAL CAPACITY NEEDS:

- Need improved coordination with NEPA HQ,
- Have pilot projects that could act as good models for other offices,
- Request book on Chemical Bonds 2004.

# 5. BSP/NEPA STRATEGY

The BSP/NEPA is tasked with building capacity within NEPA, yet the project is limited in time and budget. For this reason, each action of the BSP/NEPA should contribute to strengthening or building systems within NEPA. It would be hoped that these systems would be sustainable and continue way past the life of the BSP/NEPA. Joining forces with other organizations will allow the BSP/NEPA to gain more from limited resources, as well as build synergies and avoid overlap. All activities must be in accordance with the Biodiversity Attribute, and the BSP/NEPA team recognizes that unless underlying issues, such as institutional systems, are not a focus, even efforts toward biodiversity conservation will be in vain. The OSS has taken into consideration the needs of the provincial NEPA offices and

recommends that further assessments be carried out in the provinces when security and funding allow. A priority to building capacity within NEPA is that NEPA institutionalize a training program.

## 5.1 TRAINING PROGRAM:

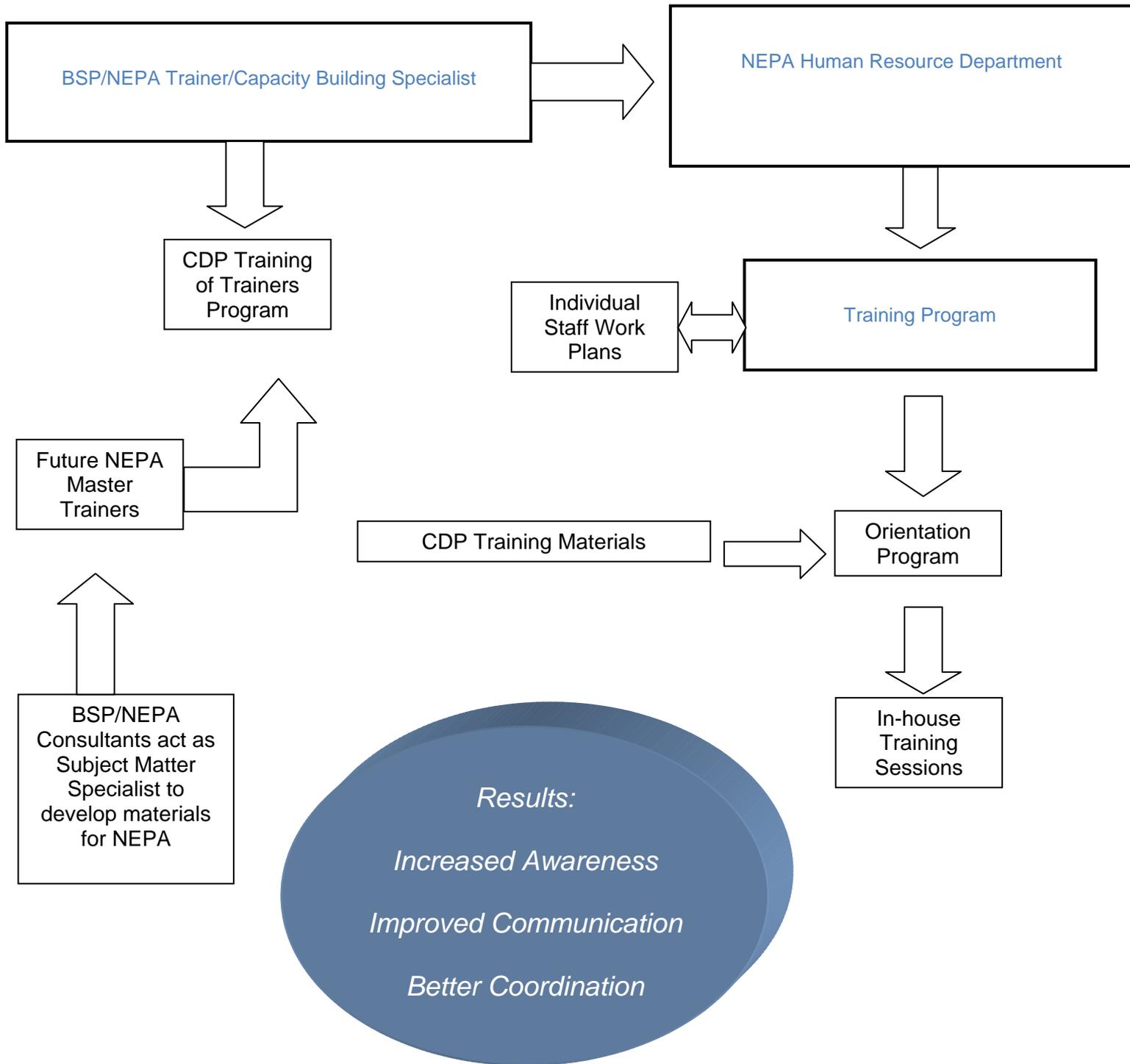
NEPA does not have a training plan or program established, which is a significant limitation to any capacity building efforts. The NEPA must be more pro-active about its capacity building initiatives and this will require establishing a strong training plan and program within NEPA. The BSP/NEPA can support this effort in the following ways (represented in graphic form in Figure 3):

- Hire a Training/Capacity Building Specialist as one of the National BSP/NEPA technical staff.
- Send the Training/Capacity Building Specialist to a ‘Train the Trainers’ program through CDP. If this position is hired in time, there is a course in April ,2008 (1387)(CDP courses are offered at no cost to the project – more details on CDP in Section 5.3). It is recommended that other NEPA staff go through the ‘Train the Trainer’ program at CDP in order to develop a group of Master Trainers within NEPA. The Training/Capacity Building Specialist can help with this initiative. Having Master Level Trainers on staff at NEPA HQ will be very beneficial to the institution at this time. NEPA will be changing its structure from 1 NEPA HQ with 8 Regional Hubs to 1 NEPA HQ with NEPA field offices in each of the 34 provinces. This structural change will require the hiring of approximately 300 new employees. All these staff will require training. It is critical that any capacity building effort provide training opportunities in the provinces to the greatest extent possible. One approach is to build a qualified group of trainers that can train provincial staff to become Master Trainers. The HQ trainers can either travel to the provinces or have the provincial staff travel to NEPA HQ in Kabul for training.
- The Training/Capacity Building Specialist will be assigned to the NEPA Human Resource Department. The specialist will assist the Human Resource department in several areas:
  1. Developing a Training plan and program within NEPA. A Training Committee was established several months ago with the objective of implementing a more equitable selection process. Mr. Baheer, Mr. Hamdard and Mr. Mansoori are on this committee. This Training Committee can act as a base to develop a fully functioning training program. The NEPA staff need individual work plans and these work plans should include individual training goals. The NEPA must be pro-active about its training needs, and not just depend on donor money arriving at random times with specific agendas that may or may not be compatible with NEPA’s Mission.
  2. As part of the training program, in-house courses will be developed. One of these courses will be an Orientation Program. The skill level and knowledge base of NEPA’s current staff is quite varied; therefore at this time of rapid growth it is more important than ever to bring all NEPA staff up to a basic functional level. The orientation program will consist of two main parts.
    - Professional Etiquette, Basic computer/internet skills, Issues of gender in the work place, Basic formatting for letters/reports (CDP has already developed training materials in some of these areas, which NEPA’s new Trainers will be able to utilize)
    - What is Environment , Environment Law, Environment in an International Context, Understanding NEPA and its Mission (CDP is willing to discuss the potential of developing training materials on this topic, such as a DVD which a Trainer can use as a tool to guide them through a workshop). This topic is critical since some staff in NEPA openly express that they do not know what the environment is. This lack of environmental knowledge has increased

because the PRR program has been and continues to hire people into NEPA that have had no exposure to environmental issues.

The Orientation program will be given to all new staff, as well as all current staff. Follow-up quarterly or annual training courses are recommended for all staff.

- Setting up a computer lab for NEPA could be very supportive to initiating an in-house training program, as well as improving data collecting and research capabilities.
- Initiate less formal Train the Trainer courses that work not only toward producing Master Trainers within NEPA, but also encourage more informal channels of communication that will work toward improving awareness levels and coordination efforts. (Annex)
- Potential topics for Workshops:
  1. GIS (GIS & Biodiversity; Managing a GIS Lab),
  2. Biodiversity,
  3. EIA (Actually walk through one in the workshop),
  4. Public Awareness (Developing a Strategy),
  5. Gender and Data Collecting,
  6. Environment Law (How it relates to each Division),
  7. International Environment Law,
  8. Afghanistan and the environment in an international context (focus on biodiversity).
- Potential topics for Study Tours:
  1. EIA Systems Abroad
  2. Natural Resource Management



**Figure 3:** Training Strategy

## 5.2 STAFFING

The recommendations for STTA input and for the Afghan National technical positions based on the capacity building assessment of NEPA are (note: 5 technical positions area available and 6 options are provided below):

### 5.2.1 BSP/NEPA TECHNICAL POSITIONS:

1. Law Specialist
  - A candidate with a 4 year degree in law would qualify for such a position. The Law Specialist can become the Specialist on Afghanistan's Environment Law. The level of ignorance among NEPA staff, other government employees and the general public is great. This law specialist can work to increase the level of understanding for each Division as to their role and responsibilities relevant to the Environment Law. The Law Specialist can support coordination among Divisions to educate the public on this topic.
2. Environmental Awareness/Education Specialist
  - NEPA currently has staff with the skills to develop awareness materials, but they lack a strategy and proper coordination. The Environmental Awareness/Education Specialist will provide support to the Division of Research, Policy and Information to develop and implement such a strategy. A communication & Media Outreach Strategist (International STTA) can provide training and mentoring for the Environmental Awareness/Education Specialist. UNEP has begun the process to develop such a strategy; therefore any action must be coordinated with them as to avoid overlap. UNEP has stated that a policy is needed in this area and that this will come after the Strategy.
3. Training/Capacity Building Specialist
  - The Training/Capacity Building Specialist can be assigned to the Human Resource Department and will be responsible for supporting HR's effort to develop a training plan and program.
4. Database Developer/Administrator
  - There is some element of data collection in the mandate of each Division, yet there is no database to store the information. It is urgent that a functional database be established within NEPA in the near future.
5. GIS Specialist
  - NEPA has functional GIS equipment which is currently under the authority of UNEP. This equipment is not being utilized. One reason is that there was not proper management of the lab and staff were either misusing the equipment or stealing the equipment. A person trained in basic GIS could assist in getting the lab up and running and could act as the manager of the lab. The MoAIL has a fully functioning GIS lab and can act as a model for NEPA.
6. Web Developer/Administrator
  - It is critical NEPA has a well designed website, especially while the need to increase awareness in the environment sector is so great. UNEP does have a consultant working with a NEPA staff member, but their capacity has been weak. It would benefit NEPA to either replace the current NEPA staff member or have the two work as a team with the UNEP consultant.

### 5.2.2 STTA INPUT

**STTA Input for 2008: (each can work with a NEPA Trainer to develop a course which NEPA can use for future trainings)** In discussions with several international organization that have been working with NEPA and with NEPA staff, it is felt that short term international consultants have been a lot less effective compared to ones that can join NEPA long term and be embedded within the organization. The same thought is true for trainings, longer term mentoring is much more effective than short term training sessions. It is recommended that to the extent possible, the BSP/NEPA consider consolidating some of its STTA inputs so that there can be less consultants for longer periods.

1. Environment/EIA Specialist (Suggested Time: April/May)  
The Division of Assessment and Sustainable Development for benefit from a consultant that could work with them long-term and be embedded in their office. The focus should be on setting up systems in the office to be able to properly implement the EIA policy and regulations.
2. Biodiversity Specialist  
The understanding of biodiversity was very low among the staff. Many could not define and even after it was defined for them, they were not able to recognize the links between biodiversity conservation and the mandate of their division. This expert can help build awareness within and outside of NEPA. They can act as the subject matter specialist for the development of awareness materials.
3. Communications & Media Outreach Strategist (Suggested Time: April/May)  
As mentioned previously, NEPA has staff with the skills to produce materials but they lack the ability to properly plan a strategy. This expert can provide support to the already on-going initiative of UNEP to develop such a strategy.
4. Grants Program Design Specialist (Suggested Time: June and a later input depending on the small grants program schedule – 2 inputs)  
This expert will provide support for Task 5, CBRM Small Grants component.
5. Public Finance Specialist  
A standardized financial system exists within the Afghanistan Government, but the NEPA Finance Department has not been able to link to it due to limitations of internet. They currently are using Excel and MS Word to carry out their financial responsibilities, but would prefer to be able to connect with the system at the Ministry of Finance. A National STTA may be better for this position, since the National Public Finance Specialist will have a solid understanding of the current government system.
6. Logistical Management Specialist (Suggested Time: May)  
This position is better filled by a National. The position is explained in section 5.3.1)
7. M&E Specialist (Suggested Time: Dependent on Small Grants Schedule – later in summer when start going into the field)  
Can assist with the monitoring effort, including training of NEPA staff, for task 5, CBRM.

**STTA positions not suggested at this time:**

1. Wetlands Management Specialist  
Clay Miller of EPA has returned to NEPA for 6 months. He is a Wetlands Management Specialist and is open to consultation with NEPA when needed on this topic.
2. Environmental Law  
UNEP has several Environmental Law Experts that are available for consultation when needed.
3. Protected Areas Specialist  
There already exists a protected areas consultant working with NEPA.

## 5.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION:

### 5.3.1 EPA – CLAY MILLER

Clay Miller with the EPA has been focusing on the overall strengthening of NEPA's administrative systems. This includes a focus on institutional planning, specifically the work plans at the Division level. The BSP/NEPA can add value to this already ongoing effort through the following actions:

- Take the Division level work planning initiative to the next level and provide training and practical support for how to develop individual work plans. A review of current staff TORs would be a good start to making the link from Division work plans to individual work plans. After a re-evaluation of the staff TORs, then quarterly individual work plans can be developed.
- Logistical Management in areas such as inventory, procurement and maintenance requires support.

The BSP/NEPA can provide National level STTA time for the above actions. A National STTA would be most appropriate since the above actions require a consultant with extensive knowledge and understanding of the Afghanistan government system, in such areas as procurement law. CDP does have a procurement specialist on staff, therefore may be able to provide some training and/or training materials to support this effort. If the Biodiversity Attribute is a limiting factor for the BSP/NEPA to carry out such actions for the entire NEPA, then the focus should be on the Natural Heritage Division. If such actions are successfully carried out in the Natural Heritage Division, it can be a model for the other Divisions. Establishing a strong administrative foundation is critical for any work to be productive in an institution; therefore without a strong base, even biodiversity conservation initiatives will be useless.

### 5.3.2 UNEP

Areas that BSP/NEPA can focus capacity initiatives that are most compatible with UNEP's on-going efforts and work to best tackle some of NEPA's most urgent capacity needs.

- UNEP has begun to establish a Provincial Outreach Program, yet the program is still in its infancy. As the BSP/NEPA consider carrying out Outreach at the provincial level, it will be important to coordinate closely with UNEP so as to strengthen efforts and not weaken them through overlapping. One foreseeable capacity need will be to make the link from the provincial level to the community level. UNEP feels that with the weak institutional capability of NEPA currently, along with the instability, insurgency, and absence of rule of law in most areas of the country, that it is not feasible to attempt such an effort at the present time. But with this said, UNEP does feel certain areas such as Herat, Kunduz and Balkh have been a few of the success stories and could be target areas for capacity building efforts. Key to successfully building capacity at the provincial level is having a strong and stable central organization; therefore the majority of efforts should be targeted toward NEPA HQ.

The BSP/NEPA will focus much of its efforts on NEPA HQ, but it is recommended that Herat, Kunduz and Balkh be considered for capacity building efforts as well. If

the Trainer the Trainers initiative is implemented within NEPA HQ, then these three regions could provide 'test' areas for NEPA trainers.

- UNEP has provided NEPA with GIS equipment, but this equipment needs to be set up. The lab requires a qualified manager before it can be open for use, as well as qualified technicians. Staff have been trained on GIS, but not all have stayed with NEPA. It is a waste for the GIS equipment not to be utilized by NEPA, it could help them greatly in many areas. The BSP/NEPA should consider actions that could support NEPA in getting their GIS lab up and running. ICIMOD and WCS are also willing to cooperate on GIS initiatives. One thought was to host a workshop that would bring MoAIL and NEPA staff together to discuss issues of biodiversity conservation and how GIS can help with such initiatives. This workshop would aim to break some of the political tension among MoAIL and NEPA and hopefully, MoAIL, which has a functioning lab, could act as a model for NEPA as they work toward getting their GIS lab functional. This could also encourage joint initiatives between the two in this area.

#### **Summary of UNEP's past work with NEPA:**

In October 2003, the UNEP began the Capacity and Institution Development Programme for NEPA. The program continues until 2009 with financial support of the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Government of Finland.

The focus of UNEP's work with NEPA has been:

1. **Environmental coordination** – supported NEPA with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) poverty reduction strategy paper;
2. **Environmental Legislation** – supported the development and passage of the Environment Law, as well as policies and regulations such as the Environmental Impact Assessment Policy;
3. **Community-based Natural Resource Management** – this program was implemented as a pilot project with great success and recommendations for future efforts in this area;
4. The priority **reform and restructuring** program 2004;
5. **Environmental Information and Monitoring** – the development of an environmental database framework;
6. **Environmental Education and awareness**;
7. **Multilateral Environmental Agreements** – supported NEPA's efforts to accede to several MEAs and to secure funding for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
8. UNEP hosted the Afghanistan-Iran dialogue on the **Sistan basin wetlands**.

#### **5.3.3 ACC**

- Have been working to improve capacity of the wetland area, Kole Hashmat Khan Wildfowl Sanctuary. They are attempting to build up materials for the Resource Center. The BSP/NEPA should consider strengthening the link between the NEPA HQ library and the Resource Center, as well as supporting the effort to build their inventory.

### **Summary of Afghan Conservation Corps (ACC):**

The ACC was established in 2003 with the help of USDA and financial support from the US Department of State. UNOPS plays a key role in providing operational and management support for the ACC on the ground. The objective of the program is to provide community-based employment for Afghans in the following areas:

1. Growing and planting trees
2. Fostering conservation of water
3. Controlling soil erosion

The targeted populations for these employment opportunities have been returning refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and vulnerable groups such as women. The ACC have begun such initiatives as the Greenbelt program, which aims to plant 850,000 seedlings around Afghanistan in the hope of returning the country to its former green state of over 30 years ago. A large part of the reforestation effort has focused on bringing back the pistachio woodlands of Afghanistan. The ACC has also carried out a small grants program in which it worked directly with the local Shuras on implementing community projects to support the overall goal of the program.

Past Training initiatives – most of their work has involved MoAIL, but some NEPA staff have participated:

- Forest Inventories
- Nursery establishment
- Soil/Water Conservation
- Protected Areas

### **5.3.4 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS)**

- Willing to support GIS initiatives, such as the workshop mentioned earlier.

Summary of WCS:

WCS is implementing a three-year program in wildlife conservation, community conservation, capacity building, wildlife and rangeland management, promoting and developing protected areas, developing cross-border landscape management and developing an international park in the Wakhan Corridor.

Potential Coordination with Partners for 2008:

- Writing and adapting laws such as the hunting law, management plans for protected areas, etc.,
- Support to GIS lab,
- Field training for Natural Heritage Protection staff,
- Development of CITES legislation and red-list of endangered species for Afghanistan in 2008,
- Wildlife trade monitoring.

Past Training initiatives:

1. Field Research

Consultants have national counterpart when carrying out field research, are responsible for mentoring, must have workshop/short course upon return to Kabul on work

2. Study Tours
3. Seminars

### **5.3.5 INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR INTEGRATED MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT (ICIMOD)**

- Willing to support GIS initiatives, such as the workshop mentioned earlier.

Summary of ICIMOD:

ICIMOD Country Office Afghanistan, USAID Funded Biodiversity and Community Forestry Program in Afghanistan.

ICIMOD is a recognized organization in the region that has the mandate to bring about common understanding and collaboration among the States that share the habitats of the Himalayas. Afghanistan was once a very active member of the organization but has long been inactive because of the war. ICIMOD's unique role in the area and their demonstrated technical skill in community management of mountain resources will be key resource available to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan becoming an active member in the regional effort to properly manage the region's natural resources.

ICIMOD could collaborate with partners and contribute in capacity building of NEPA staff members in a) information management, 2) monitoring and evaluation and in various aspects of promoting Community Based Natural Resource Management, 3) undertaking participatory action research for linking policy with practice through meaningful demonstrations on the ground.

### **5.3.6 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM/USAID**

CDP (add summary) – in addition to support with above mentioned items (Training of Trainers, Course Materials, DVD on key environmental concepts to be used for trainings), CDP also is in the process of planning its curriculum for this year. Some NEPA staff would be able to participate in these programs at no cost through the BSP/NEPA. Below are a sample few course topics, but when their planning is complete, CDP will send a full list of the available courses.

- Basic budgeting
- IT
- Leadership and Management

## 6. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS THAT HAVE WORKED WITH NEPA:

### **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**

CRS is working in the remote province of Ghor. There are few NGOs that are willing to work there. This activity is providing assistance in management of watershed/range areas using the Community Management Mechanism to conserve the resources of the very disadvantaged people in this remote province. This small activity will test the concept of allowing people to have both authority and use of resources important to their well being. This effort is an important effort having the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and local people collaborate on natural resources management.

### **Global Partnership for Afghanistan (GPFA)**

GPFA is an emergent organization. They work on assisting farmers to grow fast-growing trees as a farm crop. This is the only such program in Afghanistan providing assistance directly to farmers.

### **World Food Programme (WFP)**

The implementation of the Provincial Reforestation and Integrated Environmental Protection Project (IEPP) was recently awarded to WFP. IEPP is a component of the on-going UN Joint Program with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan - the "Green Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN)". The objectives of GAIN are:

1. to increase natural vegetation and forest cover through community and government-supported labor intensive projects;
2. to provide alternative sustainable livelihoods through home and community-based nurseries;
3. to increase environmental awareness through education by integrating environmental issues in to the school curriculum; and
4. to build community and government capacity on strategic planning and policy development.

IEPP will enhance the capacity of the government agencies and communities in the provinces of Faryab, Sari-i-Pul and Jawzjan to manage their natural resources and conserve biodiversity.

### **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**

Since 2003 the ADB has been working with the Environmental Authority, now represented by NEPA, by providing environmental management and capacity building support. They successfully implemented the Kabul Air Quality Management Program which lasted from December 2004 until December 2006. The program worked with NEPA on emission inventory and control as well as capacity building. There is potential for more funding to come through that will allow an extension of this program. ADB also has worked with NEPA on developing renewable energy programs. Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation in Afghanistan was another project which was jointly implemented with NEPA and the Ministry of Agriculture. The various components of that project were:

1. Protected areas management and biodiversity conservation;
2. Poverty alleviation in buffer zones of protected areas;
3. Capacity building in biodiversity and park management;
4. Park infrastructures;
5. Technical and administrative support for the Department of Natural Resources;

6. Study Tours to a National Park in Nepal; and
7. Ecotourism development.

### **World Bank**

The World Bank has not done any direct projects with NEPA, but has provided support to their development in several ways as well as actively looking into how they can support NEPA more directly in the future. The one significant action they have taken to support and validate NEPA's role in the government is to require that any Ministry carrying out a World Bank-funded project first seek approval by NEPA regarding the required Environmental Impact Assessments. They recognize NEPA's weakness in being able to enforce such newly established regulations, therefore aim to build awareness among the Ministries for such regulations.

The World Bank also has been involved in trainings to support awareness building among NEPA staff, as well as the other Ministries. A World Bank consultant will begin work soon to look further into the needs of NEPA, so that they can develop projects that will support the environmental management capabilities of NEPA and strengthen its institution.