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**AFGHANISTAN**

# Assessment of the Impact of USAID Funded Technical Assistance-Capacity Building Final Report

May 18, 2007

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared under contract with Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. and its Subcontractor through USAID's Afghanistan "Services under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking" (SUPPORT) project. The report was prepared by Richard N. Blue, Consultant.

## I. Introduction

This report covers the Scope of Work issued for this Assessment of USAID Funded Technical Assistance Since 2003. It will supplement the Power Point Presentation already provided and submitted to Checchi and USAID May 6, 2007 in Kabul. The information, analysis and recommendations presented here answer questions posed in sections 3 d. and (f.) as enumerated in the SOW numbered 2007-007 (attached).

## II. Methods

Per the SOW, Section 5, I reviewed the data from the earlier informal survey of Afghan government ministers conducted prior to my arrival in Kabul April 21, 2007. No draft survey had been prepared, although a list of questions was provided by Checchi on my arrival. Together with local Afghan consultant Dr. Hamiddullah Tarzi, I used this list to prepare a written questionnaire which was distributed by Dr. Tarzi to eleven ministries/agencies on April 24, 2007. Later, the questionnaire was translated into Dari for those who requested it. On my departure from Kabul May 8, only two questionnaires had been returned. USAID and Checchi agreed to support Dr. Tarzi's efforts to retrieve as many more of the questionnaires as possible. In spite of Dr. Tarzi's efforts, only one additional questionnaire was completed. The ministries returning their questionnaires were: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Women's Affairs. The answers to the eight closed questions are summarized below, as well as a few of the comments made, but without attribution as promised to the respondents.

Section 3 of the SOW directs the consultant "to develop an inventory of past, present, and planned TA, including TA characteristics (short-term, full-time, expatriate, Afghan, etc.) and whether capacity development was an explicit objective. The consultant will also review the findings of evaluations or audits of past TA programs and identify, where possible, when a particular program moved from support aid (one-off assistance) to building infrastructure and capacity." SOW Section 5, states that the Mission will supply to the consultant "all material relevant to preparation of inventory" and "any other material relevant to establishing standards against which to assess program."

I could not develop a systematic inventory as requested. Neither the Mission nor the USAID desk office could provide materials relevant to such an inventory. A request for audits and evaluations turned up three audits and four evaluations, two of which were relevant, but were only 'mid-term' appraisals. A search of USAID EvalWeb yielded two additional evaluations, both done at mid-term. These evaluations did note that capacity building, in the main, was a substantial challenge which had not been addressed in any systematic way by the technical assistance provided up to the time of writing, mostly late 2004 – early 2005.

During discussions about the absence of documentation with USAID Afghanistan Program Director Thomas Johnson, we concluded that I would attempt a qualitative assessment based on what I could learn during the two weeks allotted to field work for this study. I agreed to conduct interviews with USAID counterpart ministries and with

USAID Implementing partner organizations, review what documents were available, and attempt an approximation of an inventory, as well as preparing my response to the questions posed in Section 3.d. of the SOW.

The SOW requires a report that addresses the following issues:

1. The relevance and importance of various types of TA programs from the perspective of GoA official and other stakeholders.
2. The strengths and weaknesses of USAID Kabul provided technical assistance since the re-introduction of US assistance in 2003, and
3. What GoA officials and other stakeholders would like to see in the future in terms of how technical assistance, particularly assistance intended to develop indigenous capacities, is managed and implemented.

In the final report, the SOW directs me to prepare a summary and conclusions drawn from the questionnaires, a summary of TA inventory, a summary of evaluation and audit findings, and recommendations on how to deliver better and more appropriate TA in the future and performance indicators linked to capacity building. Also, the report should include recommended steps to build more positive and stronger relationships with the GoA in the TA development and delivery process.

While still in Afghanistan, I provided Checchi SUPPORT project and the USAID Mission several documents, including an annotated and detailed eight page outline of findings, conclusions and recommendations, a copy of a Power Point presentation based on the outline, a list of persons interviewed, and a list of documents reviewed. I also developed a proto-type of a what I have termed a “donor-coordination map” that could be tailored to each ministry receiving assistance. All these documents are included as appendices to this summary report.

### III. Findings

#### A. Summary and conclusions from Questionnaires.

As noted above, only three ministries returned questionnaires. A copy of the questionnaire is included as an annex. The questions and responses are summarized in the following table:

USAID  
Ministerial Capacity Building Questionnaire Responses  
Selected Questions

Question #	Question Summary	Response Summary	Number Responding
Q. 2	Ministry involvement In USAID TA Planning?	Only Informed by USAID	2
		Rarely Involved and not informed until TA arrives.	1
Q. 3	Any change in USAID TA?	No Change that we can see	1
		Now more emphasis on training and capacity building	2
Q. 4	Ministry involvement in Implementation?	We do not have regular meetings or other ways to discuss issues with USAID	1
		We sometimes meet if a serious problem	1
		We have had a productive relationship with contractors, but not with USAID directly	1
Q. 5	Describe general relationship between your ministry and USAID?	USAID has been very responsive to our concerns when we have issues	1
		USAID will sometimes respond if we persist	1
		USAID does not seem to care for our views	1
Q. 8	Other constraints to capacity building in addition to low salaries and poorly trained staff? (two choices)	Inability of our staff to work in English	2
		We cannot compete on salary with international donors, NGOs for young, well trained Afghans	1
		With low salaries and poor training, there is little incentive to work hard	1

One section of the questionnaire asked respondents to review nine policy action statements that described various recommendations that had been made in documents and policy discussions between USAID, other donors and the government. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the recommended action was a high, medium, or low priority, or either not important or not practical.

Two policy recommendations received ‘high priority’ by all three respondents

- a. *Work with government to develop policies for better pay and grade systems, better working conditions and operating budgets for all ministries.*
- b. *Take a comprehensive and systematic approach to government reform and capacity building by establishing a long term strategic partnership with USAID and other donors.*

The recommendation to “Create an Afghan government technical assistance coordinating agency charged with approving, coordinating, and reviewing performance of all donor provided TA” was considered a high priority by only one ministry, while another considered only medium, and one said it ‘was not important’. Given the emphasis on coordination by the Government of Afghanistan, this lack of full endorsement is a bit surprising.

The recommendation to send young Afghans to the United States for long term training with a obligatory return received only one ‘high priority’ vote. All other action recommendations received two ‘high priority’ votes.

All respondents were asked to provide additional comments following each question. One ministerial respondent was especially thoughtful, as summarized below:

*“Our 2006 project focuses on training and capacity building”*

*“We have had a positive and constructive relationship with USAID contractors; no relationship with USAID directly.”*

*“We would like a long term advisor for each department with a program of regular in-service training, as well as specialized courses in data management, computer operations.”*

*“We need more capacity building in policy decision making, how to analyze different courses of action”*

*“PRR process is not facing challenges: high capacity Afghans do not apply because of low salaries.”*

*“Need to achieve ethnic balance in recruitment is not consistent with a modern, merit-based appointment process.”*

*“Advisors tend to do their own work, rather than devoting time to transferring their skills and knowledge.”*

This small number of formal responses cannot be considered statistically valid or fully representational of the views of various ministries that have received technical assistance through USAID projects. However, the sense of some improvement in focus on capacity building and, at the same time, the frustration with the lack of systematic communication, coordination and review with USAID is a view supported by the personal interviews conducted and summarized below.

**B. Summary of TA Inventory**

In anticipation of a completing the requested inventory, I set up a Table for recording information as shown in Sample Table 1 below. As noted in the preceding section, I was unable to compile a TA inventory. However, I believe that this would be a useful task for the Mission or the Checchi SUPPORT project to undertake. It could be done by a relatively junior level person with some supervision from a more experienced person. Locating and assembling the raw data would take some time. The most likely source might be contractor quarterly and annual reports to USAID, supplemented by additional information from Afghan Ministries, evaluations and other USAID sources. Once the basic facts were collected, a different process would be needed to establish Capacity Building Impact. It would be difficult to evaluate short term TA that may have occurred in 2003 or 2004. However, it might be possible to establish a joint Afghan-USAID Delphi panel to examine and evaluatively rate longer term advisors or advisory team’s contribution to capacity building, past, present and planned. (See recommendations)

USAID TA Afghanistan  
Sample Table 1  
(Example Only)

Ministry/Agency	TA Objective	Duration	Afghan Experience	Nationality	Embedded	Capacity Building Impact

Through discussions with both expatriate and Gov. of Afghanistan officials, as well as some additional material supplied by the Ministry of Finance, I am able to identify the following major types of technical assistance providers:

- **The Short Term Foreign Expert**

Often called the ‘parachute’ type of technical assistance, the expert is usually brought in to produce a particular product in his or her area of expertise, or to meet an information/analysis need for USAID, its contractor, or the GoA Ministry.

This type of assistance works best when there is a clear objective, and the expertise needed is of the technical type, not requiring deep experience and insight into local culture or substantial ‘re-fitting’ to the particular conditions of present day Afghanistan. Much of this type of expertise is of greater benefit to the USAID contractor than it is to the Afghan government.

The Capacity Building Impact of this type of TA is limited, although to the extent a useful ‘tool’ is left behind, it can contribute to improving performance of the relevant ministry or agency.

- **The Repeat Performer**

Whether short or long term, there are a number of technical assistance experts in Afghanistan who have served under several different contracts, and have developed a deeper understanding of the difficulties and possibilities of assisting the Afghan government to become more effective. The Global Alliance part of the ABC project is using the ‘repeat performer’ model in its approach to fashioning relationships between foreign and local universities.

- **The Embedded Advisor (or Advisory team)**

The embedded advisor is one who usually works in an Afghan Ministry Directorate or Agency for one or more years. In the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, for example, USAID/Bearing point has a team of experts working on issues relating to Afghanistan eventual entry into the World Trade Organization.

The capacity building impact of these advisors can be substantial, if their mandate is explicitly focused on this objective. On the other hand, the embedded advisor, or advisory group may find that they are becoming a ‘parallel’ government body, taking on most of the operational functions that theoretically should be performed by the Ministry. When this happens, the capacity building impact is limited.

- **The Afghan Returnee**

Whether as an expert, part of an advisory team, or simply placed in an operational role related to longer term capacity building efforts (as in the reforms underway through the ICARCSC), USAID has found ways to attract Diaspora Afghans back to Kabul through salary inducements, supplements, and ‘topping off’. It would be useful to know the extent of this practice in quantitative terms, as well as the distribution of these persons among the various ministries and agencies of the government.

The benefits of the Afghan returnee are many, including language facility, exposure to contemporary (usually western) ways of thinking and doing business, and understanding of cultural and social customs that influence Afghan practices.

The down side of this practice is the resentment sometimes caused when returnees make salaries that are substantially higher than other Afghans in service, and when the returnee’s so-called superior level of competence is called into question.

These issues notwithstanding, the Gov. of Afghanistan has strongly endorsed the concept of attracting Afghan returnees to government service, as well as to the economic sectors of Afghan’s rebuilding effort.

- **The Seamless Partnership**

Capacity Building benefits when the relationship between the host agency and the technical assistance provider has a long history. Everyone admits that CB takes a long time, but for the most part, the foreign assistance project/contractor approach may be time limited to three years, and individual experts may have even shorter time assignments as demonstrated in Table 2 below. However, USAID has supported two contractors whose performance is of such a quality that they have become continuous partners with key ministries. The best example might be the relationship between Management Sciences for Health and the Ministry of Public Health, which claims a thirty year relationship going back to refugee camp days in Pakistan. This is the only relationship where the contractor’s Chief of Party and key team positions are staffed by Afghans. Another candidate for Seamless Partnership status is the Bearing Point-Central Bank and Ministry of Finance relationship. Whether the new Bearing Point ABC team can bring to bear any of the benefits of this previous experience remains to be seen.

The Ministry of Finance has compiled lists of technical assistance advisors that have been supplied to that Ministry through the Bearing Point contract.

Table 2  
Gov. of Afghanistan - Ministry of Finance\*  
Record of USAID TA Provision

TA/Provider	Contract	Expatriate	Duration	Afghan local	Duration
EMG	State Owned Industries	4	3 = 1 year 1 = 2 year	13	4 = 1 year 7 = 2 year 3 = 3 year
Bearing Point	Treasury	11 FT 3 PT	2 = 1 mos. 1 = 1 year 1 = 2 year 7 = no data	30	25 = 9 mos. 5 = no data
Bearing Point	Various	4	2 = 1 mos. 1 = 9 mos. 1 = no data		
Bearing Point	Customs	12	4 = 3 mos. 8 = 1 year	18	16 = 1-3 mos. 2 = 1 year

\*Source: Ministry of Finance, Human Resource Management Unit. May 2007

According to this data, USAID supported two expatriate advisors for two years, twelve for one year each, and nine for a few months each. Of the 34 expatriate advisors listed, a review of personnel names suggests no more than two or three may have been of Afghan descent, and two of South Asian descent. I do not have access to the fully loaded cost coefficient for a person year of expatriate technical assistance. Using a guesstimate of \$300,000 each, the total cost for this assistance would be in the vicinity of \$5.1 million (17 person years X 300,000).

### C. Strengths and Weaknesses of USAID Kabul-provided technical assistance

This topic was covered in considerable detail in the power point presentation and my document submitted to USAID dated May 8, 2007, see pages 4-7. In this report I will simply summarize the main findings.

There are structural tensions on both the Afghan and US side in the discussions about the success or failure of capacity building. The Gov. of Afghanistan's discussion paper submitted to the World Bank's Afghan Development conference in May reflects many of these tensions and the general belief that billions of assistance notwithstanding, very little capacity building has taken place. There is some merit in the Afghan position, in that, until recently, capacity building has not been a primary objective of USAID projects. And what has occurred has been more ad hoc and 'spotty' rather than systematic and strategic. This is changing, and the hope is that both the donor and the Afghan side will seize the opportunity to get serious about capacity building, rather than engage in public accusations and finger pointing. For this to happen, both sides will have to find ways to

engage in this process while overcoming the variety of pressures that focus attention on the immediate here and now outcomes.

On the positive side of the equation, and despite assertions to the contrary, there is considerable evidence to support the claim that USAID assistance has promoted, and is currently promoting Afghan capacity building. At least four ministries are considered reasonably competent to carry out their primary responsibilities. Three of these are line operational ministries, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development. All three have chosen to rely on contractual relationships to provide the bulk of their service outreach to the Afghan public, reserving for the Ministry the role of policy, program initiatives, budget, and supervision to maintain expected standards. The fourth highly ranked candidate is the Ministry of Finance, often lumped with the Central Bank. Including Customs and Treasury, MoF performs a core government function necessary to the success of the entire Government of Afghanistan, and has rightly received considerable support from USAID and other donors.

Successful capacity building is the product of a relationship between the host and the donor in which both sides contributes. The donor cannot ‘build capacity’ without the host agency accepting responsibility for the ultimate results of the process and for taking the necessary sovereign steps to provide a favorable environment for donor assisted capacity building efforts. .

On the Afghan side, the key factors which seem to be related to relatively successful efforts in capacity building appear to be

2. the presence of a competent and committed leader as Minister,
3. the creation of a second tier team of competent administrators/managers (often drawn from Afghan Diaspora ranks with supplemented salaries),
4. a clear understanding of the key objectives and priorities of the Ministry, and
5. Finally, well established and relatively universally accepted set of practices and procedures for doing the assigned task, regardless of the particularities of local customs and beliefs.

On the USAID, the key components of a successful capacity building appear to be:

1. A sustained and long term commitment to a partnership with the host agency.
2. A willingness to listen, communicate, respect and engage as equals in the partnership.
3. The application of well known adult learning principles. Advisors must be “Coaches” as well as experts...
4. Creating the capacity for building capacity by emphasizing training of trainers, institutionalization of knowledge building and management (through monitoring and evaluation) for organizational learning.
5. Constantly challenging the host client to find and take responsibility for implementing solutions that achieve RESULTS. (Avoiding taking responsibility for doing the job.)

While these factors can be identified by examining the experience in Afghanistan to date, there are also too many examples of technical assistance efforts which have neither met their immediate technical objectives nor contributed to capacity building. And there are too many examples of ministries where leadership is lacking, staff morale remains low, and no clear vision or strategy for achieving objectives is forthcoming from the Afghan side.

#### **D. Four Major Dimensions of Organizational Capacity**

As everyone knows, capacity building is long term, complex, and when coupled with comprehensive reform of existing systems, subject to many setbacks, constraints, and possible failures. Four major structural and human resource constraints affect the process, and unless all are dealt with, results may be sub-optimal at best. These are:

1. **The Task Environment:** this includes meager pay and allowances, the incentive structure (promotion and pay increases), recruitment and advancement processes, staffing redundancy, as well as the physical aspects of the work place, including security.
2. **Human Resources:** work skills and habits, discipline, absence of analytical and problem solving aptitudes/habits, training unfocused or non-existent, organizational culture.
3. **Work Systems:** antiquated or non-existent laws, policies, procedures, and processes for planning, managing, and implementing tasks and assessing results...include especially information technology and communications management internally and externally.
4. **Leadership:** absence of well prepared, informed, experienced and committed leadership at the first and second tiers of the organization. No identity between political requirements of the job and the function of the organization, unable or unwilling to take responsibility for the task of building capacity and delivering results.

Each of these constraints is discussed in greater detail below.

##### *The Task Environment*

The principle issue here from a capacity building perspective is the very meager pay structure for Afghan civil servants. All respondents on both sides cited this as the number one constraint to capacity building. Why? First, the salary structure makes it impossible to attract skilled Afghans from within the country or from abroad. Second, when people are trained by donors they become competitive in the broader labor market, and many of them leave. While there may be a net gain to Afghanistan, it makes it next to impossible to keep good skilled people in government service.

A related problem is that of redundancy and overstaffing in the ministries. A foreign advisor in a Ministry that had about 450 employees opined that his ministry could be run with 150 good people. Another advisor in a large ministry with about 18000 people asserted that one third of the current work force could be retired without noticeable difference in output. A Deputy Minister in another Ministry said that he had been able to reduce the work force by about 3000 employees, and had helped another ministry do the same.

Because of low salaries and redundant workers, some civil servants are finding day time outside work, while theoretically doing their civil service job, as noted by one Minister. How widespread this practice is cannot be determined.

Clearly, unless steps are taken to improve the pay and working conditions for civil servants, improving skills and introducing more efficient and effective processes will not produce the desired capacity improvements.

### *Human Resources*

Including teachers, but not including the police and military, the estimated number of civil servants is in the vicinity of 300,000 persons spread over nearly 700 organizations and operational units. According to testimony from expatriates and Afghans alike, a large percentage of these people lack both the skill sets and the work habits consistent with modern government performance expectations. Recruited largely during the Soviet era, then surviving through Mujahadin and Taliban political leadership, this aging work force is naturally risk averse, conservative, and difficult to retrain. For example, few of the judges in the Afghan court structure have more than a high school education, and according to one observer, are not expert in either Sharia or Civil Law. An advisor working on civil service reform estimated that 2100 civil servants had to be trained in “all aspects of Human Resource Management (HRM) policies, regulations and procedures” (Bateman-Rahimi Letter February 2006) with at least 650 will require additional specialized training in specific aspects of Human Resource Management. In addition to HRM training, ministerial staff will require substantive technical training as well as process management training relevant to the particular functions of each ministry.

Over the longer run, successful capacity building will depend on the input of younger, better trained Afghans. While in service training can boost performance, especially in technical skills such as IT, producing the kind of analytical and problem solving skills and attitudes will depend on current efforts to revitalize University and specialized graduate level education, as being developed by USAID’s Global Alliance project, for example.

### *Work Systems*

Although not the focus of this assessment, interviews with expatriates especially suggest that most ministries do not have in place good information management systems, work

planning procedures, or administrative manuals covering all aspects of the ministries functions.

The link between skills training and the introduction of better work management systems must be tightly drawn in any capacity building program. Too often, training is of a general nature and may or may not be related to the actual functions the trainee will be asked to perform on return to the job.

Unless a more thorough study were to demonstrate otherwise, it does not appear that existing capacity building efforts have focused much on the array of issues relating to building public trust and confidence. Democratic governance, as understood in USAID, is more than public administration efficiency. It has to do with integrity, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to public concerns and inputs. These values are difficult to implement even in nations with a long history of democratic governance. They speak to an unusual relationship between citizens and their government which may be very difficult to inculcate in the Afghan political culture.

### *Leadership*

It is not surprising that strong leadership has been present in the ministries generally cited as having made substantial progress in developing capacity and competence. The characteristics of these leaders, by most accounts, include:

- Commitment to reform and capacity building for their ministry.
- Sufficient technical understanding of the task.
- Political savvy and ability to compete effectively for resources.
- Communication skills, both within the ministry and externally
- A sense of ‘taking responsibility’ for the success of their program.

Obviously, any government when making high level appointments has to balance between political factors and the technical requirements of the job. When the human resource pool is large, this need not be a problem...but even in the United States, political appointees, when put to the test, often come up short.

Leadership involves more than having a strong minister at the head. Leadership is a category of people who operate at the second and third levels of organizational management; the deputy ministers and director’s general is the people who make the difference between a sloppy organization and a well managed one. Too often, a strong leader centralizes all decision making, or fails to build his second and third level managers into a functioning team. Based on interviews with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Health, the quality of the second and third tier leaders was substantially higher than in some other ministries. Any capacity building effort has to focus on building a leadership team, not on just finding the best top leader for the job.

E. **Steps toward a successful capacity building strategy: recommendations.**

General principles to guide decision making

1. Recognize that capacity building is the KEY cross cutting issue, and must be a major criterion in all assistance decision making.
2. Successful capacity building must be based on a partnership between the Afghan and donor side...partnerships require engagement, respect, listening, and accommodation.
3. Avoid wasting time and money if the minimal conditions for success are not in place...
4. Building Afghan capacity to do its own capacity building is critical...the world is not static, new problems, technologies, and challenges will emerge which require organizational learning and continual adjustment.
5. Recognize that structural and leadership problems can undermine the best human resource and systems development programs.

Moving Forward

USAID has in place a formidable array of projects, including but not limited to ABC, that have capacity building components and objectives. This second generation of projects will have to be well coordinated with the ABC effort, as well as with the GoA and other donors. Based on recent GoA papers, it appears the GoA is quite serious about taking a more forceful posture with respect to approving projects, as well as taking a leadership role in capacity building efforts across the entire spectrum of government agencies. There appears to be a convergence of thinking and commitment among the various stakeholders. The challenge now is to translate this convergence into effective action.

Based on the two weeks of this assessment and a very steep learning curve for me, it would be folly to lay out a detailed road map for USAID to follow. However, recommendations are called for in the SOW, so I will follow suit. I suggest the following steps be considered.

1. Establish a Capacity Building Board of Advisors (CBBA) or similar with representation from all sectors, private, not for profit, donor, and parliament and government. This Board would be responsible for advising the Gov. of Afghanistan on strategies, measures, projects and emerging issues. A first effort of the Board would be to build on GoA recent efforts toward a comprehensive capacity building strategy, which would set priorities in line with resources, time lines, and implementation capacity.
2. Establish somewhere in government (MoF? or Civil Service?) a Management and Program Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, (MPEMU) responsible for conducting needs assessments, developing capacity

building results indicators and monitoring and independent evaluations. Reports would be issued to the CBBA and discussed in public fora. The MPEMU might serve as secretariat to the CBBA. It would also be a resource and training unit for developing similar capacity for E and M in each Ministry and Agency. This unit might be a key counterpart for the ABC project.

3. Develop and use a standard protocol for capacity building needs assessments. Any Needs Assessment must start with a clear statement of the organization's Mandate and Responsibilities. Needs Assessments will serve as 'baselines' against which to measure progress for each unit toward building capacity.
4. Develop a schedule and contractual means of conducting needs assessments for all major operational units of the GoA. With modifications, do the same for the various sectors in the Afghan economy. These assessments must be done expeditiously and with the understanding that they are not academic exercises. They must meet the test of management utility.
5. Develop a Donor Mapping Protocol for identifying and coordination donor inputs to capacity building programs. An overall map for government, private sector, and civil society can be constructed first, followed by more specific mapping exercises for each major operational unit of government.
6. As a high priority, donors and government must find ways to address the twin problems of low pay and overstuffed ministries in the GoA. This will take some creative thinking and sound labor economic analysis, coupled with an awareness of the political dangers of precipitous action. The analysis and strategy should include the practice of various 'topping off' mechanisms used by donors to attract Afghan returnees with the goal of integrating all salaries into a rational and affordable salary structure financed by GoA resources.
7. Develop a generalized protocol and guidance manual for capacity building that could be used by all projects, with suitable flexibility for accommodating the variability of needs, strengths and weaknesses in each agency. This manual should be based on well established principles for adult learning as well as for the introduction of new systems for managing work tasks. A number of these practices are outlined in the report prepared for the Power Point presentation May 7, 2007
8. Work with nascent civil society organizations to develop 'watch-dog' and advocacy capacity vis a vis government performance. To the extent

possible, take a ‘positive sum’ approach, rather than a highly adversarial one, at least in the early stages.

9. Keep the spotlight on this effort with conferences, publications, award ceremonies, distribution of reports, etc.

## Annex 1

### Scope of Work

#### Scope of Work

#### **SUPPORT** **Assessment of the Impact of USAID Funded** **Technical Assistance Since 2003, Phase II**

2007-007

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

USAID wants an assessment of its programs and activities in Afghanistan since 2003 involving the provision of technical assistance (TA) to government ministries and other bodies. The assessment needs to take in consideration USAID's role at the beginning of its involvement in Afghanistan and how that role has evolved. In the beginning, the major role of USAID's activities was to provide resources that would help support the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) to become a functioning body and deliver some degree of services. The activities included one-off projects generating activities such as food aid and infusing money into the economy. The programs changed over time to include building major infrastructure programs and, presently, comprehensive capacity development. However, in the course of implementing programs since early 2003, significant levels of technical assistance (TA) have been delivered via short-term consultants and long-term, often in-country, advisors. In most all cases, both forms of TA were provided by expatriates, almost always from outside the region.

Afghan Government officials have their collective and individual opinions of how successful USAID TA programs have been. What they say in public sometimes differs from what they say in private. In public forums they are not overly critical of the TA received, but privately there is a tendency in some quarters to criticize USAID (and virtually all other donor) TA programs as using too many high-priced and at times under-qualified consultants, and as a result, questioning the quality of the work and the control of expenditures. The overall objective of this task is to try to assess, as objectively as possible, the effectiveness of USAID-provided TA in achieving stated results, to document why or why not it was effective, and to offer lessons learned.

The assessment will consist of two consultancies. Phase I, which is currently underway, is being conducted by a local consultant, Hamidullah Tarzi, to get an understanding of the concerns of Afghan stakeholders, i.e., political and governmental officials that have received, or have perceptions about, USAID-funded TA. The interviewees will include senior managers, mid-level officials and political officials from institutions receiving any type of TA from USAID. (Note: many of these institutions will have received TA from multiple sources, and may in some cases be uncertain of the donor responsible. Care must be taken to ensure that discussions and later interviews focus on USAID TA exclusively.)

The interviewees will also include people new to government since 2003, and people that were in government before and have made the transition to the private sector. The Phase I consultant will provide a written summary of these initial discussions, and develop a draft survey questionnaire which will be refined, approved, and finalized during Phase II.

Phase II will consist of a review and assessment of USAID programs that have been carried out since early 2003. The work will include reviewing and finalizing draft survey II (previous paragraph), supervising implementation of Survey II, interviewing Afghan stakeholders; USAID staff, including Afghan Foreign Service Nationals; and other donors' staff; in addition to reviewing program files to summarize the technical assistance provided and the achieved objectives.

## **2. Objective**

The objective of this task is to provide a review and assessment of USAID Afghanistan TA programs, inclusive of recommendations to improve the design and delivery of technical assistance, particularly assistance with the explicit objective of capacity development.

## **3. Scope of Work**

a. The Phase II consultant will interview USAID staff (in Washington and Afghanistan) and review program files to develop an inventory of past, present, and planned TA, and TA characteristics (short-term, full-time, expatriate, Afghan, etc.) and if capacity development was an explicit objective. The consultant will also review the findings of evaluations or audits of past TA programs and identify, where possible, when a particular program moved from support aid (one-off assistance) to building infrastructure and capacity building.

b. The consultant will review the information collected during the Phase I discussions/informal interviews and finalize the structured survey instrument drafted during Phase I for use in interviewing Afghanistan governmental officials. The questionnaire will be designed to elicit information with respect to:

- TA needs and requirements;
- TA expectations;
- Present perceptions of USAID programs; and
- Specific issues that were identified in the first interview process.
- Assist USAID to develop TA programs that results in sustainable capacity development and are cost effective.

c. Working in collaboration with the Phase I consultant, the Phase II consultant will arrange between 15 and 20 interviews with government officials. The questionnaires will be sent out before the interview so that the officials will have a chance to review the information and respond to the questions. Both consultants will participate in these interviews and prepare written summaries of the interview findings, which will be included in an annex to the final report.

d. Based on the information gathered in (a) through (c) above, the consultant will prepare an analysis of:

- The relevance and importance of various types of TA programs from the perspective of GoA officials and other stakeholders;
- The strengths and weaknesses of USAID Kabul-provided technical assistance since the re-introduction of US assistance in 2003, and
- What GoA officials and other stakeholders would like to see in the future in terms of how technical assistance, particularly assistance intended to develop indigenous capacities, is managed and implemented.

(f) The consultant will prepare a final report consisting of

- Summary and conclusions drawn for the interviews and the questionnaires.
- Summary of the TA inventory. This section should discuss evaluations, audit findings and if the objectives of the programs were met.
- Recommendations on how to deliver better and more appropriate TA in the future and performance indicators that links to capacity development. This should include recommended steps to build more positive and stronger relationships with the Government of Afghanistan government in the TA development and delivery process.

## **5. Level of Effort**

Mission will supply:

1. Survey and findings from Phase I
2. Draft of Survey II
3. All material relevant to preparation of Inventory
4. Background on history and written objectives of program.
5. Any other material relevant to establishing standards against which to assess program.

The consultant will:

- Review the results of the Phase I survey and draft questionnaire; review available background documents and interview cognizant DC-based USAID staff (4 days);
- Prepare the TA inventory and assessment (4 days);
- Finalize the structured survey questionnaires and arrange for the delivery of the questionnaires to respondents in at least one week in advance (5 days to prepare, translate, back-translate, revise, finalize and distribute, get back, review, analyze, document patterns);
- Conduct follow up interviews in Kabul with GoA officials, USAID/Afghanistan, and other donors and stakeholders (12 days);
- Prepare report and briefings (10 days including rewrite and final briefing).

39 days total (including 23 days for research, inventory and survey instrument development and report preparation in the U.S., 12 days for interviews in Kabul, 4 days travel).

## Annex 2

### **Phase I Questionnaire Findings**

USAID Technical Assistance to Afghanistan Assessment  
Checchi SUPPORT Project  
April 7, 2007

#### **Phase I Findings**

From the informal meetings conducted by Dr. Tarzi and Mr. Eaton, it was found:

1. Many interviewed wants to be better informed as to how the money is allocated.
2. The impression was that there was little or no communications between USAID and the government.
3. The impression was that there was very little involvement of the government of Afghanistan in planning and designing the programs.
4. There is little involvement of government of Afghanistan in implementing the TA.
5. Advisors have little lasting effect.
6. There needs some type of reference group, focal group or bodies to guide the TA made up of government officials and others that may benefit for the TA.
7. The government needs to have coordinators/counterparts on programs. The persons involved should be senior government officials or staff.
8. The government needs to be able to work with USAID in developing indicators to judge the success of programs.
9. The government of Afghanistan needs to see the evaluations of programs, and be involved in the evaluations.
10. There needs to be seminars on how USAID works and what is expected of the government and what is expected of USAID. The roles and responsibilities of each need to be defined.
11. There needs to be better monitoring of projects.
12. The government needs to know how does USAID quantify the success of programs. Indicators need to be identifies at the beginning of programs that both the government and USAID agree on. There needs to be bench marks, and mid term reviews that involves the government.

Possible questions coming out of the informal meetings:

1. Does your Ministry/Department coordinate, implement, or receive technical assistance/advisory services funded by US AID? What is the precise nature of these technical services?
2. Were you included in the planning for the TA? What was your specific role in the planning process? Were your ideas and concerns incorporated into the final design? In what way were your ideas build into the project or program?

3. Do you meet regularly with US AID staff to review implementation status? Are your issues/concerns adequately considered by USAID? In what way?
4. Is the technical assistance effective? Are your objectives being met?
5. What are the major positive features of the technical assistance? What do you feel is most effective about the assistance?
6. What problems, shortcomings have you encountered. What changes would you make to improve the impact/results of the assistance?
7. Who makes important decisions regarding the TA you receive? Are you satisfied with the management process?
8. If USAID came to you with an idea for new TA what would be your major concerns? Would you be positive, negative, or neutral about the possibility of receiving TA from USAID?
9. What have been the most significant positive results of USAID funded TA to your Ministry/Department?

Annex 3

**Phase II Questionnaire**

**USAID AFGHANISTAN  
Checchi SUPPORT Program**

**Assessment of USAID Technical Assistance to  
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**Phase II Ministry Questionnaire**

**April 23, 2007**

**Prepared by**

**Dr. Richard N. Blue  
Consultant  
Dr. Hamidullah H. Tarzi  
Consultant**

## **I. Background**

**USAID Afghanistan is developing a new approach to assist in building organizational capacity in Afghan government ministries and other organizations. This program is called “Afghans Building Capacity (ABC).” Its purpose is to provide a broad range of capacity building services to assist in developing technical and management capabilities in Afghan government ministries. It will assist in providing skill training as well as helping to introduce effective procedures and processes for managing work flow, personnel, communications, monitoring and evaluation and budgeting and financial accountability and management. USAID also intends to refocus other projects in the direction of building Afghan capacity for effective democratic governance.**

**Your ministry is one of several that have participated in preliminary, informal interviews on the subject of the effectiveness of USAID technical assistance (TA), starting in 2004 to the present time. Although much good work has been done, you have also identified a number of areas for improvement. These are summarized below:**

- Better communication is needed between USAID and government at the planning stage.**
- More involvement of government in planning and designing TA programs.**
- More collaboration in monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of USAID provided TA.**
- Establish some kind of “council” or “commission” to improve overall assessment of needs, approval of projects, coordination and assessment of effectiveness.**
- Place more emphasis on medium and long term institutional capacity building programs at all levels, and between Kabul and Provinces.**

## **II. Phase 2 Fact Finding**

**USAID desires to further develop practical approaches and best practices for improving the effectiveness of the technical assistance it provides. It is seeking your advice and input into this process. As part of this effort, we are asking Afghan government ministries additional questions which are contained in a questionnaire which follows below.**

**This questionnaire asks you to identify and evaluate the technical assistance you have received from USAID supported programs only. Our request is that you and your senior ministerial staff provide to us your answers *in writing by completing the questionnaire by May 1, 2007.***

**Dr. Hamidullah Tarzi will contact your office to set up an appointment for a follow-up meeting based on the questionnaire, as well as any other advice you might wish to give regarding this issue. At this meeting, we will collect the completed written questionnaire. We hope to complete all the interviews by May 6, 2007.**

**We want to express our appreciation for the time you have already given and for the insights and honest appraisals you have contributed to this effort. We hope that our collective effort will result in an effective program of support to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's own efforts to improve the capacity of its ministries.**

**L. James (Bud) Eaton  
Checchi SUPPORT Program  
April 23, 2007**

**Dr. Richard N. Blue  
Dr. Hamidullah H. Tarzi  
Checchi Assessment Team**

**USAID AFGHANISTAN  
Checchi SUPPORT Program  
Phase II Technical Assistance Assessment  
Ministry Questionnaire**

**Ministry/Agency**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Position)**

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(date)**

**This questionnaire has eight questions. To answer each question will require some thought and may involve talking to other people in your ministry. We are asking for both factual information as well as your judgments and opinions about the effectiveness of Technical Assistance (TA) and, more important, how it can be improved. Please take the time to respond honestly and completely to each question. In the final report, no attribution to any named ministry will be made. Most of the data will be synthesized and presented in the form of aggregate tables.**

**Questions:**

- 1. Please list and rate the performance of the technical assistance advisors provided to your ministry by USAID beginning 2004 to present. Do the best you can in completing the TA Inventory spread sheet following this page.**

**(Several copies of the TA Inventory spread sheet are supplied. These may be used within the Ministry to collect data, but we expect to receive ONE LIST representing the consensus judgment on all USAID TA received by the Ministry.)**

**2. In general, thinking about your experience with USAID TA, please describe your ministry's involvement in the planning for USAID provided TA to your ministry. (Answer by circling the letter next to the answer that most closely matches your experience. Please provide additional comment or explanation in the space provided.)**

- a. Our ministry has been fully involved in the planning and selection of Technical Assistance and Advisors.
- b. We requested assistance but are not involved in the planning or selection of advisors.
- c. We are usually just informed by USAID that we would receive technical assistance.
- d. Our Ministry rarely has any involvement in the process and we have not been made aware of the technical assistance until after it had begun.
- e. Don't Know/No Comment

**Additional Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. From 2004 to the present time, have you observed any changes in the way USAID provides technical assistance to your ministry? (Please answer by circling the letter next to the answer that best represents your position.)**

- a. There has been no change that we can see.
- b. USAID and its contractors are doing a better job of keeping us informed.
- c. There is more emphasis now on training and capacity building
- d. The TA provided has deteriorated in quality and effectiveness over time.
- e. Don't know/ No Comment

**Additional Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

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- 4. During the *implementation* of technical assistance, in general, how would you describe your Ministry's involvement with USAID. (Circle the letter next to the answer that best represents your position.)**
- a. We do not have any regular review meetings or other ways to discuss implementation issues with USAID and its associates.
  - b. We sometimes meet if there is a serious problem, but there is no regular schedule of meetings or a systematic review process.
  - c. We do meet on a regular basis with USAID to review and discuss all technical assistance implementation issues.
  - d. We have had productive relationships with USAID contractors, but not with USAID directly.
  - e. Don't Know,/ No Comment

**Additional  
Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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- 5. In your experience with technical assistance provided by USAID, in general, how would you describe the relationship between USAID and your ministry? (Circle the letter next to the answer that best represents your position.)**
- a. USAID has been very responsive to our requests and has been responsive to our concerns about the quality of technical assistance when we have raised such issues.
  - b. USAID will sometimes respond to our concerns if we persist in our effort to be heard.
  - c. USAID does not seem to care for our views and interests with regard to the effectiveness of the TA provided by them.
  - d. We have been reluctant to say anything about our concerns for fear of a negative reaction from USAID.
  - e. Don't Know/No Comment

**Additional  
Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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6. **USAID is shifting its TA strategy from one of ‘buying technical skills’ to one of ‘building technical and management capacity’. Below are listed some different ways that donors have tried to work to build the capacity of governments which have emerged from long periods of conflict, interrupted education, and out-migration of skilled citizens. Please read the nine approaches, and circle the number indicating the priority you give FOR EACH STATEMENT based on your own experience and judgment about the situation in Afghanistan.**

**Capacity Building Approaches**

- a. Work with government to develop policies for better pay and grade systems, better working conditions, and operating budgets for all ministries.
- 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not important  
5. Not Practical**
- b. Take a comprehensive and systematic approach to government reform and capacity building by establishing a long term strategic partnership with USAID and other donors.
- 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important  
5. Not Practical.**
- c. Place long term (one plus years) technical advisors with ministry counterparts in critical management positions in each ministry.
- 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important  
5. Not Practical**
- d. Place more emphasis on transfer of skills through training, mentoring, and practical on the job skill building experience when selecting and instructing USAID technical advisors.
- 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important  
5. Not Practical**
- e. Develop practical and reliable means for establishing performance objectives for technical assistance which can be monitored and evaluated by trained ministry staff.
- 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important  
5. Not Practical**

- f. Create an Afghan government technical assistance coordinating agency charged with approving, coordinating, and reviewing performance of all donor provided TA.
  - 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important 5. Not Practical**
  
- g. Invest in long term human resource and skill development by sending young Afghans to US for intensive training with a guaranteed return obligation.
  - 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important 5. Not Practical**
  
- h. Develop within five years an Afghan Public Administration – Public Management Training Institute with responsibility for most training and capacity building for government agencies.
  - 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important 5. Not Practical**
  
- i. Help Improve laws, policies and procedures for public procurement and contracting for services with the private sector.
  - 1. High Priority 2. Medium Priority 3. Low Priority 4. Not Important 5. Not Practical**

**Additional Comments/Approaches: (Please provide any SPECIFIC recommendations for improving the effectiveness of technical assistance for capacity building.**

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**7. What steps can you take in your ministry to build capacity and improve performance?**

**Comment: (Please be specific)**

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**8. In addition to low wages and poorly trained staff, what other constraints do you face in trying to improve the capacity of your ministry? (Please circle the two most important constraints – and please comment/identify other constraints you face.)**

- a. Inability of most of my staff to work in English language.
- b. We do not have the capacity in house to conduct useful training.
- c. We cannot compete on salaries and working conditions with international donors and NGOs for well trained young Afghans.
- d. We do not have good procedures for work planning, implementation and review.
- e. We have become too reliant on foreign experts to do most of the work.
- f. My ministry is little more than a collection of foreign assisted projects, with little staff or money for other routine work.
- g. With low salaries and poor training, there is little positive incentive for people to work hard and productively for the common good.

**Additional Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**This concludes the questionnaire. Thank you for your interest and patience. If you have any additional comments or observations, please enter them in the space provided below:**

**Additional Comments:**

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**We look forward to discussing these issues with you in the near future.**

Annex 4

**USAID Implementing Partners Interviewed**

**USAID Implementing Partners Interviewed**

Name	Organization	Position
Maria Beebe	Washington State University	Global Alliance CoP
Neal Mangham	Academy Ed. Development	Higher Education CoP
Kami Rahbani	Bearing Point	ABC CoP
James Agee	Checchi	ROL CoP
Kelly Gavagan		Senior Court Admin. Specialist
Martin Dinning	Bearing Point	Econ. Governance & Private Sector CoP
Oliver Dziggel	ATRA	Legal Regulatory Advisor Min. Communications
Jon L. Summers	The Asia Foundation	Country Representative
George Varughese	TAF	Dep. Country Representative
Anthony Bateman	TAF	HR Advisor Min of Foreign AffairsKe
Tilly Reed Shehzad ehmoood Mehm Nathan Stark	Counterpart Int.	NGO Strengthenng CoP
Derek Sherman	LBG/BV	Reconstruction Rehab. (Infrastructure-Maintenace Roads)
Louis Faoro	Chemonics	Accelerated Support Agric. Sector ASAP
Dr. Mubarakshah Mubarak Dr. Rashidi Dr. Farid Ahmad Omar Dr. Abdul Khalil Dr. Omid Ameli	MSH	Tech Serve CoP MoPH Capacity Building Prog. Mngr Child health Advisor Communicable Disease Advisor HMIS and ME Advisor

James Blewitt	Adam Smith CoP	Min. of Commerce and Industry
Bradley Dollis	Technical Advisor	GCMU Min. of Public Health
Atiq Panjshiri	President	Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce
Ajmal Ghani A.	Chairman	Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce

**Other Knowledgeable Informants**

Paul Fishbein	Director	Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit
James Blewitt	Adam Smith CoP	Ministry of Commerce and Industry

## Annex 5

### Afghan Counterparts Interviewed

#### Afghan Counterparts Interviewed

Mustafa Aria	NaPSO Director	Office of President
Abdul Razique Samadi	Dep. Minister (Admin) Min. of Finance	Min. of Finance
Mirwais Ahmadzai	Reform and Monitoring Consultant	Min. of Finance
Dr. S. M. Amin Fatimie, MD	Minister	Min. of Public Health
Dr. Faizullah Kakar (Ph.D)	Dep. Minister for Technical Affairs	Min. of Public Health
Rahela Hashim Sidiqi	Senior Advisor to Chairman	Independent Administration Reform and Civil Service Commission
Wali A. Hamidzada (Ph.D)	Director, Training and Development	IARCSC
Dr. rer. Pol.M. Amin Farhang	Minister	Min. of Commerce and I
Dr. Sohrab Ali Saffary	Minister	Min. of Public Works
Dr. Eng. Rasooli W. M.	Technical Deputy Minister	Min. of Public Works
	Minister	Min. of Agriculture
Eng. Habib Rahman		Min. of Agriculture
Dr. Dadfar	Minister	Min. of Higher Education
Hamidullah Farooqi	Chief Executive	Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce
Hayat Dayani	President/CEO	Pashtany Tejaraty Bank

Annex 6

**USAID Officers Interviewed**

USAID Officers Interviewed

Thomas Johnson	Program Director	USAID Afghanistan
Lane Smith	Program Officer	
Leon S. Waskin	Mission Director	
Jene Thomas	DG Dep. Director	

## Annex 7

### **Works Cited and Read**

USAID Afghanistan

### **Capacity Building Reading List**

Prepared by:  
Richard N. Blue  
Checchi SUPPORT Project

May 5, 2007

This brief list contains various documents reviewed during the preparation of an assessment of technical assistance and capacity building in Afghanistan by USAID. The list contains both public documents and documents which require USAID permission to access.

The research for many of these documents was conducted in the 2005 period, although the list contains very recent Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRA) documents as well as recent research conducted by the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) on the subject of administrative reform and capacity building.

A review of the USAID EvalWeb site yields only two evaluations on USAID Afghanistan projects. USAID Afghanistan has made several more available to the author. These contain very useful appraisals and recommendations regarding capacity building in two very important USAID projects. A mid-term evaluation was conducted of the MSH REACH project in December 2004 containing very useful discussion of the effectiveness of MSH capacity building support for the Ministry of Public Health. In 2005, an evaluation report was completed on the Bearing Point Afghan Economic Governance Program, a very wide ranging effort covering the Afghan Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministry of Communications. This evaluation deals extensively with capacity building strengths and weaknesses. Other evaluations during the 2005-2006 period also contain evaluative findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding capacity building.

The current debate about the long term capacity building effectiveness of donor assistance has roots as far back as 2004. Readers of this report who are concerned

with this issue would be well advised to examine the materials presented here, some of which contain references to even more studies on the subject.

This is a selected list and very much a work in progress. It is likely that other evaluative and analytic documents on USAID and other donor efforts may be found and added to the list below.

## **List**

### **Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit**

Lister, Sarah: Moving Forward? Assessing Public Administration Reform in Afghanistan. September 2006

Nixon, Hamish: Aiding the State: International Assistance and the State-Building Paradox. April 2007

Lister, Sarah and Nixon, Hamish: Provincial Governance Structuring in Afghanistan: From Confusion to Vision? May 2006

### **Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief:**

**Enhancing Aid Effectiveness.** Prepared for Afghan Development Forum, April 2007

### **World Bank**

**Afghanistan: Managing Public Finances for Development**, December 2005

Evans, Anne, et.al (with AREU): **A Guide to Government in Afghanistan**. 2004

Serge Michailof: Review of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building in Afghanistan: Discussion Paper April 8. 2007  
(Preliminary Draft for Discussion)

### **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

IARCSC: A Capacity Development Plan for the Common Functions for the Civil Service in Afghanistan. March 2007

IARCSC: OVERVIEW (Civil Service Reform) Power Point, 2007

IARCSC: Proposed RIMU Implementation Plan (MoAIL and MoPH), April 2007

Capacity Building: A National Policy and Program Discussion Document. No date. Document and Power Point Presentation made to Afghan Development Forum Meeting sponsored by World Bank, Kabul, April 29-30, 2007-05-05

Min. of Finance: Prioritizing Aid Effectiveness: Taking Forward the Afghanistan Compact and Paris Declaration Commitments. Final Draft. 18 April 2007

USAID and Implementing Partner Documents

Academy for Educational Development, Indiana Univ., Univ. of Massachusetts: Afghanistan Higher Education Project: Power Point presentation. No date (2007?)

Management Sciences for Health (MSH): Bill Newbrander, Capacity building in Afghanistan's MOH(sic): What it is and how are we doing? Power Point Presentation. No Date (but appears recent circa 2006-7).

Comment: This presentation is an excellent and succinct outline review of the CB process as it is developing in the relationship between MoPH and its US partner, MSH. It would be helpful if Mr. Newbrander were to expand this PP into a full blown text setting out the substance of the MoPH-MSH experience.

Washington State Univ. (multiple international partners): 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Alliance, Afghanistan-India-Japan-US Public Administration Degree Program. No Date (2007) (this project part of USAID ABC program)

Counterpart International (I-PACS): **Afghanistan Civil Society Assessment: How Afghans View Civil Society**. No Date (Research done mid 2005)

The Asia Foundation: **Afghanistan in 2006: A Survey of the Afghan People**. 2006.

The Asia Foundation: Multiple Authors. **State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People**. 2007.

USAID Evaluations: Public Domain

A quick search of USAID Eval-Web yields few evaluations of USAID's projects in Afghanistan. This may be because the search engine is less than user friendly.

USAID-Chemonics: Donald J. Bedunah, Ph.D. An Analysis of Afghanistan's Rangelands and Management Issues for the Development of Policies and Strategies for Sustainable Development. January 2005. see pages 31 and 54-55.

"There is an urgent need to strengthen institutional capacity to lead Afghan's Efforts in better rangeland management"

USAID/OTI-Social Impact: Afghanistan Program Final Evaluation. Aug 15, 2005

USAID Evaluations: Permission to access required from USAID.

USAID Development Associates: Peter Connell et. al: Mid-Term Evaluation: MSH/REACH, December 2004.

Comment: Contains much that is useful about progress toward building capacity in Ministry of Public Health. See also work of John Hopkins University systematic evaluations of MOPH health delivery system.

USAID Dr. Moh. Humayan Qayoumi: Monitoring and Evaluation of Afghan Economic Growth Program (AEGP) Bearing Point. February 2005.

Comment: This evaluation covers work of Bearing Point AEGP program in Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Industry, and Communication, as well as the DAB or Central Bank. It contains much information relevant to anyone addressing the issue of capacity building in Afghanistan, See Part III and elsewhere. Many of the capacity building deficiencies noted in the evaluation have been addressed for the Ministry of Finance, according to Abdul Razique Samadi, Dep. Minister for Administration, Ministry of Finance.

USAID Charles Hatch: Afghan Conservation Corps Program Review Final Report. March 2005.

Comment: Not an evaluation, but does contain useful, if predictable findings and conclusions about capacity building.

USAID: Afghanistan Commercial Law & Institutional Reform and Trade Diagnostic (ACLIR-Trade) Working Draft Report MARCH 2007.

Comment: An excellent very recent analysis of some of the deficiencies in commercial law drafting prepared by earlier technical assistance teams.

Annex 8

**Annotated Interim Report  
Technical Assistance – Capacity Building**

USAID Afghanistan  
Checchi SUPPORT Program  
Richard N. Blue  
Consultant – May 8, 2007  
(First Draft - Presentation)

NOT FOR QUOTATION OR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

**Technical Assistance - Capacity Building Assessment**

- I. Purpose of the Assessment: Scope of Work
- II. Phases: Buy Technical Assistance versus Capacity Building
  - Initial Phase 2003-2005...Governing in the absence of Government
  - Transition Phase 2005-2007...Moving toward Capacity Building
  - Current Strategy: Building Afghan Capacity  
ABC Plus
- III. Information Sources
  - Documentation:
    - Records on TA not accessible or located in one place...a comprehensive inventory not possible in four days.
    - Selected project documents available and reviewed
    - Review assessments prepared by GIAR, USAID, TAF, AREU, NYU.
  - Interviews with Afghan Minister and Deputy Level level
    - Informal Interviews prior to arrival of consultant
    - Structured questionnaire to 9 ministries for completion (See Annex for List)
    - Follow-up face to face interviews with Minister/Dy Minister, Senior Advisors and other staff. (See Annex for List)
  - Interviews with donor staff
    - Interviews with selected USAID CoPs and other expatriate project staff. (See Annex for List)
    - Interviews with USAID officers
- IV. Findings

1. Familiar deficits of post conflict societies
  - a. Destroyed infrastructure, roads, schools, clinics, other public building.
  - b. Public and private educated/professional/technical people left the country
  - c. Education system low quality/intermittent/inappropriate re production of needed skills and abilities for modern state, society and economy.
  - d. Public institutions deteriorated, antiquated/inefficient systems, staffed, and overstaffed, with poorly educated staff...underpaid, poorly motivated, in poor working conditions, yet conservative and resistant to change.
  - e. Government centralized in metropole (capital city) slow to push services and decision making out to provinces.
  - f. High levels of unemployment, especially among youth who lack employable skills.
  - g. Private sector not well developed, mostly trading and retail...little value added production.
  - h. Corruption and other manifestations of quick gain-long term risk averse behavior prevalent in public and private sector.
  
2. Familiar features of international donor response
  - a. Establish security, transition government, plan for establishment of elected government, constitution, parliament and other framework institutions.
  - b. People's expectations rise faster and higher than capacity of government to deliver expected services.
  - c. The influx of Humanitarian and Quick results assistance generates dependency and resentment simultaneously.
  - d. Pressure to demonstrate benefits of peace and new regime shapes assistance, focusing more on immediate and visible results rather than sustainable transformations in capacity.
  - e. Pressure to 'show results' shapes type of technical assistance towards doing, such as drafting laws, building infrastructure, purchasing equipment, establishing new organizations supported by TA
  - f. an 'internal brain drain' making it difficult for Gov. to compete for expanding pool of trained people. A USAID contractor pays a compound cook \$250 per month. A young IT person \$850 to \$1000, contrast to civil service salaries of \$50 to \$250 per month.
  
3. Special Features of Afghan situation:
  - a. Resurgence of violence and organized insurgency in certain rural areas shapes type and duration of military/civil engagement (PRT and direct military action)
  - b. Poppy !!!!
  - c. Insecurity is big factor in shaping provision and supervision of foreign TA...turnover, short term assignments, parachute TA, shortage of experienced donor staff
  - d. Robust Afghan Owned Private Sector (compare to Cambodia/Liberia)

- e. Stability/security in Kabul and some districts and FA spending enables and fuels private sector construction/commercial/trade/retail activity and urban demand for food products.
  - f. Sheer size (\$) and number of donors competing for space places extraordinary burden on coordination efforts; gov. not well positioned or equipped to sort it out, or to say 'no'.
  - g. Very High US National Interest as well as International community
4. Current Situation: Capacity in Afghan Ministries
- a. Size of the government: 285 - 325 000 civil servants in nearly 700 .organizations and operational units.
  - b. Pay scales are abysmally low compared to cost of living, especially in Kabul
  - c. Forty One Ministries need accelerated upgrading of Human Resource Management capacity...

***This outline plan is for 2,100 civil servants to be trained in all aspects of HRM policies, regulations and procedures over the first two years of the CSL implementation project. This is necessary to ensure that HR units are established in the 41 Ministries and government agencies during the first phase of CSL implementation. It is estimated that about 1025 staff will be needed to work in 41 HR units. These 1025 HR staff plus 1025 line managers will need to be trained in all aspects of HRM. At least 650 of the HR unit staff will require additional specialised training in specific aspects of HRM such as recruitment and selection. In addition, about 50 staff of the HR Policy Division and other departments of the IARCSC will require training in HRM.***

Anthony Bateman to Mr. Rahimi  
February 2006

- d. HRM is critical, but only part of the problem. Technical competence in implementing policy, program management, oversight and service delivery is missing or in short supply.
  - e. Systems for planning and doing work, recording and communicating information, and monitoring/evaluating results against benchmarks/indicators are highly variable, formalistic, and not results oriented.
4. Structural Tensions: Afghan side
- a. Some High Level Afghans critical of TA (foreign aid) results, especially US assistance.
  - b. Demands for budget support/cash transfer increasing.
  - c. Resentment by some over 'topping off' of Afghan American salaries. (but see Government's capacity building strategy presented to ADF)
  - d. Resentment over 'high cost of US technical assistance'.

- e. Criticism of quality of TA, especially ‘parachute’ teams. (some US CoPs agree), but also embedded advisory teams who do the work, but leave little increase in capacity behind.
- f. With Afghan leadership, lack of communication, planning and decision making involvement in TA decisions. Some senior level ministers feel poorly informed and do not ‘own’ the various projects.
- g. Perception that very little ‘skill transfer’ or organizational capacity building has occurred.
- h. Perception that PRT teams are poorly coordinated with development assistance s
- i. Coordination is being addressed, but perception that it is more information sharing than real coordination (deciding on who does what, where and how).
- j. Perception that much of the ‘capacity’ that is being required of ministries is in part a function of expanding demand by donors for data, documents, reports, and other forms of attention. This demand can only be met by foreign advisors who know how to prepare these documents.

#### Structural Tensions: US side

- a. Between pressure to show immediate results and recognition of need for capacity building and sustainability.
  - b. Reliance on output measures for assessing results can mask capacity building and sustainability weaknesses.
  - c. Understaffing and turnover in USAID...200 people, 300 slots make it difficult to sustain continuity, institutional memory, documentation, evaluation of results..
  - d. Massive \$ size ramping up to more \$ increases visibility, risks of ‘scandal’, audit vulnerability, and Congressional oversight.
  - e. Rapidly changing task environment requires flexibility, but US procurement and contracting systems are lengthy, complex, and difficult to adjust.
  - f. Criticisms within US academic and policy community make impact on Hill. USAID often put on the defense.
  - g. Time is a limiting factor; to read, think, step back, strategize.
    - o Efforts to respond to Afghan gov. criticism by offering more control have not borne fruit due to persisting weakness Afghan ministerial capacities with regard to contracting, accounting and project management.
6. Capacity Building is and has been underway for some time...2005.
- o Min Finance Well Advanced
  - o Min RRD Well Advanced
  - o MOPH Well Advanced
  - o Min Communication Well Advanced
  - o Ministries of Education Progress

- Supreme Court Underway but obstacles
- Min Public Works Just Underway
- Min Woman's Affairs Struggling
- Private Sector Support Struggling to Just Underway
- Civil Service Reform PRR process Underway, Establishment of HR Management Systems Just Underway, ARTF supports recruitment and retention of qualified Afghans and hyphenated Afghans to Gov.

5. General characteristics of a Capacity Building Strategy in post conflict society: Constraints, Bad Practices – Good Practices

a. Four major constraints have to be addressed 'holistically'

- 1) Task Environment: **pay**, incentive structure, working conditions, recruitment and advancement politicized, overstaffing! Failure to address these issues will undermine most mid and micro level capacity building
- 2) Human Resource Deficits: skills, work habits, discipline, absence of analytical and problem solving aptitudes/habits. English?
- 3) Antiquated or non-existence systems, laws, policies, procedures, processes for planning and managing tasks and supporting IT.
- 4) Leadership deficit: some leaders ill prepared, not committed, inexperienced, politically inept or lacking clout, unable to communicate, don't 'own' or take 'responsibility' for the task of building capacity and delivering results.

b. Bad Practices: Typical Weaknesses in assistance approaches.

- Short term results emphasis.
- Uncoordinated and Inconsistent interventions, especially among donors.
- Doing the job, rather than training/coaching/mentoring Afghans.
- Poor quality technical experts, not knowledgeable with respect to subject matter or cultural context.
- "When in doubt, train." Deliverables measured as outputs, e.g., number of people trained, number of courses held, number of manuals produced..
- Training unrelated to or inappropriate to actual tasks to be performed.
- Fragmented, short term interventions without paying attention to context of work place.

- Failure to “walk the process”, to learn what routines people have now, whether they work or not, and respect those people while introducing new approaches, skill sets.
  - Introduction of “International Standard” systems when “sufficiency with room for growth would do” (The ideal becomes the enemy of the good.)
  - Introduction of overly complex systems requiring massive reorientation in short period.
  - Failure to focus or establish realistic priorities linked to baselines, and objective progress benchmarks/results indicators at all levels.
- c. Good Practices (many examples found in current TA-)
- Do everything with Afghan counterpart and leadership fully engaged to promote ownership, knowledge and skills, and enhance potential for sustainable capacity. This is a constant.
  - Walk the Process: Understand how things are done, or not, by the organization. Identify system strengths and weaknesses. Do the same for specific sets of tasks, such contracting, budgeting, personnel evaluation, or monitoring contractor work.
  - Develop a task map to guide coordination with other donor actors...
    - Chemonic ASAP
    - ABC project
    - Civil Service reform
  - From the beginning, work to build the capacity of Afghan organizations to do capacity building/renewal/and adaptation (BCBC) to a changing environment.
  - Build in evaluation and feedback loops/systems to promote organizational learning and adaptation. Examples
    - Teacher Training and Resource center development
    - MofPH
    - Commerce Min. Private Sector Development Directorate
  - Develop integrated strategies for Short, Medium and Long Term capacity building; Have a holistic strategy...all four constraints with short, medium and long term time lines and objectives.
  - Develop a political strategy to demonstrate responsiveness to pressures on USAID for ‘results’, ‘success stories’, even if the success make little immediate contribution to build capacity for building capacity (CBC). But do no harm.
    - ROL web site and electronic archiving of Afghan law

- Over the medium term, identify achievable results at the organizational level that have strong backward and forward linkages to overall capacity building.
- Work with client to establish goals and benchmarks for assessing progress.
- Involve client in identifying weaknesses, constraints, and SOLUTIONs.
- Challenge the client to take responsibility for meeting benchmark targets.

#### Training Lessons Learned

- Prioritize needs across the spectrum of constraints...and keep watch on linkages so that one strategy doesn't get out ahead of another. (IT training in the absence of any investment in IT hardware. Investment in hardware with anticipating budget and training for maintenance, replacement.)
- Where training is needed, partition the task into smaller, 'step by step' units that can/must be mastered before moving on.
- Link the training to real world tasks. If training how to write RFPs, use a real example.
- Repetition is a key element of skill development.
- Any advisor/trainer has to be expert and experienced in coaching and adult skill development as well as expert in the particular subject matter.
- If using a long term imbedded advisor, be clear about the job, which is to coach and mentor, not to do. "DOING" is a trap.
- If using short term advisors, commit them to multiple visits over the time needed for reaching the process and/or skill objectives.
- Anticipate and accommodate resistance, bend it to your purposes.

#### 6. Models/Modalities for Capacity Building

- a. The CB for CB approach
  - Focuses on establishing in house learning and training capabilities and organization.
- b. The Directorate Improvement Approach
  - Work with selected sub-units of a ministry to build capacity

- c. The Special Sub-Unit approach (PMU, CGMU)
- d. The Embedded Advisor(s) Approach
- e. The Twinning Repeated Visit Variant
- f. The Technical Assistance – Problem Solving Approach
- g. The Across the Board Reform Approach
- h. The long term Human Capital Investment approach

#### 7. Recommendations for USAID

1. Capacity Building is the KEY cross cutting issues, and must be a major criterion in all development assistant decision-making, from strategic planning to project/contract development to selection of individual advisors/consultants.
2. Capacity Building has to be owned by and the responsibility of the GIAR...assisted by USG and others. Without action and ownership on the Afghan side, real progress will not occur. Both sides need to learn to say “No” as well as “OK”. Both sides need to listen
3. Capacity building principles and practices are well known and are being practiced...study, evaluate and build on what is working.
4. Be specific about the nature and relevance to Afghan sustainability about the ‘capacities’ that need to be built.
5. Develop short, medium, and long term benchmarks that can be empirically verified through evaluation and monitoring.
6. Focus on building Afghan capacity to do capacity building..the world will continue to change...adaptation is a major component of successful development.
7. Don’t let ABC project be the only ‘tool’, USAID already has CB efforts underway and these should be nurtured and integrated with ABC efforts.

