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EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMATIC NEEDS IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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List of Acronyms

AGMC	Afghanistan Government Media Centre
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CBWG	Capacity Building Working Group
CoM	Council of Ministers
CoS	Office of the Chief of Staff to the President
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
IoD	Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NSC	National Security Council
NSG	National School of Government, UK
OAA	Office of Administrative Affairs
OMSPA	Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs
OoP	Office of the President
OPS	Office of the Presidential Spokesperson
PAPJ	Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Jirga
PAR	Public Administration Reform Program
PPS	Presidential Protective Service
PRR	Priority Reform Restructuring
PSPT	Presidential Strategic Policy Team
RIMU	Reform Implementation Management Unit
SCoG	Support to the Center of Government
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TOR	Terms of Reference

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Evaluation and Description of the Assistance Provided

The importance of and interest in streamlining, strengthening and integrating the technical and administrative support functions across the Office of the President (OoP) in support of more effective decision-making has been clear to USAID and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for some time. The *Support to the Center of Government* (SCoG) project was designed to build capacities of OoP officials, managers and key technical staff, introduce modern information management systems, and foster an enabling environment for policy making that supports more informed and timely Presidential deliberations. As well, there was a need in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to strengthen its ability to manage relations with its neighbors in the region and beyond.

The purpose of this evaluation of current assistance is to identify and articulate existing and emerging issues, including opportunities and constraints, affecting the structure, personnel capacities, systems, and ultimately the effectiveness of the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The assistance is being provided under two separate projects: a multilateral project with UNDP and the British Department for International Development (DFID) and an extension of a cooperative agreement with The Asia Foundation.

Within the Office of the President, a grant to UNDP is supporting the provision of technical assistance to the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) and the Office of Chief of Staff (CoS), via a contract with The Asia Foundation (TAF), targeting six domains as follows:

Organization: Strengthen the full spectrum of human resource development as a core function in OAA and CoS

Training: Professionalize and strengthen staff capacity in OAA and CoS via integrated generic office management training, advanced job-specific skills, and behavior improvements.

Policy: Improve the efficiency and substantive content of Government's "policy decision-making process chain".

Facilities: Renovate and furnish OAA and CoS staff buildings to international standards.

Information Technology: Establish a technical infrastructure that provides reliable information communication technology (ICT) in OAA and CoS offices.

Administrative Work Processes: Streamline critical administrative work processes in CoS and OAA, increasing the staff effectiveness and efficiency.

Via a separate, direct cooperative agreement with TAF, USAID is providing broad spectrum support to the Office of the President (OoP) targeting:

OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation: Assistance is helping to build a single and reliable system to monitor the implementation of Presidential decrees and Orders and Council of Ministers' (CoM) approvals and decisions.

Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (OMSPA): Assistance is helping to define and develop organizational capabilities required to deliver on its mandate and strategies; assess and design optimal policy and administrative work flow and processes; and strengthen capacity to coordinate the exchange of information between the parliament and the executive government.

Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program: Assistance targets fostering cross-border collaboration and understanding in anticipation of future progress of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Jirga (PAPJ).

Assistance under the cooperative agreement also supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA): Technical assistance is being provided to develop a comprehensive reform strategy, a new organizational structure, detailed job descriptions, streamlined administrative and policy processes, improved human resources management, enhanced outreach and communications mechanisms, and security enhancements.

Summary of Project Implementation Progress and Critical Issues

Overall, the two USAID projects experienced impressive progress towards the achievement of targeted outputs, exceeding targets in some areas and encountering major difficulties in others. The flexible nature of both projects enabled TAF to respond to rapidly evolving priority requirements of partner agencies.

A number of critical issues and significant opportunities have been identified and described in the main body of the report, and are summarized below.

SCoG Assistance

Organization

The original objective for the organization domain was "New CoS and OAA organizational structures implemented per Government's Priority Reform Restructuring (PRR) initiative". A key indicator of success was to be the "number of CoS and OAA departments transitioned to the new PRR structures". During "refreshment of the design", the above objective was modified in the Inception Plan as, "To integrate human resource functions with the overall objectives of the organization for effective and efficient HRM and continuous development for optimum utilization of manpower".

Much has been achieved within this more narrow scope. It has been mentioned that the President sees a stronger and more effective OoP as both a legacy of his historic role as Afghanistan's first President, and as a foundation on which to build a successful second term in office. Both the Chief of Staff and Director General of the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) have posed the vision of a more efficient, streamlined OoP. Such a vision can guide the technical assistance required to pursue phased functional integration, new structures, or other reform initiatives.

Training

At the start of the project, TAF conducted a basic needs analysis of staff targeted for training. Many staff had difficulty articulating their job descriptions and training needs. Thus the default decision was to design a "Foundation Skills" set of basic generic training. Managers have expressed a concern that the training has been too basic, too general, and not at a high enough technical level to substantially improve work performance. However, part of the reasoning behind the decision to focus training on generic topics was that once interest was raised and basic courses taken, staff could better identify future needs and would have greater incentive to continue. In fact, a recent survey found just that, many staff are eager for additional and higher level training.

Policy

The primary focus of SCOG's policy domain assistance has been to improve the Government's "policy decision-making process chain" via assessing and mapping, with the intent to streamline, the policy analysis, development, coordination, review and approval stages. However, the more important objective of developing the policy capacity of the OoP such to strengthen Presidential deliberations and decision making has not been advanced. In terms of helping to shape decisions for presidential consideration, the enabling environment for policy development in the Office of the President is underdeveloped and unfocused. The Presidency requires an independent policy voice with the capacity to do policy analysis at a high level. Critical policy development functions that require strengthening include: framing the policy debate; focusing the voices that currently drown out critical policy issues requiring Presidential attention; initiating, formulating, developing, and/or synthesizing cross-cutting policies; managing policy records; and organizing Presidential policy advisers.

Recently, interest has been expressed within the OoP in the concept of a Presidential Strategic Policy Team (PSPT), comprised of key policy staff in the CoS, OAA OMSPA, National Security Council (NSC), and the Presidential policy advisers. If supported by the President, a PSPT could: serve as an independent and coordinated policy voice to the President; provide policy analysis at a high level; and develop/initiate cross-cutting policies on critical issues of national and international concern.

Facilities

The original objective of the facilities domain was to have "the buildings that house OAA and CoS repaired or reconstructed to international standards" in order to provide modern accommodations for the OoP workforce. Much has been achieved. Buildings have been

renovated to provide a productive working environment. Support spaces such as conference, meeting space, dining, storage, etc., are contributing to a quality and efficient work environment. Environmental comforts such as heating, cooling, and lighting conducive to a productive work environment have been improved. Modern communication systems are available in a variety of spaces to users. A $45 million Architectural Master Plan has been designed for the long term needs of the Office of the President. No future technical assistance is anticipated in the facilities domain.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Key objectives in the ICT domain included: the functioning at an expected international level, of all computer hardware, software, databases, networks and communications services required by CoS and OAA; and an "enterprise information communications technology architecture", comprising technical infrastructure design and standards, application designs/development/testing, database design standard, ICT product and vendor standards, integration design and principles, disaster recovery plans and procedures, security policies and procedures, operational policies and procedures, and help desk design and processes.

In less than two years, the project team has achieved impressive success in practically all output areas of the ICT domain. The greatest successes have been in establishing the OAA/IT Department as a modern ICT department that is meeting the voice and data needs of a rapidly growing number of computer users over the next few years. Building upon the model foundation established by SCoG, the department now requires assistance to develop and execute a long-term strategic vision and implementation plan to integrate all of these units into one OAA network.

Administrative Work Processes

The original objective of this domain was to streamline critical administrative work processes within OAA and CoS (e.g., procurement, asset management, personnel management, document management, financial management) so that they are predictable, timely and transparent. Notwithstanding the many and unique challenges of initiating change management within highly political, crisis-oriented offices, the SCoG project team substantially achieved, and in some areas, exceeded targeted results.

For possible future technical assistance, an opportunity may exist to build a core "service capacity" within OoP to assess and oversee implementation of administrative work processes across all OoP entities, utilizing existing, motivated staff members, provided that a culture of cross-office support can be inculcated within OoP.

Assistance under the Cooperative Agreement

OAA/Department of Monitoring and Evaluation

Support was provided to build the capacity of the OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) through technical assistance, equipment, training, and systems development. Within less than a year, the specific objectives and outputs for assistance are on track to be substantially completed by the end of assistance in early 2009.

Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (OMSPA)

A major accomplishment of assistance to OMSPA has been the drafting of a "Three Pillars Code of Conduct" to facilitate improved interrelationships between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary branches of Government. USAID can be duly proud of the laudable achievement towards promoting a better quality of coordination and understanding of the techniques of democratic cooperation and executive rule in Afghanistan, manifested in what may likely be the "world's first" (draft) Code of Conduct governing relationships between the three pillars of Government. When enacted, the Code might form the basis of a new, strategic cross-cutting theme for integrating in other USAID activities an over-arching focus on building broad-based understanding and respect democratic principles in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program

The current component of the cooperative agreement targets support to establish and institutionally strengthen a Peace Jirga Secretariat, including development of mandate, structure, and staff; and to facilitate development of relevant program initiatives to support its mission. The Peace Jirga is an initiative to address on-the-ground issues in the provinces along both sides of the Durand line separating Pakistan and Afghanistan. Anticipated joint activities are meant to help normalize day-to-day relations among peoples across the borders, and diffuse tensions stemming from the larger political and socio-economic issues.

Unfortunately, since the initial meeting in 2007, Pakistan has not taken the necessary steps to appoint its Peace Jirga Committee and related secretariat. As a result, the Afghanistan Peace Jirga Committee advised its Secretariat that no activities, including the Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program, should be developed or conducted before the formal start of the joint process, which currently depends on Pakistani follow-through. Future USAID assistance should be considered pending further developments.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Assistance to the MoFA has been very successful in two of the initial four target areas, and expanded to other areas as priorities within the Ministry evolved. USAID assistance has enabled the Ministry to make a quantum leap towards substantial reform and restructuring. As a result, the Ministry has practically completed two of three phases of a "model" reform strategy. It is currently anticipating approval by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), and hoping for donor support for full implementation of the final phase. Planned assistance in the area of outreach communications was deleted as a result of a USAID decision to reallocate communications assistance to the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (OPS).

Recommendations for Future Programming

Building on the key findings, and on recent discussions with the leadership of the Office of the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), the assessment team proposes a seven point framework for possible future technical assistance for the Office of the President (OoP). In addition, recommendations are presented for possible assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support implementation of its Reform Strategy and Plan.

New Directions – A Framework for Assistance to the Office of the President

The framework encompasses concepts, actions and capacity building recommendations to: create an OoP working group to represent the OoP in proposal development and project management; set the parameters and define an approach for a joint CoS/OAA capacity building assistance proposal; establish the terms of reference for program ownership and management through a mechanism to be determined by USAID; and address issues critical to achieving the overarching strategic objective of assistance as noted by OoP leadership:

> "*To streamline, strengthen and integrate administrative and technical functions across the OoP in support of more effective decision-making*".

Capacity Building Working Group (CBWG)

There has been recent general acceptance of the concept of a joint OAA/CoS working group to design/oversee future capacity building assistance. CBWG should include representatives from: CoS, OAA, NSC, Presidential Protection Service (PPS), OMSPA, Peace Jirga Secretariat, and be co-chaired by CoS/OAA. Its responsibilities would include: designing/submitting a comprehensive long-term proposal for capacity building assistance on behalf of the OoP; acting as the agent of change, and the manager of record, for all technical assistance to the OoP; promoting cross-departmental communications, knowledge and integration, where warranted, on reform/restructuring matters; and ensuring that capacity building changes are systematized and prioritized.

Capacity Building Proposal

Much work needs to be done by the working group, with independent assistance as needed, to advance the substantive recommendations of this report for possible future technical assistance into a full-blown "Office of the President Capacity Building Proposal". The proposal should be guided a client driven agenda for reform. Initially, attention should be given to building the capacity of a limited number of critical functions that require priority attention. A twofold approach to proposal design is suggested. The first is to delineate a path to streamline duplicative functions. The second is to identify critical gaps or vacuums in current functions, i.e., policy development, ANDS (Afghanistan National Development Strategy) implementation, knowledge management, etc., that require early action.

Ownership/Program Management

Both the client groups (CoS/OAA) and implementing agencies (UNDP/TAF) expressed frustration concerning the current structure of relationships. A more direct relationship delineating a clear leadership role for Government is needed. This can be provided through a bi-lateral agreement possibly with the procurement function kept within USAID, or a Memorandum of Understanding or other mechanism to be determined. Whatever mechanisms is chosen, it should provide for a strengthened, proactive USAID oversight function which can help to: promote the "Afghanization" of assistance; add political visibility, respect commitments to internalize further progress; reinforce OoPs reform move to performance-based programming and budgeting; and potentially increase the efficiency of US institutional strengthening assistance by minimizing costly bureaucratic contracting layers.

Policy Development

As noted earlier, the enabling environment for policy decisions in the OoP requires priority support. To address this situation, it is recommended that in the OoP there be established and provided with capacity assistance a "Presidential Strategic Policy Team", (PSPT) within which all relevant policy entities of OoP can work cooperatively to develop, promote, coordinate and assess a Presidential policy agenda. The PSPT would comprise key policy staff from CoS, OAA, NSC, OMSPA and relevant Presidential Advisers. PSPT would serve as an independent and coordinated policy voice to the President, facilitate the integration of policy interests across OoP, and provide the President a sustainable structure within which tough policy agenda items are managed.

Staffing Support

The issue of how to recruit/retain the kind of staff needed to be functioning agents of change is central to the introduction and sustainability of capacity building reforms. The issue is complicated and challenging, and relative to the compensation factor, beyond the scope of this assessment. However, the fundamental nature of the "good people" factor requires some observations and suggestions for a way forward.

Bridging packages that would continue to subsidize key staff are yet to be determined. Such initiatives must be carefully implemented such that the personnel to be supported are well matched to terms-of-reference (TORs) that are critical to a reform agenda. To keep good people, a broader strategy is needed. To begin with, a new generation of professionals should be recruited. Most importantly, they need to see that there is a career path for them which would include options for professional development and advancement.

Professional Development

Career education is fundamentally important for career employees, many of whom begin their careers with minimal skills and training. Professional development geared to working professionals must be designed and implemented A menu of options could include: short-term courses on specific technical or management topics; master's degree scholarships via distance learning management leadership programs; strengthened technical/management programs in Kabul designed around the schedules of working professionals; in-house training; and more exposure tours/visits to reinforce the "Aha, now I understand" factor.

Information/Knowledge Management

Significant SCoG assistance has been provided and/or offered to: develop new data and management information systems; streamline processes to improve the timeliness of the flow of information; and digitize and properly store documents and records. Still, OoP requires support to develop abilities to gather and transform data into information, and synthesize information into knowledge. Future assistance can build upon the progress to date and further develop the OoP capacity to properly evaluate, analyze, organize and synthesize the vast and often incoherent flood of information it receives. Systems alone will not solve the problem. High level knowledge management staff must be recruited and given proper authority and training to address this problem.

OMSPA, OAA's Department of M&E and the Peace Jirga

For various reasons, technical assistance to OMSPA, OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and the Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program (Peace Jirga) was provided under separate provisions within the cooperative agreement. Any possible future assistance needs to be provided within the broader OoP capacity building proposal. Specific needs for policy advisory assistance, professional training and education or ICT systems development must be prioritized against demands from other offices/units within the OoP.

Implementing the Reform Strategy: Future Assistance for MoFA

With strong support from the Minister, MoFA focused on the need for a thorough review of its existing structure. Approval of the new structure for MoFA is anticipated in the next few months. Considerable assistance will be needed to operationalize the reform strategy, which is to be phased over the next few years, including help to: fully professionalize HRM functions; oversee merit appointments; strengthen information technology; and improve management skill sets and systems.

MoFA has hired a new young diplomatic corps. Long-term professional development must be made available for these new entrants and should include: scholarships for short, mid and long-term courses/programs/degrees abroad; distance learning programs; exposure visits/study tours; in-house continuous training materials and teachers; programs linked to national universities and research centers; and coaching/mentoring as available. Assistance could be provided through the Afghanistan eQuality Alliance (AeA) as described under "Professional Development" (page 58).

Conclusions

USAID, OoP and MoFA should be duly proud of the considerable achievements under the two projects assessed. All parties agree that important foundations have been laid in support of the substantial reform and restructuring of pivotal Government agencies. Within the context of "emerging government institutions" during a protracted period of transition, the on-going needs of these institutions are both broad and deep. Undoubtedly, sustained donor commitments will be needed to help ensure that they remain strong models for reform leadership.

II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation

The importance of and interest in streamlining, strengthening and integrating the technical and administrative support functions across the Office of the President (OoP) in support of more effective decision-making has been clear to USAID and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for some time. The *Support to the Center of Government* (SCoG) project was designed to build capacities of OoP officials, managers and key technical staff, introduce modern information management systems, and foster an enabling environment for policy making that supports more informed and timely Presidential deliberations. As well, there was a concern that assistance was needed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to strengthen its ability to manage relations with its neighbors in the region and beyond.

The purpose of this evaluation of current assistance is to identify and articulate existing and emerging issues, including opportunities and constraints, affecting the structure, personnel capacities, systems, and ultimately the effectiveness of the Office of the President and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan. Several key USAID concerns are addressed, including:

1. What functions within the OoP and MoFA most need, and could most effectively benefit from future assistance?
2. How can current and future assistance effect sustainable capacity building and reform in OoP/MoFA?
3. What are the incentives and capacities for change and reform in OoP and MoFA, and how can they be advanced?
4. What should be the overall, realistic objectives and strategies for future assistance?

Based upon the findings of this evaluation, the assessment team proposes a New Directions strategic framework for future USAID technical assistance to the Office of the President, and outlines a set of capacity building initiatives for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that could possibly be supported by programs of the Department of State.

The methodology employed by the assessment team has included: a review of information presented in various written documents, i.e., program descriptions, quarterly reports, project outputs, etc.; interviews and discussions with more than sixty people, including client officials, managers and technical staff, USAID implementing partners, and other stakeholders and observers inside and outside of government; and observations by the assessment team of the circumstances and conditions in Afghanistan with respect to the functioning capacities of the OoP and MoFA. The team appraised the situation in terms of: a) the current programs' effectiveness to achieve objectives, what hindered and/or assisted the effective implementation of the project, the level of satisfaction of partners and the sustainability of the assistance provided; and b) future programs' role in the context of defining a set of recommended results-oriented activities targeted to specific objectives.

B. Brief Description of the Technical Assistance Provided

Since 2006, USAID has been assisting the Afghan Presidency and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in their objectives to streamline and modernize administrative and policy processes in support of improved decision-making and governance. As described in detail below, this assistance is being provided under two separate projects: a multilateral project with UNDP and the British Department for International Development (DFID) and an extension of a cooperative agreement with The Asia Foundation, the latter of which includes components that are not the target of this current assessment.

Office of the President

In collaboration with UNDP and DFID under the *Support to the Center of Government* project (SCoG), USAID is facilitating more effective support to the Presidency via the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), which represents the President as head of government, and the Chief of Staff (CoS), which represents the President as head of state. A grant to UNDP (grant number 306-G-00-06-00516-00, awarded in April 2006), covering the period 2006 – 2009, is supporting the provision of technical assistance via a contract with The Asia Foundation (TAF) targeting assistance in six domains with the following objectives:

- Organization and Structure: Strengthen the full spectrum of human resource development (HRD) as a core function of the OAA and the CoS by (a) creating an atmosphere that encourages proactive and forward-thinking attitudinal leadership changes; (b) implementing fundamental HRD organizational and management practices in concert with core civil service reform human resources management policies; (c) delivering priority HRD staff and management training; and (4) designing, installing and training staff on a basic automated HRD information management system.
- Training: Professionalize and strengthen the capacity of OAA and CoS staff via the design and implementation of a competency-based improvement program that integrates generic office management training, advanced job-specific skills, and behavior improvements at all staff levels, including senior management.
- Policy: Improve the Government's "policy decision-making process chain" via (a) assessing and mapping the policy analysis, development, coordination, review and approval stages; (b) rationalizing the OoP organizational structure for policy review and coordination; (c) assessing and building staff capacity for policy analysis and coordination; (d) developing a consistent Government-wide format for policy proposals; and (5) strengthening policy liaison and coordination across Government.
- Facilities: Renovate and furnish an historic OAA staff building to international standards; and design, substantially renovate and furnish an unfinished military barracks for the CoS administration building.
- Information Technology: Establish a technical infrastructure and technology management foundation that provides reliable information communication technology (ICT) in support of the OAA and CoS offices.

- Administrative Work Processes: Increase the capacity and capability of the staff in CoS and OAA by streamlining critical administrative work processes to be more predictable, timely and transparent. This will be achieved via (a) mapping, assessing and streamlining core business administrative work processes (e.g., procurement, documents handling, mail management, etc.); (b) designing key enterprise-wide "quick hit" process improvements that will have a significant impact on overall administrative performance; and (c) institutionalizing improved processes through procedural manuals, relevant software applications, and related staff training.

Via a separate, direct cooperative agreement with TAF (*Strategic Support to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*; cooperative agreement number 306-A-00-03-00504-00; awarded in August 2003 and amended in 2006 to incorporate MoFA), USAID is providing broad spectrum support to the Office of the President (OoP) and other pivotal elements of the executive branch.

Within the Presidency, assistance relevant to this assessment under the cooperative agreement is targeting:

- OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation: Assistance is helping to build a single and reliable system to monitor the implementation of Presidential decrees and Orders and Council of Ministers' (CoM) approvals and decisions. The system will enable the President to continually monitor government initiatives, apply timely correctives, and hold his ministries accountable.
- Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (OMSPA): Assistance is helping to define and develop organizational capabilities required to deliver on its mandate and strategies; assess and design optimal policy and administrative work flow and processes; and strengthen capacity to coordinate the exchange of information between the parliament and the executive government.
- Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program: Assistance is fostering cross-border collaboration and understanding in anticipation of future progress of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Jirga (PAPJ), including establishment of the Peace Jirga Secretariat, development of mandate, structure, and staff; conducting community mapping exercises support effectively bilateral dialogs; and facilitating cross-border communication, cooperation and activities.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Support under the cooperative agreement to other pivotal elements of the executive branch includes:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA): Assistance is improving public administration and security reform efforts towards a more efficient ministry, including technical assistance to develop comprehensive reform strategy, a new organizational structure, detailed job descriptions, streamlined administrative and policy processes, improved human resources management, enhanced outreach and communications mechanisms, and security enhancements.

C. Brief Overview of Project Implementation Progress

Overall, the two USAID projects experienced impressive progress towards the achievement of targeted outputs, exceeding targets in some areas and encountering major difficulties in others. The flexible nature of both projects enabled TAF to respond to rapidly evolving priority requirements of partner agencies.

Assistance to the MoFA has been very successful in two of the initial four target areas, and expanded to other areas as priorities within the Ministry evolved. USAID assistance has enabled the Ministry to make a quantum leap towards substantial reform and restructuring. As a result, the Ministry has completed two of three phases of a "model" reform strategy. It is anticipating Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) approval of, and hoping for donor support for implementation of the final phase. Planned assistance in the area of outreach communications was deleted as a result of a USAID decision to reallocate strategic communications assistance to the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (OPS). Implementation of planned security enhancements has been relegated to Phase 3.

Assistance to the OoP has experienced mixed results. Outputs achievement has been good in all areas except the policy domain where the need for fundamental reform and restructuring of policy development capacity lacked a champion. In all domains, however, the team recognizes the rather tenuous linkages between outputs achieved and anticipated higher level outcomes or results. This may be the result of many interrelated and complex factors, perhaps beginning with the apparent decision to proceed with project implementation without full satisfaction of agreed pre-conditions to success, namely, (a) approval of CoS and OAA proposals for organizational restructuring under Government's Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) Program; and (b) clarification of the distinct functions and avoidance of functional "overlap" between CoS and OAA.[1]

Other key factors include: lack of OoP ownership of the project design; an inability to engage in responsive dialogue on budget decisions; the absence of strong, consistent "champions for change"; initial attitudinal resistance to change among senior and middle level managers; and the crisis-oriented nature of OoP which leaves little time for contemplation of organizational strategies and reform; etc.

Both projects have laid important foundations for continuing reform efforts. Moreover, they have triggered strong desires in both camps for "Afghanization" of future potential USAID institutional support, including proactive participation in subsequent project designs and increased influence in decision-making.

Increased authority is always accompanied by increased responsibility, and both MoFA and OoP have signaled their readiness to direct their own courses along the reformation continuum.

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[1] [1]UNDP SCoG proposal, p. 9

III. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS

A. Assessment of the Effectiveness of Technical Assistance – Support to the Center of Government

Under the *Support to the Center of Government* project, assistance to the Office of the President's Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff office was targeted within six domains of activities: Organization, Training, Policy, Facilities, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and Administrative Work Processes. For each domain, program objectives, results, and issues and opportunities are examined.

1. Organization

Program Objectives

The original objective for the organization domain was "New CoS and OAA organizational structures implemented per Government's Priority Reform Restructuring (PRR) initiative". The emphasis on organization inferred activities required for successful implementation of the new organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, and employee recruitment process outlined in the OAA and CoS PRR designs. A key indicator of success was to be the "number of CoS and OAA departments transitioned to the new PRR structures".

This objective would be accomplished via the following targeted outputs:

- Developing a change management structure
- Mapping the old to the new structure
- Developing an integrated change management schedule
- Guiding/mentoring employees through the organizational change

Agreed pre-conditions for success, noted above, were not fully achieved. During "refreshment of the design", the above objective was modified in the Inception Plan (initial work plan) as, "To integrate human resource functions with the overall objectives of the organization for effective and efficient HRM and continuous development for optimum utilization of manpower". This modified objective would be accomplished via:

- Implementing policies and procedures of HRM in the near term ensuring for merit based selection and recruitment that are in accordance with the Civil Service Commission guidelines and already developed policies.
- Guiding and coaching HRM officials for the implementation of policies.
- Integrating the HRM functions with the overall objectives of the organization, not just as support, but as a core function.
- Strengthening other HRM functions like manpower planning, performance management, promotion, discipline, etc.
- Completing the spectrum of HR functions: succession planning, performance appraisal management, promotion, recruitment, training, personnel documentation management, redress, conflict management, pay, benefits, grievance and leave.

Results and Benefits

The modified objective accentuated attitudinal, skills, functional and policy changes in human resources management towards eventual/potential organizational restructuring. The project completed the following results:

- Conducted HR organizational assessments of CoS and OAA
- Reviewed existing HR policies, procedures and practices
- Developed an implementation plan and approach
- Developed and HR management overview training course
- Participated in the OAA recruitment process
- Developed over 60 new position descriptions in CoS. In terms of PRR position description targets (establishing new or updating current position descriptions for a new salary scale), supported OAA in completing to date 80% of the job descriptions targeted, and for CoS, 60%. It is expected that all will be completed by the end of the project.
- Developed and implemented modern, civil service compliant policies for recruitment, grievances, attendance and leave, training, recognition; and initiated refinement of the performance appraisal policy
- Trained HR staff in basic and advanced practices of HR, supplemented with coaching and mentoring to reinforce behavior changes
- Introduced, installed and initiated training on HR management information systems (HRMIS) in OAA and CoS
- Completed assessment and recommendations for the Presidential Protocol Office
- Completed and introduced a User's Manual for HR functions in CoS and OAA

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from the organization domain.

SCoG Organization Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Modern, CSC-compliant HR policies • HRMIS • Upgraded staff position descriptions • Higher civil service pay and grading for civil service staff with upgraded position descriptions	• Increased competence of HR staff • Increased HR staff confidence that they will benefit from a modern approach to HR management

Issues and Opportunities

Organizational Restructuring

Issue:

OAA and CoS have updated old or developed new position descriptions for nearly all of their staff. For those staff members who are fully on the civil service rolls, these offices have initiated the process through the Civil Service Commission to increase salaries per a new pay and grading system. This is one key step in the Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) initiative of the CSC's Public Administration Reform (PAR) program. However, this approach appears to by-pass or side-step the more substantive organizational restructuring and capacity development objectives of PRR. Under PRR, salary increases are reportedly meant as incentives for initiating substantial priority reforms, including organizational restructuring, where warranted/anticipated. The original project design indicates that such was the case for OoP, given agreement on a pre-condition for implementation that addresses organizational reform. The availability of support from SCOG may have facilitated this more direct approach used by OAA and CoS, without the anticipated substantive restructuring.

Opportunity:

There may be an opportunity to re-assess, prior to the start of any follow-on assistance, the possibility of addressing organizational reform. It has been mentioned that the President sees a stronger and more effective OoP as both a legacy of his historic role as Afghanistan's first President, and as a foundation on which to build a second term in office. Both the Chief of Staff and Director General of the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) have posed the vision of a more efficient, streamlined OoP. Such a vision can guide the technical assistance required to pursue phased functional integration, new structures, or other reform initiatives.

In terms of rationalizing critical OoP functions, future OoP assistance can assess those functions "ready" for integration (candidates include ICT, HRM, Documents and Relations, Policy, Auditing, Procurement, Budgeting, Accounting, Transportation, etc.), develop/introduce shared systems, policies, standards, managers and technical staff in the new systems/procedures, and establish a strategy to evaluate progress and reward achievement/successes in the implementation of the reorganization plan.

Any reorganization plan must be driven by the internal needs and desires of those serving the President, and should consider how this President functions. The CoS believes that assistance should be provided that complements and supports the President, not dictates a style with which he is not comfortable. There needs to be a change management approach that recognizes history and personalities.

As well, one must recognize the continuing progress in OAA and CoS. OAA and CoS have progressed to a point of improved relationships where duplications of activities have lessened. For the immediate future, attention should be focused on a limited number of key issues, like policy development, that can be substantially improved. It will also help if change management and restructuring can be packaged in small, easy-to-achieve, results-oriented initiatives.

HR Integration

Issue:

All elements of the OoP have essentially the same needs related to the development and implementation of modern HRM systems, including continued capacity development; policy development and implementation; filing systems; and associated ICT hardware and software requirements. As such, there are significant areas for, and potential interest in exploring integration opportunities. Technical training and long-term education in HR is clearly required and desired.

Opportunity:

TAF has designed the HR Management Information System to be shared by both OAA and CoS HR Departments. As well, new policies setting standards for training, leave, grievances, attendance, and performance review have been developed and will be shared. Training for HRM staff, including an exposure tour, has been jointly offered. Altogether, these are important requisite steps to an ultimate merger, which will be, if it comes, a political decision. But preparations to date have helped to streamline current operations, a substantial achievement in itself.

The new Public Administration master's degree program at Kabul University, initiated and supported under USAID's Afghan eQuality Alliance network, currently includes courses in HR management, and may soon expand its offerings to include specializations in HR and other sub-areas of public administration. This and other affordable opportunities for higher education should be explored.

Merit Recruitment

Issue:

It is unclear to what extent CoS can effectively apply merit recruitment guidelines for on-going hiring activities, given concerns associated with recruiting for sensitive positions.

Opportunity:

An opportunity may exist to help identify modern approaches for the broad application of the new HR recruitment policy to politically sensitive positions.

Government-wide Databases

Issue:

Reportedly, there are plans to develop several government-wide database systems, including CSC for a human resource management information system; Ministry of Finance for program-based budgeting; and one possibly for tracking program implementation.

Opportunity:

Further work on OoP (interim) database systems should clearly keep an eye out for potential integration into broader systems being considered and established.

2. Training

Program Objectives

The primary focus of the training domain has been to professionalize and strengthen the capacity of OAA and CoS staff via the design and implementation of a competency-based improvement program that integrates generic office management training, advanced job-specific skills, and behavior improvements at all staff levels, including senior management.

Results and Benefits

Key results of the training domain include:

- Over 600 staff have taken the basic English and computer applications training course
- More than 400 staff have taken various Civil Service Institute (CSI) training courses
- Participation of one official in the Kennedy School of Government courses at Harvard University and the participation of another fifteen executives in courses at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) in Hyderabad India
- Management and Leadership Development program initiated
- A database of who completed what training, and who expressed an interest in specific technical future training

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits on the training domain.

SCoG Training Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• 600 OoP staff have developed a basic working knowledge of English, and sufficient computer skills to begin to use computers in their daily routine. • Key staff having gone through CSI training in financial management and/or procurement are better able to perform their functions. • Management who have undertaken the leadership programs offered have developed situational awareness of the possibilities for strengthening management capacities in the OoP.	• Generic courses in governance have provided OoP staff with an introductory understanding of the practices of democratic governance which is key to developing a democratic ethos of government. • Exposure visits have open the eyes of OoP staff to their future, and will over time, generate new ideas and new interest for improving OoP functions. • Surveys of employees to determine who has an interest in future training have shown that there is significant interest and buy-in for a new round of higher level technical training.

Issues and Opportunities

Issues:

At the start of the project, TAF conducted a basic needs analysis of staff targeted for training. Many staff had difficulty articulating their job descriptions and training needs. Thus the default decision was to design a "Foundation Skills" set of generic training, including modules on: interpersonal skills, time management, basic office management, conflict management, governance, basic computer skills, and introductory English. While appreciating this initial, basic foundation, managers have expressed a concern that the training has been too basic, too general, and not at a high enough technical level to substantially improve work performance. However, part of the reasoning behind the decision to focus training on generic topics was that once interest was raised and basic courses taken, staff could better identify future needs and would have greater incentive to continue. In fact, a recent survey found just that, many staff are eager for additional and higher level training.

The selection of who attended classes was based in part on self-nomination. In a TAF conducted survey, staff were asked to identify their level of interest and their top three subject priorities. The resulting database was used to notify staff of when specific courses were scheduled. In turn, staff could request approval from management to attend. Actual approval from relevant OoP directors was not always reflective of employee interests or any identifiable match to the ongoing Priority Reform Restructuring (PRR) initiative. Future training should be programmed with more objective selection criteria agreed to in advance by OoP management. In fact, a training policy for OAA has been drafted and is awaiting approval.

Attendance was at times a major issue. Managers often kept people from training, citing an urgent need to have staff back at the office. An example was when the President directed OAA to establish the Afghanistan-Pakistan Peace Jirga. For almost three months, most key staff were seconded to that assignment and were not permitted to attend previously scheduled training, though reportedly many did in fact have free time. In recent training, this issue has been less of a problem, but future programming must find the right balance of commitment and training programming designed around the schedules of working professionals.

An issue related to the organization domain noted above was that training was not matched to a reorganization plan. Neither was training matched to CSC's PRR initiative for position upgrades, which can require technical skills certification for promotion. Future training needs to be responsive to these requirements.

The mode of training in the SCoG program was largely one-off classrooms sessions. Mentoring is being provided to OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation through the cooperative agreement, but reportedly without an adequate training foundation. Managers have suggested that, if properly implemented, mentoring may contribute substantially to building staff capacities to improve day-to-day work performance. It was noted that one-off workshops and other group trainings can be very useful for introductory subjects, but lessons learned can quickly fade if there is no follow-up and reinforcement.

TAF training did not establish ongoing capacity building linkages between OoP and with other, continuing USAID or other donor capacity building programs, though there was informal discussion with BearingPoint about their Capacity Building Program (CDP), and CDP did provide for several basic financial management courses for OoP staff. Stronger linkages across individual donor training programs should pursued in any future technical assistance.

A secondary issue in SCoG was that domain integration was not as strong as it could have been. For example, training and new ICT systems or work process improvements were designed at the outset as one coherent package. The "stovepipe" nature of the domain structure itself may have been at fault. Future training should be integrally designed as part of comprehensive approach to achieving the larger strategic objective of improving work performance.

The value of, and culture for training has, until recently, not been fully understood or appreciated by managers who often are in crisis mode and feel they cannot spare staff time for what is perceived to be modest and long-term skills improvements. Communication to managers of the real, expected benefits of capacity building initiatives must be strengthened.

Opportunities:

The issues above notwithstanding, much has been accomplished in the training domain, especially with junior staff. An excellent base of skills have been provided on which a program of higher level training can be built. There is increased recognition of the importance of skill improvement. Exposure tours have provided staff with an understanding of where they need to be in five years if they are to be important members of the OoP team.

Thus, a base has been established to provide additional assistance to the OoP in whatever form works best for the individual employee, one-off training, on site mentoring, distance learning for a master's degree, etc. The opportunity to provide a full menu of career path education is immediate, as is the need to offer more and varied managerial and leadership training. There is also a growing opportunity to build the knowledge management capacity of the staff in the OoP. This is a new field of critical importance which matches new technologies to processing the flow of information throughout the IRoA.

3. Policy

Program Objectives

The objective of SCOG's policy domain assistance has been to improve the Government's "policy decision-making process chain" via (1) assessing and mapping the policy analysis, development, coordination, review and approval stages; (2) rationalizing the OoP organizational structure for policy review and coordination; (3) assessing and building staff capacity for policy analysis and coordination; (4) developing a consistent Government-wide format for policy proposals; and (5) strengthening policy liaison coordination across Government.

Results and Benefits

Key results in the policy domain include:

- Mapping the policy process from an originating ministry through to Council of Ministers, and suggesting recommendations to streamline the process.
- Preparing three case studies to assess policy development capacities.
- Assessing professional development in the policy area towards the goal of providing short, mid and long-term options, including in-country and abroad training programs.
- Drafting of a new template for policy consideration of the Council of Ministers.
- Coaching of policy analysts on how to improve inter-ministerial consultation and coordination.

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits on the policy domain.

SCoG Policy Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Recommendations to improve policy presentations to the Council of Ministers (CoM) have led to the design a new template to ensure a properly vetted and easy to read brief. • Policy coordination coaching has clarified processes to improve consultation between the CoM, the Ministries and representatives of the OoP.	• TAF led policy self-evaluation sessions have resulted in OAA and CoS staff recognition of inadequacies in current policy development capacities. • An understanding has been gained of the gaps in current policy education which could lead to new programs to train the next generation of policy analysts.

Issues and Opportunities

Issues:

In terms of helping to shape decisions for presidential consideration, the enabling environment for making policy decisions in the Office of the President is underdeveloped and unfocused. Presidential decision-making requires and/or would benefit from an independent policy voice with the capacity to do policy analysis at a high level. Critical policy development functions which should be strengthened include: framing the policy debate; focusing the voices that currently drown out critical policy issues requiring Presidential attention; initiating, formulating, developing, and/or synthesizing cross-cutting policies; organizing policy record management; and organizing Presidential policy advisers.

Opportunities:

There has been expressed interest within the OoP in the establishment of a Presidential Strategic Policy Team (PSPT), comprised of key policy staff in the CoS, OAA National Security Council (NSC), and the Presidential policy advisers. If supported by the President, a PSPT could: serve as an independent and coordinated policy voice to the President; provide policy analysis at a high level; and develop/initiate cross-cutting policies on key issues of national and international concern. The team would have the responsibility to compile, review, propose, assess, and/or recommend policy for consideration by the President. The PSPT would not replace current functions in the OAA or CoS but rather would fill gaps in the cross-government "machinery" for policy development. Strategic planning, critical thinking, and policy formulation would be the focus of PSPT's responsibilities.

TAF is working with the National School of Government (NSG) in the UK to assess gaps in the menu of options to train high-level policy analysts. A team from will visit Kabul in October, 2008 to assess local capacities and recommend a program of career path policy education options, including strengthening local university offerings and linkages to international programs.

4. Facilities

Program Objectives

The original objective of the facilities domain was to have "the buildings that house OAA and CoS repaired or reconstructed to international standards according to a comprehensive architectural design for each building and their immediate surrounding grounds"[2].Targeted outputs were to:

- Develop a comprehensive architectural review and design of OAA and CoS facilities
- Repair to international standards the facilities that house the OAA and CoS, according to a comprehensive architectural design for each building and their immediate surrounding grounds, where "facilities" refer to office space, conference rooms, bathrooms, kitchen areas, reception areas, storage areas, utilities, and handicap access. Design drawings include specifications, bill of quantities and construction cost estimates.
- Provide and install basic office furnishings and office equipment
- Implement a facilities asset management function
- Assess the condition of the (240) vehicles fleet; make recommendations on their disposition, garaging and maintenance facilities; and develop a policy for fleet renewal

[2] UNDP SCoG Proposal, Sept. 2005

These original outputs were subsequently modified to reflect a Steering Committee (SC) decision to reconstruct a CoS office building from an unfinished military barracks, which required the addition of the following outputs for the CoS building:[3]

- Drawings and 3-D visuals of schematic alternative designs
- Comparative cost-benefit analysis of alternative designs
- Architectural design drawings; structural, mechanical electrical and communication systems designs; a physical model of the completed facility; and a preliminary construction cost estimate

The earlier requirement for a facilities asset management function was modified to become:

- Foster the development of a Department of Facilities Planning and Maintenance for the CoG that would ensure long-term planning for the CoG grounds as well as maintaining its buildings as an on-going process

Results and Benefits

Results of the facilities domain are:

- Completed comprehensive architectural reviews and designs for targeted OAA and CoS facilities
- A renovated OAA office building, including design drawings, managing the bidding process, contract preparation, and quality control and monitoring of construction work. A completed design of the CoS office building, including development of schematic design, detailed architectural design, managing the bidding process, contract preparation, and quality control and monitoring of construction work. Design drawings included specifications, bill of quantities and construction cost estimates
- Facilitated selection and procurement of furniture for the new CoS and the Telephone Kahana buildings
- Completed review of the transportation fleet *(reported under the administrative processes domain)*, including identification of vehicles which should be disposed of

Repair and furnishing of the OAA building, and design of the CoS building were completed during Year 1 (by December 2007). The remaining activities under this domain, i.e., reconstruction and furnishing of the CoS building, are being administered directly by UNDP with funding from DFID.

As a result of internal reallocation of responsibilities within OAA and CoS, anticipated outputs targeting garaging and maintenance facilities, the development of policy for fleet renewal, and fostering the development of a Department of Facilities Planning and Maintenance within CoG became unnecessary.

[3] SCoG Inception Plan, Nov. 2006

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from the facilities domain.

SCoG Facilities Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Buildings that perform according to the user needs. • A productive working environment. • Support spaces such as conference, meeting space, dining, storage, etc., are adequate contributing to a quality and efficient work environment. • Environmental comforts such as heating, cooling, and lighting conducive to a productive work environment is improved. • Modern communication systems are available in a variety of spaces to users with ease.	• A working environment that is aesthetically pleasing, physically comfortable, operationally efficient and conducive to organizational efficiency and effective work flow. • Employees of OAA and CoS enjoy better working environment and office space. • The new spaces foster teamwork and better communication between the different departments and administrative entities. • Space relationships will bring better organizational efficiencies and better work flows. • Getting to buildings and work spaces and between buildings and workspaces become easy and effortless. • Relationships between interior and exterior spaces and the activities that take place in those domains are improved. • The new and renovated buildings provide spaces that are easier to maintain. • Understanding that good buildings are important marketing tools projecting an image of political and administrative stability and success helping to build political capital and draw public support

Issues and Opportunities

<u>Flexibility</u>

Issue:

OAA and CoS may have interpreted the agreement for SCoG to be “highly flexible” as an opportunity to seek higher allocations of resources to priority “tangibles”, including more

work on other OoP buildings. In response, the Inception Plan clearly identified the following items as being "out of scope":

- Functions and facilities related to:
  - The National Security Council
  - The Ministry of State for Parliamentary Affairs
  - The Vice Presidents
- Salaries or other monetary incentives
- Purchase of any items or services that should normally be part of the on-going operational budget of the CoS of OAA, e.g. consumable office supplies

Flexibility, both within and between components, is an important benefit of projects, intended to help reflect and promote ownership and buy-in of partner agencies. The Steering Committee exercised its responsibility to oversee program and budget flexibility. However, within relatively short-term institutional strengthening projects with relatively weak conceptual buy-in and ownership of the highest level objectives, it should not be surprising that such flexibility may result in an increasing push towards the procurement of "tangibles" at the expense of resources allocated to other objectives.

Opportunity:

While significant flexibility may have been important during the initial phase of donor assistance to OoP, future assistance might limit flexibility to within project components and thereby help to assure the adequacy of resources, and hopefully buy-in commitment, to achieve all levels of project objectives. Within this framework, flexible activities could help ensure achievement of well-defined, targeted results.

<u>Meaningful Partnerships</u>

Issue:

Senior OoP managers expressed that their offices were treated more like "a recipient" than a full partner in the project. This suggests a perception that opportunities derived from a full partnership role may have been missed. The facilities renovation processes were reportedly managed by the SCoG project team without adequate engagement of core OAA and CoS managers. As a result, OoP procurement managers may have missed opportunities to gain appreciable, "intangible" benefits from proactive participation in related decision-making processes.

Opportunity:

An opportunity in any future assistance project is to ensure that beneficiary project managers, at appropriate levels, engage in core planning and review processes, such as integrated work plan and budgeting; quarterly reviews and updates of work plans, expenditures and expenditure projections; and complex procurement actions. The intangible benefits to be derived from their proactive engagement in fair, competitive selection processes are invaluable.

5. Information Communications Technology (ICT)

Program Objectives

The original objective of the ICT domain was to "develop within OAA and CoS the necessary information technology and communications infrastructure to function at international standards". Targeted outputs were:

- The functioning at an expected international level, of all computer hardware, software, databases, networks and communications services required by CoS and OAA
- An "enterprise information communications technology architecture", comprising technical infrastructure design and standards, application designs/development/testing, database design standard, ICT product and vendor standards, integration design and principles, disaster recovery plans and procedures, security policies and procedures, operational policies and procedures, and help desk design and processes
- Procurement of ICT hardware and software.
- Development and execution of an implementation plan

The Inception Plan (Year 1 work plan) refreshed original objectives: to lay a solid technical infrastructure and technology management foundation that provides reliable ICT services in support of the OAA and CoS offices; and to automate key processes to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of both organizations. A three-tiered results strategy emphasized: (a) installation of foundational technical infrastructure, (b) development and deployment of key software applications, and (c) strengthening ICT governance structures, capacity and standards, with ICT managers and technicians who can successfully manage and plan the ICT future of their organizations. The above list of outputs was expanded to include the:

- Design of the network architecture for the new Council of Ministers building *(in addition to OAA and CoS facilities)*
- Design, development, and deployment of a software application required to support at least one key administrative work process
- Implementation of a secure enterprise ICT network and systems infrastructure in the Presidential Compound
- Implementation of secure wireless network infrastructure
- Development and deployment of an OAA website
- Upgrade of electrical wiring in the OAA office building
- Refurbishment/construction of the OAA and CoS server rooms
- Development of a Presidential scheduling database

Results and Benefits

In less than two years, the project team has achieved impressive success in practically all output areas of the ICT domain. The greatest successes have been establishing the OAA/IT Department as an expansive, modern ICT department that is meeting the voice and data needs of a rapidly growing number of computer users over the next few years. The OAA/IT network is regarded as a model for expansion and replication. The project team is confident in the technical and management capabilities of this department to manage the current network without major problems.

Achieving targeted results within CoS/IT have been hampered by restricted access to the Palace and server equipment, and lack of initial support by (prior) CoS management, especially in the area of staff training. Lack of regular access to servers has blocked and delayed the project team from confirming the accuracy of server configuration, which is critical to establishing an official domain and extending the application of project-financed equipment.

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from the ICT domain.

SCoG ICT Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Computer hardware • Uninterruptible power sources and power stabilizers • Software applications • Server room enhancements • Wireless networks • Upgraded building cables/wiring (OAA) • Website (OAA) • Client help desk (OAA)	• IT staff and management training • ICT strategic plan • Increased staff efficiency and communications abilities

Issues and Opportunities

Issues

Training: As a result of staff shortages, the project did not benefit from the full cooperation of senior CoS management. As a result, the only technical training this staff received was a study tour to India for one person to learn about telephone exchange systems. Both staff and management require advanced technical training, especially as (1) technical uses of its systems increase; (2) more CoS staff members become computer literate; and (3) software

upgrades need to be assessed. On the other hand, OAA has taken full advantage of offered ICT training, resulting in a staff which is technically competent to sustain USAID investments.

Access Limitations: The project team initially lacked adequate access to the Palace compound and CoS equipment, primarily due to security reasons. Subsequently, three project team members were provided with security passes. Access to CoS server equipment has continued to be problematic, limiting the ability of the project team to train staff and verify and document proper use and maintenance of project-funded materials.

Staff Shortages: Both ICT departments have a few staff vacancies. The pending loss of support from two certified project advisors embedded within OAA/IT will hinder on-going mentoring requirements as the office expands its use of complex technical software applications, and increases the number of system users from other OoP facilities for which it has responsibility. CoS/IT has three vacancies, and is benefiting from four technicians who are seconded from the Ministry of Communications. This office has requested embedded staff support from SCoG.

Limited Influence on ICT Domain Decisions: Both ICT managers report lack of or involvement in SCoG/IT budget and procurement management, resulting in confusion about how priorities are decided in a project with a "flexible" budget. As a result, they both strongly request direct budget control should future assistance be considered. Budget flexibility was approved by the Steering Committee early during implementation in response to an overall funding shortage and increasing priority requests from OoP. OAA/IT objected to a project decision to establish a wireless rather than an optical cable link between several OAA facilities. The department must now manage the frequent disruptions in this undesired service.

Departmental Budget Limitations: Both ICT department managers report lack of involvement in their offices' annual budget development processes. The majority of the budget is keyed to staff numbers, with a minimal operational budget based on the finance departments' knowledge of past expenditures and equipment on-hand. They report making no substantive contribution of variable technical information (e.g., maintenance or upgrade requirements) relevant to the needs of a modern ICT department, resulting in continued reliance on donors to meet large value investment and maintenance requirements, both anticipated and unanticipated.

Opportunities for OAA/IT

Broader Integration: The OAA/IT has management responsibilities for other offices within OoP, i.e., two Offices of the Vice Presidents, OMSPA, Presidential Advisors, Services, and Transportation. Building upon the model foundation established by SCoG, the department now requires assistance to develop and execute a long-term strategic vision and implementation plan to integrate all of these units into one OAA network structured with either wireless routers and/or fiber optic cabling. Assistance (which is not yet identified per office) would include long-term, embedded technical advisors/mentors; a variety of equipment, including back-up servers and Cisco switches; appropriate basic and technical

software applications; and advanced technical and English language training. A doubling of bandwidth is also requested to handle planned increases (from 200 to 500 users) in voice and data users. Other donors may be supporting ICT elements of some of these offices, but the need to integrate all voice and data networks of these units is not currently being addressed. With this planed integration, the OAA/IT Department may be renamed "IT General Directorate".

Equipment Training: For security purposes, the department must produce many OoP reports in-house, using 40+ year old, yet serviceable stencil equipment. New staff requires training in the use and maintenance of this equipment.

Security Cameras: Given increasing security risks and actual attempts to breach the OAA compound, the ICT department requests a network of security cameras to enhance security.

Opportunities for CoS/IT:

Pending Merger: The project team has recommended and is currently negotiating the potential merger of the ICT departments in CoS and the Presidential Protection Service (PPS). When approved, this merger would help to eliminate duplication of equipment and other resources; help rationalize maintenance and upgrade costs; minimize security risks; promote technical coordination and specialization among staff; and promote standardized OoP/IT operations. A detailed needs assessment following the merger may identify opportunities for future assistance. The assessment should also examine the reported need for replacing all telephone and ICT cabling throughout the Palace compound. Underground telephone cables are over 40 years old and are often infested with moisture, causing lots of noise on the lines. ICT cabling runs across roof-tops and is subject to frequent weather-related cuts.

6. Administrative Work Processes

Program Objectives

The original objective of this domain was to streamline critical administrative work processes within OAA and CoS (e.g., procurement, asset management, personnel management, document management, financial management) so that they are predictable, timely and transparent. This would be accomplished via:

- Conducting current state administrative work processes assessments
- Identifying significant change opportunities
- Redesigning select administrative work processes
- Developing administrative procedure guidelines
- Developing implementation roll-out plans

The Inception Plan narrowed the focus to immediate, 'quick hit,' enterprise-wide process improvements that (a) are not technology dependent; (b) can be implemented quickly"; and

(c) will have a significant impact on administrative performance; and (d) become the priority for automation. The Plan also added a focus on capacity development to include:

- Establishing, staffing and equipping a business process management capability in CoS and OAA

Results and Benefits

Notwithstanding the many and unique challenges of initiating change management within highly political, crisis-oriented offices, the SCoG project team substantially achieved and in some areas, exceeded targeted results.

Key results include:

- An administrative work process improvement guide in English and Dari
- "As-is" and streamlined "to-be" assessments, mapping, next step recommendations, and ICT software designs were developed, and are in various stages of implementation and related training, for administrative work processes in the following areas:
  - OAA: procurement; documents and relations (including the development, classification and archiving of documents and establishment of a new archive room with mobile shelving and the potential for automated archiving); best practices in Monitoring and Evaluation Department strategy; human resource management (including installation of the Human Resource Information System – HRMIS; financial management (including installation of the Afghanistan Financial Management Information System – AFMIS in conjunction with USAID's Capacity Development Project with BearingPoint)
  - CoS: procurement; documents and relations; human resource management (including installation of the Human Resource Information System – HRMIS; financial management (including installation of the Afghanistan Financial Management Information System – AFMIS in conjunction with USAID Capacity Building Project with BearingPoint); kitchen/depot (addressing requests, requisitions, receipts, inventory, management, issues, meal planning and menus); and to a lesser extent, transportation fleet
  - OPS: best practices, efficiency and effectiveness assessments, with work plans for monitoring, analysis, news and production
  - CoM: data/voice IT-vision for the new CoM building (with installation under the USAID Capacity Building Project with BearingPoint)

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from the administrative work processes domain.

SCoG Administrative Work Processes Domain

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Technical computer software in Dari, tailored to work requirements of administrative units • Procedural guides for refresher and new-comer training • Training in complex technical software in mother language	• Substantial impacts on the cost, quality, cycle time and customer satisfaction of related administrative units • Increased experience of local software design vendors in developing complex software in Dari • Experience and capacity transfer from participation in the critical review and redesign of administrative work process assessments • Reassignment of some staff members to more meaningful, less redundant positions

Issues and Opportunities

Issue

Substantive completion of the results in this domain revealed several problem areas which the project team managed as opportunities to promote higher levels of integration and cross-fertilization among the domains; and pushed for timely management decisions to unblock progress. These problems included inadequate delegation of financial authority; non-acceptance of electronic signatures; lack of training in the new procurement law; relatively unavailability of technical ICT applications in Dari; and the ubiquitous challenges of promoting organizational change within high political and frequent crisis environments.

The chance to continue building upon the foundation that has been laid is the most significant opportunity arising from work in this domain. This foundation comprises not only the streamlined administrative work processes, but more importantly, the experience and desire of pivotal senior and mid-level managers who actually “get it” and intend to “see the change process through” to its rational conclusion. This desire is manifested in proactive initiatives from within CoS and OAA to internalize and broaden change management processes catalyzed under SCoG.

Opportunity

In this regard, an opportunity may exist to build a core “service capacity” within OoP to critically assess and oversee implementation of administrative work processes across all OoP entities, utilizing existing, motivated staff members, provided that a culture of cross-office support can be inculcated within OoP.

B. Assessment of the Effectiveness of Technical Assistance – Cooperative Agreement

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Program Objectives

Current assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs comprises Phase 2 and 3 (July 2007 – March 2009) of on-going USAID support. The broad objective is to help the MoFA meet its Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) goals required for approval, by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), of the Ministry's new organization (*tashkeel*), and establishment of a Reform Implementation Management Unit (RIMU) to implement proposed changes. During Phase 1 (April - June 2007), USAID supported the development of a master reform plan for the MoFA.

The objective of current (Phases 2 and 3) assistance is to initiate pre-implementation of the master reform plan, pending formal approval by IARCSC, targeting the:

- Development of detailed organizational structures and job descriptions, accompanied by a request for budget support
- Development of an effective Human Resources Management Unit, beginning with training a ministerial team to review, analyze and improve key administrative work processes
- Development of enhanced outreach and communications mechanisms for embassies and consulates, including web-based bi-monthly newsletters
- Implementation of earlier-identified, priority security upgrades to bring MoFA facilities into compliance with safety standards

Results and Benefits

Working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Asia Foundation has thus far achieved an impressive and extensive array of sustainable results. The project has:

- Proposed and won approval of a substantial organizational restructuring for the Ministry, based on developing the current small division of Economic Affairs into a strong Regional Affairs division; appointed an acting Director General (deputy ministerial equivalent) to facilitate the approved transition; proposed and won approval from IARCSC to establish a Reform Implementation Management Unit.
- Developed, won approval, and initiated implementation of a plan for the training, development and continuing education of the Ministry's personnel to meet highest priority needs. This included training of large numbers of personnel across all professional levels in English language and information technology; and practical training of over 90 managers and staff to help them develop more effective working methods, and acquire other skills. Negotiated implementation support from other capacity development initiatives (e.g., USAID's CDP and eQuality Alliance projects; and the British Council) for full implementation of the education, training and development plan.

- Refurbished the Institute of Diplomacy (IoD) and established an ICT and Open Learning Center with up-to date training facilities and equipment (twenty learning positions with computers, supported by a dedicated server, a local area network and Internet access). Extensively expanded the Institute's reference publications. Completed a review and cataloging of the Institute's reference library book stock of over 12,000 publications in European and Asian languages. Developed and translated into Dari a new curriculum for a two-year, part-time course in diplomacy and international relations at the Institute of Diplomacy, targeting the Ministry's highest priority capacity development needs for new entrants to the Ministry. Promoted and won approval for merger of IoD and the Ministry's Centre for Strategic Studies to develop the Ministry's training and strategic strengths. Negotiated staff training and support from other USAID capacity building projects and the British Council.
- Initiated detailed reviews of Afghan foreign and provincial missions, focusing on their location, organization and functioning.
- Conducted a detailed review of every MoFA division, department and section with detailed recommendations for improvements and restructuring
- Translated and reviewed all existing job descriptions; prepared detailed job descriptions and skills specifications for all 30 senior positions in the new MoFA structure
- Assessed the Ministry's extensive library and other reference resources, with recommendations for improving library facilities and services; initiated cataloging in Dari with technical and training support from local and international expert support; upgraded library accommodations and equipment.
- Trained select MoFA staff in high-quality practical training courses in conflict management, governance, project management, policy process, and work process improvement. Identified Phase 3 mentoring requirements in some key departments (e.g., Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, ICT and Documents Handling and Archives).
- Advised and guided the Minister in several pivotal decisions, including (a) preparing for his participation in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Council of Ministers conference in Herat involving ministers from ten neighboring countries; (b) formulating a ministerial position concerning ANDS (Afghanistan National Development Strategy) proposal to set up a separate ANDS centre for regional development; and (c) making a formal application to the IARCSC for the formation of a RIMU and concurrently transitioned the project team to operate as a preliminary RIMU
- Strengthened the skills of the Human Resources (HR) department to implement the full range of HR functions pending fuller Phase 3 implementation support.
- Planned, equipped, set up and initiated a 12-week, high quality English language training course covering three different levels, with concurrent support from the British Council to develop the teaching capacity and standards of local English language teachers.

- Developed a critical thinking test, in Dari and Pashtu, to support implementation of the Ministry's HR department merit-based recruitment, appointment and promotion policies.
- Assessed the Ministry's ICT infrastructure and recommended changes and improvements in software and hardware for more effective and reliable Internet services.
- Developed a job description for a MoFA security manager

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• A new IoD curriculum and IT/Open Learning Center • Functional access to expanded library resources • New staff position descriptions and associated higher PRR salaries upon approval by IARCSC	• A strong sense of direction, a way forward and a clear, flexible guide (rallying point) to navigate a highly complex, long-term and expensive reform effort, covering all levels of the Ministry • Confidence in the existence of a clear orientation and training path for new foreign service entrants • An improved sense of organizational well-being derived from a new, flatter organizational structure • Increased staff competencies in English, and in targeted administrative and technical functional areas • Increased management competencies from mentoring activities • Confidence of IARCSC approval of the reform strategy upon the identification of long-term donor support • Faith that the donor community, USAID, in particular, will protect, deepen and sustain its investments in governmental reform, towards the development of Afghanistan's potentially "best reform model"

Issues and Opportunities

Continuity of Reform Support

Issue

USAID assistance thus far has laid an excellent foundation towards the potential development of Afghanistan's first "model of a reformed ministry". The Minister demonstrates strong commitment to completing his reform agenda. When USAID current technical assistance concluding in March 2009, the most substantial part of the reform will lay ahead, requiring and equally strong and steady commitment of donor resources to assure successful completion.

Opportunity

An additional 3–5 year commitment of donor support is required to fully reform the ministry, professionalize its staff, and ensure sustainability of interventions. This means strengthening the capacity of the ministry to "do the business of diplomacy", (e.g., re-training, re-tooling and re-allocating current employees and educating and training new professional entrants); and enhancing overall administration of the ministry (across all administrative areas: financial management, documents control, passport and visa management, security, management of embassies, human resources performance management, etc.).

A significant opportunity exists to transition USAID's current TA team into a formally-established Reform Implementation Management Unit (RIMU), to guide and help ensure the sustainability of these objectives and interventions.

Institute of Diplomacy

Issue

This institute represents a pivotal element of the ministry's reform efforts by bridging the divide between current employees and new entrants into the foreign service, and providing internal capacity for meeting the ministry's educational and training requirements (both long and short-term) in-perpetuity. USAID support to the institute has strengthened its foundation, with a new two-year curriculum in diplomacy and international relations, expanded and catalogued reference materials, and a new ICT and Open Learning Centre.

Opportunity

Further support to the Institute of Diplomacy is required to establish strong linkages with external training institutions, both inside and outside Afghanistan, addressing long-term and distance learning requirements. Should USAID be unable to provide long-term support to reform implementation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, perhaps this may be a top priority area for limited intervention.

Connectivity:

Issue

The reform strategy recognizes that, "It is the embassies and missions which give the Ministry the tools which make it a unique institution within the public sector of Afghanistan. The embassies provide a channel to represent and to negotiate the political and economic interests of the government, and to collect and circulate information in accordance with those interests. … expenditures to the embassies and missions constitute about 80% of the total costs…communication between the Ministry in Kabul and Afghan embassies and other missions carry an extreme overweight of administrative, often minor, issues"[4].

Opportunity

A stronger, modernized Ministry of Foreign Affairs requires modern, reliable connectivity with its missions abroad and provincial offices across Afghanistan. Expanding and upgrading the Ministry's communications facilities and equipment will be crucial to improving the content, quality and security of information exchange with its foreign and provincial branches. Should USAID be unable to provide long-term support to reform implementation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, perhaps this may be a close second priority area for limited intervention.

Outreach and Communications Mechanisms

Issue

The objective of this element was to develop enhanced outreach and communications mechanisms for Afghanistan embassies and consulates, including web-based bi-monthly newsletters. This relates to strategic communications of the cultural diplomacy messages of Government concerning current developments and progress towards reconstruction and democratization.

In its detailed review of every MoFA division, department and section, TAF identified 10 administrative functions that required substantial reform, including communications -- an area of growing importance to the Minister and the Ministry. It was generally recognized and accepted that (a) the interests of the media and the general public awareness of foreign policy demand increased attention to communication of policy, both on a day to day basis and in planning for larger initiatives and events; and (b) communication is a specialized discipline which requires specialized support and which also should be incorporated in training for all diplomats. Thus, the reform strategy outlines several issues and options for restructuring the role of communications within the ministry. Implementation of these communications reforms and the broader reform strategy is dependent upon the availability of donor support.

[4] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reform Strategy and Plan, June 2007, p. 17

Meanwhile, Government determined that the interim Afghanistan Government Media Centre (AGMC), being established, with USAID assistance, in the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (OPS), would spearhead a focus on filling the information vacuum, bridging the information gap, strengthening information and communication outreach strategies of Government, and providing a strategic communications presence throughout the country *and internationally via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. In this regard, TAF facilitated meetings between OPS and ministries to promote their anticipated utilization of the center in fulfilling their strategic communications objectives. The formal launch of the center is targeted for late 2008.

Opportunity

Progress towards achieving the above objective is keyed to (a) full implementation of MoFA administrative reforms; and (b) use of AGMC, which has not yet been formally launched. Given this, TAF (presumably in discussions with USAID) has dropped this objective in its current programming. USAID assistance to AGMC, if continued, should target and help address any MoFA strategic communications requirements.

Security Enhancements

Issue

The objective of this element of assistance to the MoFA was to implement targeted urgent security upgrades to bring MoFA facilities into basic compliance with safety standards, including the following outputs:

- Soliciting, negotiating and funding an international security services provider contract (directly contracted by MoFA)
- Re-building exterior embankments and walls
- Readjusting parking facilities
- Upgrading entry ways
- Installing security lighting
- Installing blast film on exterior windows
- Providing training to security guards and staff

In its detailed review of every MoFA division, department and section, TAF identified 10 administrative functions that required substantial reform, including enhancement of physical security. The reform strategy outlines several issues and options for improving physical security within the ministry, and proposes the conduct of security assessments in its offices abroad.

The reform strategy notes that several improvements were then underway at the main ministry building, but does not identify any associated USAID assistance. TAF anticipated in early 2008 (Phase 2 of the reform) the (a) appointment and training of a MoFA security manager and (b) initiation of a security review across the ministry to identify priority

upgrades for USAID assistance, for implementation of the results during Phase 3 of the reform. A job description has since been completed.

Opportunity

Recruitment of the security manager and implementation of security upgrades is now anticipated to occur later in Phase 3 of the reform, which is dependent upon the availability of donor support. Given its deep satisfaction with the results of Phases 1 and 2, the Minister has a strong preference for continued USAID implementation assistance for the remainder of Phase 3, with some adjustments to consider lessons learned.

2. OAA/Department of Monitoring and Evaluation

Program Objectives

The objective of the this component of the cooperative agreement is to develop the capacity of the OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) through technical assistance, equipment, training, and systems support, with the following targeted outputs:

- An approved departmental terms of reference and capacity development plan
- An approved organizational structure with clear functional responsibilities for each component
- Staff recruitment based on agreed functions and structure
- Implementation support and training
- A prioritized work plan
- Procurement/installation of office furnishings and equipment (desks, chairs, filing cabinets, printer, photo copier, and computers)
- Monitoring mechanisms and database created to track presidential decrees and Council of Ministers' decisions

Results and Benefits

Within less than a year (since late 2007), TAF has substantially completed the above objectives and outputs within OAA's M&E Department. Key results include:

- Analyzed the organizational structure and supported a final determination on functional responsibilities; conducted departmental capacity assessments; conducted a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis workshop, including orientation on M&E concepts; and developed a proposal for M&E capacity assessments in priority ministries
- Repaired existing and procured/installed new office equipment and furnishings (vehicles, computers, and furniture)
- Developed a draft departmental work plan and TA plan

- Augmented existing staff numbers and capacity by hiring and seconding eight additional staff members, including a new department director in June 2008; and initiated recruitment of an Analysis and Reporting Expert to improve data quality and analysis and reports content
- Developed a Government work plan format for use by line ministries in developing the "Work Plan of Government for 1387", which the M&E Department will collate and reviewed prior to its submission to Cabinet for review and approval; and oriented reps of 48 organs of Government on the use of this format
- Developed reporting documents and forms for use by line ministries to track implementation progress on Presidential decisions and decrees; and produced the first quarter progress report on decrees and decisions
- Supported implementation and follow-through documentation of the "2008 Accountability Reporting to the Nation" by Government ministers, including transcription, content verification with ministers, translation into both official languages, publication and distribution
- Analyzed M&E database requirements; and prepared an interim Access database to meet immediate needs pending development of a permanent OAA-wide database.

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from assistance to OAA's Monitoring and Evaluation Department.

TAF Support to OAA/M&E Department

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• New office equipment and furnishings • A clear, though ambitious work plan • Preliminary progress on an interim database • An opportunity for structured and consistent inputs from ministries into M&E reports	• Clarity of current functional responsibilities • Opportunity to articulate and hopefully address SWOT issues • Substantive one-on-one mentoring for technical staff • An opportunity to support higher-level decision-making in a more useful manner

Issues and Opportunities

Issues

Since its establishment by Presidential Decree in late 2005, the department has faced numerous challenges, ranging from logistics support and staffing up, to negotiating clarity of its role and functions, particularly those that go beyond administrative tracking of presidential decrees and laws. Against the backdrop of three successive changes in the

Director of the M&E Department in less than three years, the most significant challenge for OAA's M&E Department was (is) to define clear functional roles and responsibilities.

The initial director was reassigned. A second director (former USAID/Provincial Reconstruction Team officer) departed after a few months to become a Deputy Mayor of Kabul. The latter developed a draft strategy which significantly expanded the original functional statement for the department well beyond compiling and evaluating reports from ministries and organizations, compiling the working plans of government, and monitoring the implementation of high-level decisions. The draft strategy included: evaluating the performance of ministries; coordinating government plans with ANDS; assessing activities of provincial commissions; conducting workshops/seminars in relevant ministries and public agencies to boost cooperation and mitigate issues; assisting in "setting up a healthy administration free of nepotism and personal favoritism in ministries and public agencies"; conducting meaningful evaluation of the impacts of presidential decrees and orders; and coordination of cross-government M&E capacity building.

TAF subsequently hired and seconded to the department its current, third director, charged with tightening the focus on a few priority functions and building what is largely an administrative tracking, compiling and reporting capacity, rather than a capacity to perform substantive evaluations and assessments to feed into a government-wide planning system.

In context of designating lead agencies/ministries as lead roles for the "five common functions" of government (human resources development, financial management, project planning, policy formulation and procurement), the Civil Service Commission (CSC), in early 2007, designated OAA the lead role in policy coordination and policy capacity development across government. This designation may have provided the impetus for the above-noted expansive vision for the M&E Department, situated within OAA's Directorate for Policy. If developed, the "evaluation" function would presumably support a "feedback loop' into policy development and program planning.

The above challenges were made more complicated by the move of the department from the main OAA building to offices in the OAA courtyard; and the refurbishment of the new space.

Finally, one official cited concerns regarding the level of skills of a long term advisor, noting the office's lack of significant engagement in TA selection.

Having overcome these considerable challenges, the Department appears to have settled down to focus on building capacity and systems to operate in a few, priority functional areas.

Opportunities

Future challenges and opportunities that will likely face the M&E Department include:

- Potentially expanding its role in light of the pending introduction across Government of "results-based planning and budgeting", linking planning of activities with outcomes, impacts, and subsequent policies (cycle).

- Building the level of respect and cooperation with other ministries and agencies to ensure (a) the timely submission of quality information and data required for generating reports for the President and the Council of Ministers; and (b) that the reports are serving a useful purpose in their decision-making. The latter point is important in light of the necessary proclivity of these busy executives to verbal briefings rather than voluminous written reports.
- Training/educating technical staff since TAF is only currently providing mentoring support on a one-on-one basis to the department's (four) civil servant M&E staff members. TAF has developed an ambitious M&E Department work plan (thru February 2009) which includes conducting a skills and training needs assessment, but appears to de-emphasize technical training.
- Minimizing and hopefully eliminating overlapping progress monitoring and reporting functions with other OAA policy departments and units of government. A Ministry of Finance rep noted increasing fatigue across ministries from multiple requests across government for similar information. The interim M&E database being developed by TAF (or possible outsourcing) will integrate into a planned OAA-wide database, which may eventually integrate into a planned government-wide database.
- Assessing administrative work processes since there is no current plan to assess this department under the SCoG project. Possible future assistance should perhaps build within OAA an in-house capacity to perform critical assessments of administrative work processes.
- Transitioning the department to life without TAF-provided staff, including the director, when cooperative agreement funding ends in March 2009.
- Following-up, as necessary, on the department's SWOT workshop in March 2008 which identified several noteworthy weaknesses, including failure in implementing PRR process; lack of support to M&E Department activities from higher management of OAA; discouragement of the result of work from management of the department; inadequate transport support for field monitoring; and appropriate measures not taken from the M&E Department for solution of problems of ministries and directorates.

3. Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (OMSPA)

Program Objectives

The objective of assistance to the Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs is to strengthen its organizational capabilities to deliver on its mandate and strategies; assess and design optimal policy and administrative work flow and processes; and strengthen its capacity to coordinate the exchange of information between the parliament and the executive branch of Government. Co-located in OAA, OMSPA is directed by OAA's Director General as Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. Assistance under the cooperative agreement follows-up on an earlier USAID-supported strategic assessment, and addresses the following:

- Finalization, advocacy, and dissemination of protocols related to executive-legislative-judicial relations and other required procedural inputs

- Assessment and rationalization of the organizational structure and capacity development needs
- Assessment and improvement of administrative work processes and work flow, with relevant performance measurement targets
- Development of an integrated skills and behavior improvement program
- Design and implementation of ICT infrastructure and relevant training

Results and Benefits

The following results have been completed for OMSPA under the cooperative agreement:

- Completed a detailed Needs Assessment and Development Plan highlighting capacity building needs and recommendations for achieving agreed strategic and operational goals in the areas of human resources, organizational structure, staff recruitment, training, tools, ICT, office accommodation, and transportation
- Coordinated and supported the drafting of a "Three Pillars Code of Conduct" to facilitate improved interrelationships between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary branches of Government. Negotiated a consensus on mutually-acceptable text with key leaders from the three pillars. Presidential approval of the Code (enactment as law) is pending
- Organized and conducted several exposure visits, including (a) one on executive-legislative relations to Washington, D.C. for the Director for Wolesi Jirga Relations (lower House of Parliament); (b) one by delegation**s** of senior officials from the Office of Administrative Affairs and Council of Ministers Secretariat, to the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of India to observe a successful model of the principles of separation of powers and checks-and-balances; and to focus on monitoring, evaluation and cabinet - ministerial coordination (Identified several potential avenues for follow-on capacity-building relationships); and (c) one visits by Parliamentarians, officials of the Executive, and members of the Supreme Court to India to study the operation of the system of separation of powers.
- Established, equipped and operationalized a Resource Center for OSMPA and OAA/ Secretariat of Council of Ministers. This involved renovation of space; procurement of shelves, computers, furniture and over 250 books (both newly procured and from TAF's "Books for Asia" program); and recruitment and training of a Librarian and Assistant Librarian
- Recruited secretariat and ICT staff
- Facilitated full ICT accommodations in new office accommodations
- Designed the new Directorate of Democratic Outreach to Civil Society (DOCS), to be established pending presidential approval. DOCS will connect with non-State actors, to broaden the ethos of democracy throughout civil society
- Developed a Manual of Office Procedure to facilitate official proceedings

- Supported appointments of acting officials to key vacant positions of Director, Government Relations, and Chief of Staff to the Minister of State
- Supported creation of new positions and orientation of newly appointed staff as OMSPA Deputy Minister and support staff charged with facilitating improved inter-relations, efficiency and coordination between the executive and legislative pillars
- Drafted a Manual of Parliamentary Procedure for ministerial use
- Supported the development of OMSPA's "floor management capacity and approaches" relating to the adoption of key ideas pertaining to the management of Government business in the Wolesi Jirga (lower House of Parliament)

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from assistance to OMSPA.

Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• A mutually-accepted Code of Conduct governing relationships between the three pillars of Government • New furnished and functional Resource Center • A negotiated and approved set of formal procedures to guide the internal functions of the office, and to inform other elements of the Government, especially the Executive, how to interact properly with OMSPA for effective support and cooperation. • A new office and framework for liaison with civil society • An expanded office that is well-staffed to perform assigned duties (Presuming OAA will keep and fill the new positions without donor support)	• Increased confidence from a clear, agreed framework for managing relationships between the three pillars of Government; and assuring adequate "floor time" within Parliament for the affairs of the Executive • Clarity of understanding of a model of inter-governmental cooperation from study/exposure visits • Clarification of office's needs in order to improve organizational and staff performance • Increased confidence that OMSPA's role will be more clearly understood and respected by its principal interlocutors, both in and outside of Government • Increased capabilities to conduct requisite research for satisfactory performance of assigned tasks • Pride from developing possibly the "world's first" Code of Conduct governing relationships between the three pillars of Government

Issues and Opportunities

Unique Achievement

Issue

USAID can be duly proud of the laudable achievement towards promoting a better quality of coordination and understanding of the techniques of democratic cooperation and executive rule in Afghanistan, manifested in what may likely be the "world's first" (draft) Code of Conduct governing relationships between the three pillars of Government. Prior to the Code, which is destined to be enacted as law, only the Constitution and the document establishing OMPSA attempted to explain the nature of relationships between the three pillars, but these are not tactically functional, nor do they represent the fruit of long, arduous negotiations among the highest level representatives of the three pillars as does the Code.

Next steps for implementation of the Code, following presidential approval, will include establishment of a Code of Conduct Commission to develop and apply enforcement strategies at both the federal and provincial levels (e.g., via the publication of formal warnings when a member or element of the pillars oversteps its boundaries).

Another laudable contribution is the establishment of an OMSPA liaison function with civil society in order to strengthen the ethos of democracy at grass roots levels. An important element of this function will be to publicize widely and promote broad understanding of the Code of Conduct across civil society, including building an understanding of core democratic values as a basis for judging the application of the Code at all levels of society (village, district, provincial, etc.).

Opportunity

USAID should explore opportunities to help publish these preliminary achievements broadly, within Afghanistan, across the region, and internationally, especially in context of promoting democratic institutions in countries emerging from protracted conflict. The world could use some (more) good news from Afghanistan.

When enacted, the Code might form the basis of a new, strategic cross cutting theme for integrating in other USAID activities (DG and beyond) an over-arching focus on building broad-based understanding and respect democratic principles in Afghanistan.

4. Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program

Program Objective

The objective of this component of the cooperative agreement is to support the establishment of an "Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program", as a follow-on to the initial meeting of the Pakistan - Afghanistan Peace Jirga in August 2007. In preparation for that meeting and in response to requests from Government and USAID, The Asia Foundation provided extensive logistical support in a wide array of areas, including recruitment of over 350 staff members;

orientation of delegates; facilitation of meeting/reception space; public awareness activities; provision of conferencing materials and supplies; etc..

The current component of the cooperative agreement targeted supporting OAA to (a) establish and institutionally strengthen a Peace Jirga Secretariat, including development of mandate, structure, and staff; and (b) facilitate development of relevant program initiatives to support its mission. Targeted results were:

- Establishment of and support to a Peace Jirga Secretariat, including provision and development of staff, resources, and equipment.
- Preliminary preparations of district-level, cross-border profiles and mapping exercises on key socio-economic, demographic, and political/conflict, to be completed in concert with the non-governmental Tribal Liaison Office (TLO) and the Center for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) as a basis for program design.
- Cross-border activities, such as exchange visits for influential people (e.g., traders, religious leaders, tribal leaders, teachers, government officials), to facilitate communication at the sub-state and nongovernmental levels; and conflict mediation/mitigation trainings for key stakeholders in communities afflicted by cross-border conflicts.

Results and Benefits

As a follow-up to the August 2007 Peace Jirga, this component of the cooperative agreement provided logistical support for the Afghan Peace Jirga Committee, including furnishing the secretariat building, recruitment and orientation of four full-time secretariat staff, and procurement of equipment and supplies.

Following is a summary of the tangible and intangible benefits from assistance towards establishment of the Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program.

Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program

Tangible Benefits	Intangible Benefits
• Staff recruited and oriented • Furnished and operationalized office space	• Confidence that Afghanistan has “done its part” preliminarily in preparing to expand bilateral cooperation with Pakistan once the Pakistan contingent is appointed and functioning

Issues and Opportunities

Issue

The Peace Jirga is an initiative to address on-the-ground issues in the provinces along both sides of the Durand line separating Pakistan and Afghanistan. Anticipated joint activities are meant to help normalize day-to-day relations among peoples along and across the borders, and diffuse tensions stemming from the larger political and socio-economic issues.

Unfortunately, since the initial meeting in 2007, Pakistan has not taken the necessary steps to appoint its Peace Jirga Committee and related secretariat. As a result, the Afghanistan Peace Jirga Committee advised its Secretariat that no activities, including the Afghanistan/Pakistan Exchange Program, should be developed or conducted before the formal start of the joint process, which currently depends on Pakistani follow-through.

Opportunity

At the suggestion of Pakistan, during a sideline meeting of the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan at the August 2008 meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Colombo, the Afghan side agreed to "re-engage on all bilateral and multilateral forums", including a meeting of their foreign ministers over ways to build "close and constructive engagement" between the neighbors. Reportedly, there have been previous similar pronouncements which have not resulted in anticipated substantive exchanges. Thus, it remains to be seen whether an opportunity to re-engage the joint Peace Jirga may be near.[5]

Meanwhile, the assessment team has learned that similar provincial profiles as those anticipated by the this component have been developed under the rubric of donor assistance to the Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG) and where done in a province to be considered for Peace Jirga activities, could be shared should the joint Peace Jirga process and program become re-activated.

Future USAID assistance should be considered in context of further developments and in view of other donor assistance to this initiative.

C. Assessment of the Level of Client Satisfaction

Across the board, all clients interviewed during this assessment reported sincere *appreciation* for USAID's assistance their individual offices/departments received. OoP Clients expressed appreciation for USAID's commitments to strengthening the Office of the President in respect of its leadership role in Afghanistan's construction.

While appreciating USAID's specific and general support, most clients reported a "general-to-high" level of *satisfaction* for the assistance provided under SCoG and the cooperative agreement. High levels of satisfaction were registered for the type of assistance, targeted to

[5] See: http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=16399

critical needs and structured to achieve pivotal reform results that are building a foundation for significant impacts. Clients expressed “general satisfaction” in terms of the (a) structure and (b) flexibility; and both sets of clients called for (c) increased “Afghanization”.

Structure

Overwhelmingly, clients expressed concern about the multiple layers of both SCoG support to OoP and cooperative agreement support to MoFA; and about less than optimum cross-fertilization across SCoG domains.

Of particular concern is the multi-donor nature of SCoG and the role of UNDP. This is, in part, a hindsight concern since (then) senior OAA and CoS executives signed the original UNDP project document outlining the structure of SCoG. The multi-layered structure, combined with a more passive-than-anticipated role by UNDP, meant these offices and executives were effectively excluded from participation in contractor selection and from subsequent equal partnership during implementation.

UNDP has provided the desired "politically neutral" partner that gave USAID and DFID confidence to support such a high level initiative which, without this role, could have "colored" bi-national assistance as potential undue interference in OoP by foreign governments. Based on its typical role worldwide, UNDP played an effective donor coordination role and also helped to crystallize and bridge discussion of high level issues between the donors and OoP, through its role as chair of the Steering Committee. Finally, UNDP played a valuable fiduciary role to blend donor funding into a competitively selected/negotiated contract.

Though cooperative agreement assistance to the MoFA was not multilateral, the Ministry did express a concern about the use of sub-contracts, noting its non- or inadequate participation in the selection of the prime agent (grantee) or the sub-grantees or contractors for jobs it (the prime) was not uniquely qualified to perform. Both MoFA and OoP clients noted concerns about possible high transaction costs resulting from multiple layers, and opined that a more direct funding mechanism could be more efficient.

Establishment of a co-chaired Steering Committee (SC) was targeted to help ensure equitable partnership. However, co-chairmanship never materialized; neither does it appear that the “spirit” of co-chairmanship extended down to middle and lower management levels, as these managers perceived a considerable distance from decision-making.

The area of integration across domains or components would no doubt represent a major implementation challenge in *any* institutional reform project in which technical needs were very deep on both the vertical (within office and departmental) *and* horizontal (across office and departmental) levels, as in OoP. Planned cross-fertilization efforts were often hampered by absorptive capacity issues; lack of or late executive level approvals to engage; non-availability of staff during crisis periods; Dari software development delays; etc.

Flexibility

Within the context of "emerging government institutions", and the expressed policy of SCoG as being flexible, OoP managers expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which flexibility was managed, particularly their inadequate participation in budget management (beyond approval at the SC level). MoFA expressed general satisfaction with the level of flexibility of assistance it received.

Based upon feedback, it appears that there was either no clear-cut, documented procedure for handling extra-budgetary requests from across OoP, or that any procedure put in place was not well respected on both sides. If middle and lower level managers (both within TAF and OoP) are not privy to work plan budgets, they will lack the budget dimension of their technical contributions to the work plan. This, combined with the promise of "flexibility", leaves the door open to extra requests. Moreover, the fact that senior executives also expressed similar concerns, in spite of their reported (SC) approval of work plans and budgets, is informative. It is also informative that reported extra-budgetary requests were often for more "tangibles".

Managers at all levels of long-term, complex development projects should be substantively engaged in the integrated management of work plans and related budgets. This increases their levels of effective responsibility in helping to achieve approved, targeted results. Clear and respected procedures should document the extent or limits of managers' line-management flexibility; and outline steps for exceeding these limits, while assuring achievement of approved targets or modifying targets, as necessary. Effective budget oversight and audit requirements should help to ensure responsible budget implementation. Segregating budget management from program management may invite irresponsible behavior, and may miss important opportunities to build and transfer key management skills.

"Afghanization"

In response to the above concerns, the OoP was not satisfied with the their level of substantive involvement in program design, budget decisions; or the specific technical assistance provided.

There have been increasing calls for the donor community to delegate more program and budget authority over resources allocated to Afghanistan's reconstruction. Concurrently, under ANDS, the donor community has negotiated and increasing and varied set of audits to satisfy donor concerns that resources are being verifiably applied as agreed.

There are several ways to respect such calls, including (the extreme scenario) direct bilateral resource transfer; substantive engagement in contractor/grantee selection; co-development, approval and implementation of joint work plans and budgets; and pre-agreement on select, targeted project and budget elements in which substantive engagement is desired. The latter is useful wherein counterpart agencies lack staff and audit resources to engage more fully.

TAF has made considerable efforts to identify and engage qualified Afghans in both projects, both individuals and businesses. However, "Afghanization" comes with a price. Increasing

demands for the relatively small pool of qualified Afghans to engage in donor programs is (a) producing a considerable inflationary effect on local salaries, (b) putting an undue strain on Government to attract and retain qualified Afghan talent, while (c) creating unusual opportunities for qualified individuals to zigzag their way quickly up the salary ladder via short-term engagements.

Counterpart requests for substantive engagements are valid, but require careful assessments to determine where/how such calls can be respected. An "all-or-nothing" approach may not be valid, so careful articulation of target areas may be indicated. Moreover, irrespective of what approach is embraced, appropriate management oversight structures need to be established to assess performance over time, and determine if and how agreed-to approaches and policies may need to be adjusted.

The issue of engaging more Afghans (individuals and businesses) in future projects and the resulting inflationary effects of increasing demands, is a major one for Government and donors to address, and is beyond the scope of this assessment.

D. Assessment of the Sustainability of Current Assistance

Sustaining the progress achieved as a result of current capacity building assistance, both in the improvements of staff skill sets, ICT systems, and work process efficiencies in the OoP; and in the expected outcomes from restructuring at MoFA, is an issue of many dimensions as discussed following..

Office of the President

ICT Systems: In regard to the design, installation and staff training for new ICT systems, there is clear evidence that these systems are being used and have become fundamentally important to the efficient operations of the various departments. Indeed, discussions have focused on how to build upon this initial success and develop/introduce new and better (more robust, more integrated) applications to enhance knowledge management capacities. Managers have committed to the long-term maintenance of system functionality, and HR departments are considering the need to amend recruiting criteria to require basic computer literacy in all positions. The ICT element of SCoG is a success; and it will be sustained because of that very success.

Staff Retention: A more difficult challenge is how to retain key staff members who have been trained in new systems and processes, who are motivated to perform at higher levels, and who are comfortable with the change management ethos required for continual reform and improvement. For the long-term, a set of career path incentives must be developed and implemented which provides a level of reward and satisfaction to make work in the public sector competitive with other sectors. Merit promotion/pay and/or "Superscale" pay upgrades are a must, as is the provision of a full menu of education offerings and initiatives to speed the career ladder. These could involve retrenchment and the establishment of new positions as an element of restructuring.

Change Management Structure: A new structure for change management is needed in the OoP to sustain current and future assistance Objectives. The concept of a Program Management Unit (PMU) as proposed by OAA but which could be established for the OoP, should be the model. The PMU could be a focal point to (a) help ensure the identification and follow-up on issues related to the current phase, (b) lay a foundation for more effective and efficient liaison with the follow-on contractor/grantee, and (c) help promote more cross departmental communications, knowledge and integration, where warranted, on continuing reform matters. It could also help take some of the pressure off managers who do not demonstrate the requisite level of buy-in to embrace reform by providing a central and forceful agent for change in the OoP.

Institutionalizing Training Capacities: Sustaining education/training capacities in the long-term requires an institutional home, either a new structure within a merged OoP HR function, and/or a strong link to the Afghan Civil Service Institute (ACSI). As well, it may be necessary to establish linkages with private service providers, a number of which have been contracted by TAF to provide current training. The use of a TAF-developed training database would be valuable in identifying needs and in designing appropriate courses , including short, mid and long-term curricula for degree programs for working professionals. The system developed by SCoG should be housed within the HR departments which should take the lead in planning for the long-term capacity building of OoP staff. SCoG manuals and coursework materials should be transitioned to whatever new structure or linkage is designated for sustaining education/training capacity building activities.

Sustainable Budgets: A significant challenge is how to develop fiscally sustainable recurrent budgets that transition away from current reliance upon high levels of donor support, yet retain a skilled and motivated, public sector workforce in the face of stiff and rising competition from the private sector, and provide sustainable systems and capacities? Much progress has been made in the OoP budget development process during the past year as both OAA and CoS are beginning to understand and better perform program budgeting. In earlier years, few if any supporting documents were provided to justify expensive initiatives/programs/projects. This is starting to change as OoP budget centers develop their capabilities to articulate and justify their budget requests. Mid-term expenditure budgets, if properly developed, can prioritize limited IRoA resources to help sustain efficiencies introduced under USAID capacity building initiatives.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The sustainability of assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is more assured because it undertook to design a long-term, fundamental reform plan to, among other purposes, guide current and future technical assistance, In fact, sustainability is built into the reorganization strategy. This process should serve as a model for future OoP assistance, and possibly as a broader model to other elements of Government.

IV: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Building on the key findings, and on recent discussions with the leadership of the Office of the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), the assessment team proposes a seven point framework for possible future technical assistance for the Office of the President (OoP). In addition, this report outlines potential assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support implementation of its progressive Reform Strategy and Plan as designed under the current cooperative agreement.

A. New Directions – A Framework for Assistance to the Office of the President

Following is a proposed strategic framework to guide possible future capacity building technical assistance for the Office of the President. The framework encompasses concepts, actions and capacity building recommendations to: create an OoP working group to represent the client in proposal development and project management; set the parameters and define an approach for a joint CoS/OAA capacity building assistance proposal; establish the terms of reference for program ownership and management; and address issues critical to achieving the overarching strategic objective of assistance as noted by OoP leadership:

> "*To streamline, strengthen and integrate administrative and technical functions across the OoP in support of more effective decision-making*".

1. Capacity Building Working Group (CBWG)

There has been recent general acceptance of the concept of a joint OAA/CoS working group to design/oversee future capacity building assistance. Recommendations of note:

- **Purpose**: A place for OoP leaders/mangers to come together to identify/discuss/act on ideas related to the strategic objective noted above.
- **Composition**: Representatives from: CoS, OAA, NSC, PPS, OMSPA, Peace Jirga Secretariat. Co-Chairs: CoS/OAA. Support and guidance provided by USAID.

- **Terms of Reference for the CBWG**: The CBWG should be established by October 1, 2008 and be charged initially to prepare and submit by mid-November, 2008 a comprehensive long-term proposal for capacity building assistance on behalf of the OoP. When the proposal has been submitted, CBWG should begin to morph into a long term role where it acts as an agent of change, and the manager of record, for all technical assistance to the OoP. Early on in that process, CBWG will need to: identify potential key champions/supporters for change management; set standards/processes for a fruitful working relationship among the constituent offices; and develop a work plan to manage the capacity building assistance and introduce reform/restructuring. Without a plan, the overall approach will be merely ad hoc and aspirational at best.

  CBWG would in time spin-off a series of sub-teams to address (vertical) management of the various components and ensure (horizontal) integration across components, per the design requirements. At the same time, CBWG would continue to promote cross-departmental communications, knowledge and integration, where warranted, on reform/restructuring matters; and ensure that capacity building changes are systematized and prioritized.

  While the CBWG need not be formally constituted as a RIMU (Reform Implementation Management Unit), it can and should in fact function as such, leading the reengineering initiative in the OoP. At an appropriate time, the CBWG should be re-titled to become the OoP Program Management Unit as described later in this report with the task of providing an overarching organizational reform program direction, coordination and internal assessment function.

  In its first year, CBWG should meet bi-weekly in order to foster a consistent team building approach in managing change and reform in the Office of the President.

Recommendations for Assistance: A full time organizational development adviser should be made available to be embedded within the CBWG to assist in the development of its work plan and program.

2. Capacity Building Proposal (CBP)

This brief outlines an approach, new directions, and substantive recommendations for possible future technical assistance to the OoP. However, much work needs to be done by the working group, with independent assistance as needed, to advance the ideas proposed into a full-blown "Office of the President Capacity Building Proposal". Issues to be address in a CBP include:

- **Vision:** Capacity building assistance should be driven by a clear vision of what a streamlined, more effective decision-making OoP would look like and what it would mean for Afghanistan's development. The vision must be communicated by OoP leadership to all stakeholders and be strong enough to guide a reform agenda. Hon. Chief of Staff Daudzai communicated his vision of "a merger over time of OoP functions to include CoS, OAA, and NSC". Hon. Director General Wardak envisions the OAA and the OoP as "Centers of Excellence that are committed to transparent and effective governance". Such visions, if properly orchestrated, can help to provide the commitment, support and coordination required to induce change and reform.

- **Focus**: Initially, attention should be given to building the capacity of a limited number of critical functions not currently well done. Policy development and information management are most often mentioned as candidates for immediate and significant capacity building assistance. These are discussed later in this section.
- **Points of Entry**: It is important to identify points of entry for assistance: functional units at a point of readiness to change; staff who are receptive to improvements; and/or managers who are willing to take risk and support new ideas and new ways of doing business.
- **Approach**: A twofold approach is suggested. The first is to delineate a path to streamlining and integration which identifies potentially early success steps to merge functions, streamline processes, and clarify standard operating procedures (SOPs) to avoid duplication, always guided by an oft refreshed and reinforced strategic vision. The second is to identify critical gaps or vacuums in current functions, i.e., policy development, ANDS implementation, knowledge management, etc., that require early action.

  To advance functional streamlining and integration, the proposal should include: an assessment of functions "ready" for integration (candidates include ICT, HRM, Documents and Relations, Policy, Auditing, Procurement, Budgeting, Accounting, Transportation, etc.); a component to develop/implement shared systems, policies, standards, and staff training; and a strategy to evaluate progress and reward achievement/success in the implementation of streamlining/integration initiatives.
- **Results Oriented Activities**: It is critical that any proposal defines a set of targeted objectives with appropriate milestones, towards which a number of relatively flexible activities are designed to lead to a series of expected outcomes and a full set of clear and measurable results.
- **Mechanism for Future Programming/Contracting**: Both USAID and the OoP are concerned that if there is to be future assistance, it should be programmed and contracted quickly to avoid a loss of momentum built up in the current program. As well, both want a proposal that builds upon lessons learned, the recommendations of this and other assessments, and a desire for greater client ownership and management control. A discussion of possible programming/contracting mechanisms is beyond the basic scope of this assessment, but Annex A includes a brief overview of potential alternative means to advance a timely and well developed future assistance program.
- **Timeframe for Proposal Development**: Approximately one-two months would be required for the CBWG to produce a well-structured, coordinated and beneficiary-owned design for review and approval, if adequate assistance is provided.
- **Timeframe for Assistance Delivery**: Assistance to OoP should be seen as the long-term institutional strengthening project that it needs to be, and structure follow-on assistance for a minimum of a five year period. This will allow adequate time for joint design; effective relationship-building; transfer and building a solid base of skills; and implementation of relevant integration activities. A breakout of discrete, manageable actions, realistically phased and appropriately sequenced will be critical to effective implementation.

Recommendations for Assistance: To synthesize a "Way Forward", assistance will be required in the short-term to provide the CBWG with the capacity it needs to sort through the recommendations of this evaluation, the recent DFID sponsored assessment, the discussions and deliberations of the Steering Committee and those within the OoP. Time is of the essence as current technical assistance for the OAA and CoS expires at the end of December, 2008. Given the minimum time needed to contract a future assistance package, a proposal should be submitted no later than mid-November if a significant gap in assistance delivery and loss of momentum is to be avoided.

3. Ownership/Program Management

Both the client groups (CoS/OAA) and implementing agencies (UNDP/TAF) expressed frustration concerning the current structure of relationships. The implementing partners have commented that buy-in was inadequate to advance a substantive reform agenda, and though the technical assistance provided has been useful, it did not have a change management emphasis due to the lack of champions. One comment was that OoP "needed capacity building to do capacity building", to conceptualize a way forward, to understand the possibilities, and to design and manage change processes. The leadership of CoS/OAA spoke of being recipients of assistance, not partners, and while readily admitting initial hesitancy in committing to full support of the program, they speak in unison that if given more responsibility to plan and manage their own capacity building assistance, there will be substantial buy-in, and more effective management of the critical responsibilities of capacity building. On this basis, the assessment team recommends the following:

- **Client/Donor Relationship**: A more direct relationship (i.e., bi-lateral agreement possibly with the procurement function kept within USAID, or simply a Memorandum of Understanding delineating the client/donor relationship) providing a clear leadership role for Government and a strengthened, proactive USAID oversight function, can help to promote the "Afghanization" of assistance, add political visibility, respect commitments to internalize further progress, reinforce OoPs reform move to performance-based programming and budgeting, and potentially increase the efficiency of US institutional strengthening assistance by minimizing costly bureaucratic contracting layers. USAID should commit to recognizing a strong role for OoP in both the design and implementation of future technical assistance.
- **Responsibilities**: With ownership, comes responsibilities. Results-oriented performance programming will require active engagement at the highest levels of the OoP in terms of time, openness to self-evaluation, hard thinking and sincere effort. The model is the Reform Strategy and Plan effort at MoFA whereby support from the Minister is enabling TAF to address significant organizational restructuring issues.
- **Management Capacity**: A clear, consistent and rigorous management capacity, adequately staffed to perform the required direction and oversight functions would be needed to specify and delegate appropriate responsibilities and authorities to senior, middle and lower level management teams, to assess performance and to adjust work plans as necessary during implementation. The Program Management Unit concept proposed by OAA could serve as a model for a PMU for the OoP.

- **Work Plans/Budgets**: The substantive, relevant engagement of managers at all levels of the organization in the development and management of integrated work plans and budgets must be ensured. Clear guidance must be established on areas and levels of flexibility, and clear policies and procedures must be specified to guide extra-budgetary requests. Adequate (e.g., concurrent) financial management and auditing capabilities must be ensured where contracting authority is delegated outside of USAID.
- **Consultation Processes**: Design/development/analysis/discovery must all be done with a learning feedback loop Various consultative processes, internal and external to the OoP, will need to be introduced into future technical assistance.

Recommendations for Assistance: Assistance will be needed over the long-term to develop effective management capacities to implement future technical assistance. Exposure tours of successful client-managed capacity building programs in the region coupled with short-term executive management and leadership programs, and in-house mentoring, could prove cost effective and ensure the kind of results-oriented management necessary to advance streamlining and other reform initiatives. Assistance should be provided to establish an OoP PMU, or equivalent, as a central structure to house the change management agenda.

4. Policy Development

SCoG technical assistance has to date mapped a number of policy processes – the flow of routine information across government – and provided new formats and checklists to facilitate that flow. As well, the Cabinet Liaison role of the OAA has been strengthened. But the larger issue remains, namely, the lack of substantive policy direction or development in the OoP.

The CoS Policy Directorate largely serves to assess the political dimension of policies. OAA also has a Policy Directorate with substantial staff to review and vet policy initiatives incoming from the Council of Ministers and Parliament. However, neither the CoS nor OAA have the substantive capacities required to provide the President with an independent policy voice, focused policy presentations, or well researched policy briefs. As well, the large number of Presidential Policy Advisers serve on an ad hoc basis outside of any structured framework.

As a result, the enabling environment for policy decisions in the OoP requires priority support. To address this situation, it is recommended that in the OoP there be established and provided with capacity assistance a “Presidential Strategic Policy Team”, (PSPT) within which all relevant policy entities of OoP can work cooperatively to develop, promote, coordinate and assess a Presidential policy agenda. The framework for the PSPT would be as follows:

- **Composition**: Deputy CoS, OAA/Deputy DG-Policy, NSC/Policy Director, OMSPA Deputy, key Ministry policy staff, key Presidential policy advisors, and ANDS Senior Economic Adviser. Given the need for direct access to the President, the PSPT should be chaired by the CoS or his designee. Support as needed could be provided by the Deputy CoS staff.

- **Purpose**: To perform policy analysis at a high level, serving as an in-house think tank with significant research and networking capacities.
- **Responsibilities**: Act as an independent and coordinated policy voice to the President, serving to facilitate the integration of policy interests across OoP, and to provide the President a sustainable structure within which tough policy agenda items are managed.

  More specifically, the PSPT will:

  - frame the policy debate/dialog for the President, particularly with regard to cross cutting themes/issues
  - focus the voices that currently drown out critical policy issues requiring Presidential attention
  - initiate/formulate/develop/synthesize policy from a base of understanding of policy gaps (sectoral, general, and/or cross cutting)
  - improve policy processes (consultation), and substance (expertise)
  - organize policy record management through a digital library of policy recommendations, papers, concepts, international knowledge bases, etc.
  - strengthen policy coordination related to development implementation
  - organize Presidential Policy Advisers, provide them with staff support, and coordinate the flow of their ideas upstream; this should not be to the exclusion of non-coordinated, individual oral and written advice to the President, as is currently the case
  - network with key policy people in strategic ministries to assess policy capacities across government, and evaluate current professional development capacities with the objective of designing/implementing a LT career education program for policy makers

- **First Steps**: Identify and prioritize a shortlist of 3-5 critical policy issues requiring immediate Presidential attention; develop briefs, conduct a due diligence consultative process, present to the President; provide follow-up coordination. One suggestion for priority areas: a strategy and approach to integrate ANDS (Afghanistan National Development Strategy) implementation into the OoP, which should serve as a nerve center for program coordination and oversight.

Recommendations for Assistance: Assistance will be required to establish and operationalize the PSPT and should include at the very least, an embedded Policy Adviser of significant international experience at the highest levels to: develop the protocols for the operation of the PSPT, provide day-to-day mentoring; assist in developing/enhancing networks and linkages to internal/external IRoA policy expertise; and guide the formation of an effective staff. Additional assistance should be provide to build the research capacity of the PSPT through knowledge management initiatives. Continuation of the successful efforts to date in the OAA to improve the coordination, processing and maintenance of policy directive documentation is critical in strengthening the overall policy function in the OoP.

5. Staffing

The issue of how to recruit/retain the kind of staff needed to be functioning agents of change is central to the introduction and sustainability of capacity building reforms. The issue is complicated and challenging, and relative to the compensation factor, beyond the scope of this assessment. However, the fundamental nature of the "good people" factor requires some observations and suggestions for a way forward.

- **Skills/Compensation Match**: There is a divide as to the level/value of personnel needed to induce and manage change, and the incentives/compensation required to build the long-term institutional base of career employees who will in fact be the ones to carry out the responsibilities of the Office of the President for many years to come. Future capacity building assistance must address the issue of how to keep good people who have other options. No reform effort will be successful without having the right people in the near term to induce and manage change. Future assistance must be carefully implemented such that the personnel to be supported are well matched to TORs that are critical to a reform agenda. Lacking a reform strategy against which TORs could properly be drafted, recently developed PRR TORs do not provide the necessary match.
- **Career Paths**: Long-term career compensation scales even at future Grade 8 upgrade levels will be considerably lower (top end of $650/mo compared to the current Management Capacity Program top end of $3000/mo) than donor subsidized salaries. To keep good people, a broader strategy is needed. To begin with, a new generation of professionals should be recruited. Most importantly, they need to see that there is a career path for them which would include options for professional development (described in the next section) and professional advancement.
- **Program Management Unit (PMU)**: The OAA is proposing a concept to address both of the issues noted above, the development of a short to mid-term change management unit coupled with a new "next generation" staff of deputy directors who would act as "shadow" directors, introducing change, "learning the ropes" and being in position to assume key positions when the older staff move on. The proposal has merit as it addresses the reality on the ground where lack of motivation is hindering reform. The PMU core team would be responsible for strategic planning and management, including monitoring and evaluation, of all capacity building initiatives. The deputy directors would be dedicated to developing work plans, producing program budgets, installing new management techniques, etc. The model has been the new Deputy Director of Finance who within six months transformed one of the worse performing budgetary centers in all of government into one of the best performing in terms of program budgeting. This model should be replicated.
- **Retrenchment**: To open career paths for the next generation, the future of those less than fully motivated older staff must be addressed. For such staff, an early retirement package could prove irresistible. The concept has worked successfully elsewhere in the world. A World Bank analysis suggests that there is a large cohort approaching retirement age (64, if enforced) such that a buyout program may not be necessary, but unless it is clear that this group actually exists in the OoP, a full retirement package will be required, complete with topped off pension and bonus payment.

- **HRM**: Under SCoG, new HRM systems and policies have been introduced with some success, more so in OAA than CoS, under SCoG. Political influence continues to plague recruiting, however OAA's "people first" campaign is paying dividends. HR managers better understand their role to look after employees. This represents an attitudinal change that has helped improve morale and retain good employees. Further assistance to train the next generation of HR managers is required and the merger of the two duplicative HRM functions in OAA/CoS must be considered if managers are to grapple successfully with keys issues of standardized recruitment and career path development of new staff.

Recommendations for Assistance: Continued assistance is required to professionalize the HRM functions in the OoP. Assistance could prove useful in developing TORs and processes for merit pay and promotion, and designing career ladder incentives.

6. Professional Development

Career education is fundamentally important for career employees, many of whom begin their careers with minimal skills and training. SCoG training has targeted a set of "foundation skills", basic English and computer training, generic governance and management programs, and several introductory financial management courses. TAF is currently exploring options for external support to scope/assess capacities in Afghanistan to provide different levels of policy education, then plan/develop a proposal to fill gaps. A number of exposure visits to India, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, etc., have been undertaken or are planned so that OoP staff can "see the future", a critical pathway for staff to understand their potentials. Thus, professional development has been a key component of current assistance. Future assistance must build upon the knowledge base developed so far. Several new directions are suggested:

- **Career Path Education**: Professional development geared to working professionals is critically important. A menu of options should be made available, to include:
  - Short-term (1-3 months, in and/or out-of-country) courses on specific technical or management topics;
  - Masters scholarships via distance learning (one USAID-supported pilot is underway, namely the Afghan eQuality Alliance's MA in Public Administration course at Kabul University, with evening classes and 3 months abroad to initiate/complete/present a thesis). Employees/students must formally commit to all such educational programs, including a commitment to compensate the government if they leave their jobs prematurely;
  - Management leadership programs (Harvard, Wharton, etc.) for Ministers/Director Generals (DGs), Deputy Ministers/Deputy DGs, key and qualified Directors;
  - Strengthened technical/management programs in Kabul (at ACSI, AUAF or Kabul University) designed around working professionals schedules. Current admission criteria: employee must be in the *tashkeel* (approved organizational structure), have good English skills, and be in a "strategic" position. Resources for these programs should be increased.

Such assistance can be provided through the aforementioned Afghanistan eQuality Alliance (AeA), which is helping to: improved capacity of the leadership and management of 19 higher education institutions (including provincial universities) to meet standards of excellence and quality assurance; improved capacity of 5 Kabul-based and 6 regional higher education institutions to sustain services of an Afghans Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL) Center for Teaching and Learning; improved capacity (knowledge, attitude and skills) of lecturers to teach students by upgrading their curriculum, course syllabus, and on line content in key academic areas; and strengthen capacity of Kabul University and the Civil Service Institute to build capacity in public policy and administration.

- In-house training with external assistance
- More and better exposure tours, for the reasons noted above. Often viewed as junkets by some, discussions with staff who have participated confirm the "Aha, now I Understand" factor. Exposure tours are a necessary prerequisite for any training, since "staff don't know what they don't know".

- **Higher Level Technical Training**: OoP managers have repeatedly commented that the time has come to go beyond foundation skills training. Higher levels of technical training are needed and expected, particularly in various aspects of financial management, strategic planning, project management, and knowledge management, as discussed in the following section.
- **Management/Leadership**: Though it is difficult for senior managers to find time for training and educational programs, it is clear that they require modern management skills to initiate and sustain reform. In-house, dedicated, minimal time requirement sessions should be designed/offered. During the design of the capacity building proposal, senior managers must commit to being available for training and using the training they receive.
- **Mentoring**: One official noted than one-off classroom training "doesn't have legs". Mentoring is required whereby an advisor is embedded or on-call to help in a learn-by-doing approach. Staff members want help solving day-to-day problems. They want to build their capacities to function well. One-off workshops and other group trainings can be very useful for introductory subjects, but lessons learned can quickly fade if there is no follow-up and reinforcement.

Recommendations for Assistance: Future assistance to build the kind of professional development program to continually refresh the job skills of key OoP staff could take several forms: assisting the transfer of training skills to a new structure within OoP, e.g., developing a basic internal training capability for routine trainings and identifying and equipping the equivalent of "technical team leaders" with skills to train and guide others across OoP in his/her technical area of competency. Alternatively, assistance could be provided to help forge institutional relationships with training providers, either in the private or sector. This might include transferring skills for assessing, negotiating and contracting with local private training institutes, the Civil Service Training Institute, and local universities. Direct assistance (funding exposure tours, distance learning degrees, etc.) should also be considered.

7. Information/Knowledge Management

Information is influence. Information is power. Significant SCoG assistance has been provided and/or offered to develop new data and management information systems, to streamline processes to improve the timeliness of the flow of information, and to digitize and properly store documents and records. Still, OoP lacks fundamental abilities to gather and transform data into information, and synthesize information into knowledge. Future assistance can build upon the progress to date, but high-level support will be required from the OoP.

- **Knowledge Management**: "Knowledge Management" (KM), defined as a "range of practices used by organizations to identify, create, represent, distribute and enable adoption of, and ready access to, what it knows, and how it knows it"[6], is a more evolved and robust concept of information management. In practice in the corporate world, KM can improve organizational performance, fuel innovation, and generate competitive advantage from lessons learned and tracked. As noted earlier, there is an issue with the level of expertise within the OoP to properly evaluate, analyze, organize and synthesize the vast and often incoherent flood of information it receives. Systems alone will not solve the problem. High-level staff must be recruited and given proper authority and training to address this problem.
- **Systems/Process Integration**: For OAA's Department of Documents and Relations, SCoG's technical systems' work (state-of-the-art scanning/storage/retrieval) was matched with a work process analysis of how documents and records are processed; who does what; how much time is spent; and how is the system managed. Such integration is key to generating coherent information, and should be replicated throughout the OoP in future assistance.
- **Modern vs**. **Traditional "Styles"**: A concern has been raised that the transcription and storage of Presidential meetings is less than state-of-the-art. Insiders have commented that the system is not at fault, per se. The system is serving a President who has a certain style, and who, at times, may not want to record discussions for various, viable reasons. Nonetheless, SCoG stands ready to introduce tailored systems if the prerequisite political support is provided.
- **Information Sharing**: Ministries have commented on the numerous overlapping and duplicative requests from different sources (Ministry of Finance, OAA, CSC, etc.) for data/information. Streamlined templates, a more robust database management system and shared server networks could minimize this problem, and should be the focus of future assistance to the OoP, which is one of two (with MoF) nerve centers for critical government information.
- **Security**: The confidentiality of Presidential documents and discussions is a significant issue to the OoP. Trust in modern technology is minimal. Demonstrations of successful models in high-level situations should be presented to gain the trust needed to introduce such systems.

[6] Wikipedia.

Recommendations for Assistance: OoP has indicated a strong commitment to knowledge management improvements. Systems and staff development in this field will be critically important if the fundamental objective of future technical assistance, "more effective decision making in the OoP" is to be achieved. External high-level education of a cadre of knowledge management specialists will be required. More robust and integrated database management systems will need to be developed. This is one area of technical assistance that cannot be shortchanged.

B. Implementing the Reform Strategy: Future Assistance for MoFA

With strong support from the Minister, MoFA focused on the need for a thorough review of its existing structure. The resulting organization reform strategy represents "a holistic and evolutionary approach covering all aspects of the Ministry's activities" including structure, management, administrative work processes, ICT, HR capacities, professional development, and security. Future capacity building will be driven by the plan.

Recommendations for Assistance: Assistance will be needed to:

- **Implement the Reform Strategy**: The new structure for MoFA should be given approval in the next few months. Considerable assistance will be needed to operationalize the reform strategy, which is to be phased over the next few years, including help to: fully professionalize HRM functions; oversee merit appointments; strengthen information technology; and improve management skill sets and systems.
- **Strengthen the Institute of Diplomacy**: MoFA has hired a new young diplomatic corps. Most of the 100+ officers are just out of school. Long-term professional development must be made available and should include: scholarships for short, mid and long-term courses/programs/degrees abroad; distance learning programs; exposure visits/study tours; in-house continuous training materials and teachers; programs linked to national universities and research centers; and coaching/mentoring provided by qualified Diaspora who may return for the short or long-term. Assistance could be provided through the Afghanistan eQuality Alliance (AeA) as described under "Professional Development" (page 58), and/or continued in-house advisors.
- **Provide Media Training**: USAID is supporting the Office of the Presidential Spokesman in establishing an Afghanistan Government Media Centre which is meant to be shared with the ministries. Program assistance will be needed to develop a central media training capacity for all ministries. If such capacity is forthcoming, MoFA should be a priority candidate for assistance, or alternatively, be provided assistance directly.
- **Secure Communications Systems**: The Minister has requested assistance to develop a secure communications network linking MoFA to its Embassies and Missions. The basic requirement as determined in ongoing TAF assessments is the development of an ICT architecture within MoFA which when completed can support MoFA linkages to NATO's "Silk Road" secure communications network.

C. Addressing Factors that May Have Hindered Current Implementation

The following factors may have hindered implementation of current USAID assistance to the OoP and MoFA. Recommendations are presented to guide the design of potential follow-on assistance to minimize such problems.

Project Design Approaches

There are several design factors that may have hindered implementation of assistance to OoP and MoFA.

Senior OoP and MoFA officials underscore their agencies' lack of substantive engagement in the design of USAID projects. They also note the somewhat "stove-piped" nature of SCoG, triggering calls from across OoP for increased integration across well defined "domains".

On the surface, USAID's broad array of assistance to OoP does not appear to have been structured to achieve optimum, potential impact in terms of leveraging sustained commitment and buy-in from partner organizations. The assistance was divided between two separate, non-mutually reinforcing projects, and allocated across a number of OoP offices and functions (to OAA, CoS, OMSPA, OPS, Presidential Advisors, and Peace Jirga Secretariat). Reported concurrent salary support to a large number of OoP staff (which is not addressed by this assessment) was apparently structured outside the ambit of major institutional reform assistance, potentially missing an opportunity for adding significant leverage to USAID's collective institutional objectives across OoP.

***Recommendation**:* USAID should (a) ensure adequate participation of its staff in the joint design and examination of fresh implementation approaches for potential follow-on assistance to these highest levels of Government; (b) pursue an integrated design that cuts across all relevant elements of OoP; and (c) where practical and politically expedient, aggregate all US assistance to OoP under one umbrella agreement (i.e., Bilateral Agreement, Strategic Objective Agreement [SOAG] or Memorandum of Understanding [MoU]) for optimum leverage of and potential impact on USAID's development objectives. Such an arrangement would be politically more meaningful in terms of "Afghanization", and could also provide the Embassy and USAID an opportunity for on-going policy dialog.

Timeframe

Given the effectively short implementation timeframe (about two years), the SCoG project was rather ambitious in consideration of (a) typically longer term institutional reform/strengthening experiences; (b) the unique and difficult context of Afghanistan; and (c) in hindsight, the absence of strong, consistent champions of change within OoP. An evaluation of prior DFID support to OoP also recognized "…the need to maintain a long-

term engagement with key actors in the government institutions in Afghanistan to build effective relationships if lasting and meaningful progress on reforms is to be achieved.[7]

***Recommendation**:* Potential follow-on assistance should be structured with a minimum five-year timeframe.

Pre-conditions for Success

CoG apparently did not fulfill all "pre-conditions for success" as outlined in the original UNDP SCoG document. These included (a) approval of CoS and OAA PRR proposals for organizational restructuring; and (b) clarification of the distinct functions and avoidance of functional "overlap" between CoS and OAA.[8]

***Recommendation**:* Any potential follow-on assistance should be jointly designed; and should include and ensure implementation of clear, relevant pre-conditions for assistance, in both the USAID agreements with OoP and MoFA and as appropriate, in any prime contract or grant documents.

Management Framework

Several management factors likely hindered successful implementation.

SCoG did not fully implement the original concept of a co-chaired Steering Committee (SC) that would meet bi-monthly. Rather than meeting bi-monthly, as planned, the SC met twice in 2006, thrice in 2007, and once in 2008, with a second meeting scheduled in 2008. UNDP has consistently chaired all meetings. Based upon feedback received, it appears that OoP participation in SC meetings was not adequate to build the level of effective partnership desired at either the senior levels or middle management levels.

SCoG suffered from adequate staffing to perform the rigorous direction and oversight functions, as evidenced by the late recruitment of a UNDP project manager adequately experienced and qualified to perform the functions required of such a high-level program encountering unique and difficult challenges; and the absence of a consistent set of national project managers following the departure of the original manager(s). SCoG also experienced rapid rates of staff turn-over among all partners (i.e., OAA, CoS, DFID, USAID and TAF (e.g., three chiefs-of-party; at least two USAID officers; three directors in OAA/M&E; and two director generals in CoS). This is a major issue which should be addressed in potential follow-on assistance, e.g., considering the staggering of staff transitions to ensure adequate overlapping for transfer of institutional memory; increasingly empowering non-USDH staff;

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[7] "Afghanistan: Cabinet and Centre of Government Support Programme, PAREM and Support for Customs; Summary Project Completion Report"; October 9, 2006; Atos Consulting review of Adam Smith International Project Assistance to the Center of Government

[8] UNDP SCoG proposal, p. 9

and discussing and documenting within joint project management teams the implications of pending staff transitions so these can be duly anticipated, assessed and managed accordingly.

The proposal for the cooperative agreement extension, under which assistance to MoFA was provided, excluded any discussion of the management roles of the client ministry.

***Recommendation**:* Joint project design teams for potential follow-on assistance should carefully assess and identify the management roles and responsibilities of all partners; and establish adequate management structures (both vertical, horizontal, and across all management levels) to ensure a successful implementation experience. This might include establishing effective, co-chaired technical teams *per component* as well as cross cutting teams to guide cross-fertilization (domain integration) initiatives. Contractor quarterly progress reports should regularly assess the continued adequacy and functionality of the agreed structure, and clearly flag remedial interventions required by senior managers.

Integrated Work Plans and Budgets

OoP senior and mid-level managers reported inadequate or non-involvement in work plan, budget, and procurement decisions. TAF domain managers reported non-involvement in and lack of familiarity with work plan budgets. Reported non-involvement of mid-level OoP managers in an integrated work plan and budgeting process may represent an important "missed opportunity" for skills transfer, especially since Government's processes also deny these civil servants substantive engagement in the annual budgeting exercises.

***Recommendation**:* As appropriate, potential follow-on assistance should ensure appropriate levels of engagement of all managers in integrated work plan, budget, and procurement plans for their areas of responsibility. This should facilitate broader understanding of the project parameters; promote skills transfer; and reduce the incidence of extra-budgetary requests and the frustrations that result when such requests are not readily implemented. Clear policies and procedures, with relevant signatures, should guide all extra-budgetary requests. Application of adequate financial accountability and auditing procedures should help prevent opportunities for financial malfeasance.

Managing Flexibility

For SCoG, the combination of (a) budget flexibility within and across domains; (b) the lack of or non-adherence to an agreed approach to managing flexibility; (c) inadequate involvement of OoP managers in budgeting and contracting decisions (for the prime as sub-contracts); and (d) the relatively short-term nature of the project, likely contributed to confusion about just how flexible the project actually could be. This confusion resulted in a push from within OoP for more flexible responses from TAF, including for more "tangibles" at the expense of progress on (and allocation of funding for) higher level objectives.

***Recommendation**:* It is critical that follow-on projects include reasonably flexible activities with well-defined objectives, appropriate milestones, measurable results targets, and

strong/consistent management oversight to assure an appropriate focus on and adequate resource allocation across all priority project components and strategies.

High Transactions Costs

Senior OoP and MoFA managers opined that USAID assistance is likely experiencing relatively high transactions "cost-per-result" (benefit), reducing the overall efficiency of US assistance they receive. High transactions costs would result from (a) the short-term, highly flexible nature of the assistance, resulting in earlier-than-desired TA close-outs; (b) a contractor reacting rapidly to evolving requirements; (c) less-than-productive assignments from inadequate partner involvement in selection processes; and (d) costly bureaucratic layers and extensive sub-contracting.

***Recommendation**:* Joint design teams for potential follow-on assistance should carefully examine and identify strategies to increase the efficiency of US assistance. Requests for proposals (RFPs) should require potential contractors to address this issue resolutely. Longer-term projects should allow for more careful deliberations and participatory decision-making. While flexibility is a clear benefit in the Afghanistan context, reasonable limits on flexibility (e.g., to "within" rather than "across" components/domains) should help minimize false starts and ensure adequate resource allocation across all activities. Reasonable limits on institutional sub-contracting should ensure that prime contractors are prepared to implement the bulk of project activities, and reduce costs from multiple layers of sub-contracting.

Evaluations

There was non-implementation of the proposed/planned annual, comprehensive, external evaluation by UNDP. Rather, UNDP organized one summary annual report (2007). The project budget excluded a line item for evaluations.

***Recommendation**:* Potential follow-on projects clearly identify and adhere to requirements for external evaluations, ascertaining (for all partners) the source of funding for such work. Evaluations of highly political interventions should include senior Afghan expertise.

D. Synergies with USAID's other Programming and other Donor Activities

The USAID program with which future OoP assistance could have the most potential for a synergistic relationship is Capacity Development Program (CDP), a five-year multi-sector initiative which began in 2007 and which is implemented by a consortium led by BearingPoint. CDP has a primary focus on training and mentoring Afghan civil servants, and process reengineering, particularly program budgeting. CDP works with other donors to support IARCSC with a variety of technical assistance to improve skills and management in the "five common functions": human resources, financial management, procurement, project management, and policy and planning. In the area of human resources management, CDP helps to develop HRM systems and protocols for IARCSC's Public Administration Reform (PAR) and Priority Reform Restructuring programs. CDP also provides support for

professional development for civil servants through assistance to the Civil Service Training Institute.

All of these initiatives are relevant to the capacity building efforts in the OoP. Future programming synergies could involve shared training and training materials development, particularly in higher level technical courses in financial management. Knowledge gained and lessons learned in implementing PAR and PRR initiatives can provide feedback to similar efforts in the OoP. In turn, CDP might benefit from a closer understanding of successful interventions in the OoP as in the integration of ICT, training and work process assistance.

Similarly, as noted earlier in the report, the Afghanistan eQuality Alliance (AeA) offers opportunities for synergistic development and sharing of programs. AeA is helping to: improved capacity of the leadership and management of 19 higher education institutions (including provincial universities) to meet standards of excellence and quality assurance; improved capacity of 5 Kabul-based and 6 regional higher education institutions to sustain services of an Afghans Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL) Center for Teaching and Learning; improved capacity (knowledge, attitude and skills) of lecturers to teach students by upgrading their curriculum, course syllabus, and on line content in key academic areas; and strengthen capacity of Kabul University and the Civil Service Institute to build capacity in public policy and administration. AeA programs can provide distance learning (nationally and internationally) and can if supported provided specialty courses and degree program links for working professionals, as for instance with their program to support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Institute of Diplomacy Master's of Diplomacy program.

E. Conclusion

USAID, OoP and MoFA should be duly proud of the considerable achievements under the two projects assessed. All parties agree that important foundations have been laid in support of the substantial reform and restructuring of pivotal Government agencies. Within the context of "emerging government institutions" during a protracted period of transition, the on-going needs of these institutions are both broad and deep. Undoubtedly, sustained donor commitments will be needed to help ensure that they remain strong models for reform leadership.

Annex A: Programming Options for Follow-on Support to Office of the President

Objectives

- A joint OoP – USAID proposal that builds upon lessons learned, assessment recommendations and a desire for greater client ownership and management control
- The avoidance or elimination of a significant assistance gap to OoP elements
- The earliest possible establishment of an OoP Capacity Building Working Group (CBWG) and Presidential Strategic Policy Team (PSPT), preferably as pre-conditions to the issuance of a RFP or other documentation for solicitation of design assistance
- The productive participation of OoP representatives in the technical evaluation committee for contractor proposals for design and implementation of follow-on assistance

Assumptions

The full final assessment report would be made available to all prospective bidders, and also (subject to DFID concurrence) the recent DFID evaluation of SCoG and available documentation on prior DFID support to COG.

USAID would carefully prepare and guide OoP representatives on the contractor selection committee to understand USAID's approach to the competitive selection process, and avoid any potentially serious misunderstandings or malfeasance from having non-USAID participants engage in sensitive procurement matters.

Programming Options

1. Substantial Extension/Restructuring of UNDP-TAF Contract, with Design of New Project

This would be the most direct option in terms of minimizing time delays and avoiding a programming gap. The extension would establish timeframes and parameters for the design and implementation of the new proposal.

This approach allows for:

a) An opportunity to explore continuing DFID support
b) An opportunity to improve management and support relationships across the board
c) The chance to benefit from the availability of current UNDP and especially TAF staff members – in the home office as well as embedded within OoP
d) A restructuring/renegotiation of the role of UNDP for more proactive direction and oversight
e) A chance to strengthen and restructure the role of the Steering Committee, concurrent with an expansion of the concept of co-managed project teams at the domain level, and possibly at the cross-cutting level.
f) Smooth continuation of assistance to the OoP

Issues

- Ability/willingness of UNDP to rise to the challenge of a more directive/proactive role
- Ability of TAF to transition from interacting with OoP as a “recipient” to a full partner, or potentially a more "serviceable" role
- Willingness/ability of OoP officer and managers (at all levels) to “flip tables” on its current relationship with TAF
- Likely triggering of UNDP competitive selection issues

2. Minor Extension of UNDP-TAF Contract and Separate Design of New Project

This would principally serve the need to continue programming pending the (separate) design of a follow-on activity and establishment of a replacement implementation structure (e.g., via one of the approaches outlined below).

This approach allows for the continuing availability of program support.

Issues

- TAF and UNDP interest in such a temporary arrangement especially one that would eventually exclude UNDP (and possibly TAF)
- Ability of TAF to compete for the new implementation role; and if not, the role of TAF, if any, in prepping for a newcomer implementation agent
- The continuing availability of support could slow (dampen motivation) in moving forward
- UNDP competitive selection issues may be minimal, but could arise

3. Amendment of the Cooperative Agreement to Incorporate Design of New OoP Assistance

This would involve negotiating with TAF to provide for the equivalent of Mr. Bateman et al to be made available to work with the OoP Capacity Building Working Group in developing a joint OoP – USAID proposal. The (grant) amendment would outline a mutually acceptable timeframe for the delivery of a proposal.

This approach allows for:

a) Contractual separation of new project design from SCoG
b) Application of TAF experience in MoFA in new OoP activity design

Issues

- TAF may not be interested in such a temporary arrangement, especially if it is excluded from subsequent competition

- This may compromise the role of TAF, if any, in prepping for a newcomer implementation agent
- USAID competitive selection issues may be minimal, but could arise
- Currently, the cooperative agreement excludes any discussion of management role for OoP

4. Use of Independent Design Talent

This would avoid the issues involved in modifying the existing UNDP contract and would facilitate development of a new, joint proposal during SCoG phase-down.
A proposal would be ready for USAID review by o/a mid-November (allowing 2+ months), presuming no substantive delays in establishment of a CBWG and PSPT; with USAID review/approval completed by late November; and issuance of a RFP for implementation support prior to the end-of-year holidays or early in the New Year. Subsequently, contractor proposals would be submitted in mid February (allowing at least six-weeks plus two weeks for the holidays); with contract negotiation o/a mid-March; and implementation commencing in April 2009, three months following close-out of SCoG.

This approach allows for:

a) Separation of the concept and negotiations for a follow-on project from SCoG
b) An immediate focus on design issues and opportunities, on the heels of the SCoG assessment
c) An immediate negotiation of the establishment of a CBWG

Issues

- Presuming the availability and review/approval of a proposal in November 2008, the following RFP solicitation, proposal review and contract negotiation time would be substantial and will likely not enable avoidance of a programming gap. Normal delays over the end-of-year holiday season would likely expand this gap
- Potential contractors' proposals would typically involve substantively responding to the RFP design, and may open the door for the negotiation of some desirable design modifications or issues to be resolved, which is typical when contractors respond to designs they did not generate
- The selected contractor, if not TAF, will be starting relationship-building from a zero base

5. Use of the "Design and Build" Approach

This would involve the immediate issuance of a RFP in late September, allowing time for clearance by OoP, to solicit one contractor to guide development of a joint proposal; support USAID's review and approval of the proposal; and subject to the outcome; negotiate a contract amendment for program implementation. This would avoid the issues involved in

modifying the existing UNDP contract and TAF cooperative agreement. It would also facilitate development of a joint proposal during the SCoG phase-down period provided that Section IV of the assessment, accompanied with specific proposal development instructions to prospective bidders, is acceptable as the substantive RFP attachment.

Contractor proposal submissions for Phase 1 would be targeted for mid-November (allowing for at least six-weeks); contract signing prior to the end-of-year holidays; with implementation (Phase 1) to begin by mid January 2009; and a design proposal ready for USAID review/approval by mid-March. T

This approach allows for:

a) Separation of the concept and negotiations for a follow-on project from SCoG
b) An immediate negotiation of the establishment of a CBWG, and possibly the PSPT
c) Targeting commencement of Phase 1 after the close-out of SCoG
d) If mutually desired, allowing USAID the option to negotiate, in Phase 1, the provision of selective, pre-implementation support while the broader Phase 2 program is being designed and negotiated. For example, if USAID so desired, both the project assessment report and TAF third-quarter progress report could be modified to respond to specific suggestions for potential pre-implementation support to be provided by the new design and build contractor.
e) This option would allow for a smoother transition from a Phase 1 to a Phase 2 contractual relationship
f) This opens the door for the new contractor to begin immediately building effective relationships across OoP during the design stage, and avoid starting full-scale implementation from a zero base

Issues

- Design and build contractual relationships require proactive management by USAID to help ensure the establishment of early, productive relationships with clients, and the delivery of a high quality, responsive, Phase 1 product
- To ensure the best possible outcome of the competitive selection process, USAID might consider setting up a pre-bidding conference (call) for prospective contractors to inquire and learn more about the high-level nature of the project, etc.

Annex B: List of Persons with whom the Assessment Team Met

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Chief of Staff Office, Office of the President

Hon. Ambassador Omar Daudzai, Chief of Staff
Ms. Homayra Ludin Etemadi, First Deputy Chief of Staff
Mr. Humayoon Rasaw, Deputy Chief of Staff
Mr. Farhadullah Farhad, Senior Advisor
Mr. Shuja Amal, Director, Human Resources Management
Mr. Sami Wardak, Deputy Director, Human Resources Management
Mr. Mohammad Fawad Anwarzai, Head of Information Technology Department
Mr. Toorialey Fazly, Scheduling Officer for Presidential Meetings
Mr. Feraidoon Ilham, Correspondence Officer
Mr. Feraidoon Zaki, Policy Analyst
Mr. Musa Arifi, Policy Analyst
Mr. Hamid Yari, Policy Analyst
Mr. Mohammad Ameen Haidary, Archives

Office of Administrative Affairs, Office of the President

Hon. Dr. Farooq Wardak, Director General and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs
Mr. Sadeq Mudaber, Deputy Director General, Policy
Mr. Waheed Omer, Deputy Director General, Programs
Mr. Bashir Bashardoost, Director, Human Resources Management
Mr. Musa Khan Hussaini, Director, Information Technology Department
Mr. Mohammad Asef Azimy, Deputy Director, Information Technology Department
Mr. Najib Amin, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation
Mr. Mohammad Gul Kochai, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Dr. Davood Moradian, Senior Advisor
Mr. Sultan Ahmad Baheen, DG Media and Spokesman

Other

Hon.. Taj Ayoubi, Minister Advisor to the President, International Affairs
Mr. Ajmal Abidy, former staff, Office of the Presidential Spokesman
Mr. Wahidullah Waissi, PRS Manager, Afghanistan National Development Strategy
Prof. Mohammad Sharif Sharifi, Auditor General, Control and Audit Office
Mr. Wahabuddin Sadaat, Deputy Mayor, Kabul Municipality
Mr. Waheedullah Qaderi, Deputy Director General Budget, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Rahela Hashim Sidiqi, Senior Advisor to the Chairman and Head of Experts Program, Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC)

SCOG IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The Asia Foundation

Mr. George Varughese, Country Representative
Ms. Meloney Lindberg, Deputy Country Representative
Mr. Zoran Milovic, Deputy Country Representative
Mr. Findlay Herbert, Chief of Party, SCoG
Mr. Mark Kryzer, Former Chief of Party, SCoG
Mr. Abdullah Ahmadzai, Deputy Chief of Party SCoG
Mr. Srinivasrao Sohoni, Senior Advisor to the OMSPA
Mr. Bernie Derible, Team Leader, Organization/Human Resources Domain
Mr. Rick Steel, Team Leader, Training Domain
Mr. Dan DoRego, Team Leader, Information Communications Technology Domain
Mr. Anthony Bateman, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms. Susan Reesor, Technical Advisor, Monitoring and Evaluation
Mr. Mujib Beni, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
Ms. Roohafza Ludin, Technical Advisor for OMSPA
Ms. Mariam Jalali, Program Officer
Dr. Javid Qaem, Human Resources Management Advisor

DFID

Ms. Lu Ecclestone, Governance Advisor, Department for International Development

UNDP

Mr. Abdel-Ellah Sediqi, Programme Officer
Mr. Dilawar Khan, Programme Officer
Ms. Maya Lindberg Brink, Programme Officer

USAID

Ms. Jatinder Cheema, Ph.D, Deputy Mission Director
Mr. Jose Garzon, Director, Democracy and Governance
Ms. Jill Kelley, Senior Program Officer, Democracy and Governance
Ms. Tanya Urquieta, General Development Officer (CDP)
Mr. Mir Zarif Waez, Cognizant Technical Officer/ SCoG
Ms. Saskia Funston, Senior Development Outreach and Communication Officer
Ms. Theodora Dell, ANDS Advisor
Mr. Mark Parkison, Deputy Director PRT Program
Mr. Fareed Ahmad Payaam, Project Management Specialist
Mr. Erik Pacific, PRT Coordinator

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Mr. Thomas Niblock, Counselor for Public Affairs
Mr. Jeremiah Howard, Deputy Political Counselor
Mr. Reno Alberto, PPS ATA Program Manager
Mr. Marc Ramos, ATA/PPS Program Coordinator
Mr. Jeff Dong, RSO/ATA PPS Training Embed

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS/OBSERVERS

Mr. Idrees Rahmani, Director, Afghanistan Center for Policy Studies (ACRPS)
Mr. Haroun Mir, Deputy Director, Afghanistan Center for Policy Studies (ACRPS)
Mr. Mark Hough, Curriculum Development Advisor, Afghanistan Rule of Law Project
Ms. Leah April, Director /PSP, Bearing Point /CDP
Mr. Douglas Winn, Senior HR Management Advisor, Bearing Point/CDP
Mr. Hekmat Karzai, Director, Center for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS)
Ms. Vanessa Valentino, Consultant, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
Mr. Abdul Aziz Babakarkhail, Senior Economic Advisor, UNDP/ASGP
Mr. Nigel Coulson, Senior Public Sector Specialist, World Bank
Dr. Maria Beebe, Chief of Party, Afghanistan eQuality Alliance, Washington State University

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Annex D: Evaluation of Programming Needs – OoP/MoFA: Statement of Work

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMATIC NEEDS AT THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN AFGHANISTAN

I. OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the evaluation is to identify areas where assistance is needed in the Afghan Office of the President (OoP) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). For each area identified, specific findings and targeted recommendations should be made.

II. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Before the start of USAID's assistance to the so-called "center of government", the institutions there suffered from policy processes and administrative work processes that did not work well enough to address the myriad of problems facing the IRoA. Those institutions were further constrained by physical facilities and IT infrastructure that were insufficient to meet the needs of a modern workforce, personnel without the proper training to carry out their responsibilities, and organizational structures that were cumbersome and archaic.

USAID is currently supporting the OoP though a grant to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) called Support to the Center of Government (SCoG). The USAID grant number is 306-G-00-06-00516-00. The grant was awarded to UNDP on April 25, 2006, and is set to expire on April 30, 2009. The grant's ceiling is $6,000,000, of which $5,000,000 has been dispersed by USAID. The SCoG program is a collaborative effort; the British government also contributes to the SCoG program under a grant from its aid agency, the Department for International Development, to UNDP.

UNDP has contracted the Asia Foundation (TAF) to implement the SCoG assistance. TAF's assistance is broken down into six domains: 1) facilities; 2) information technology; 3) administrative work processes; 4) training; 5) policy; and 6) human resources. The targeted offices at the "center of government" of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRoA) for this programming are the Office of the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA). The CoS supports the president in his role as the head of state while the OAA supports him in his role as the head of government.

USAID is also supporting the OoP through a cooperative agreement it holds directly with TAF called Strategic Support to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The USAID cooperative agreement number is 306-A-00-03-00504-00. It was awarded to TAF on August 25, 2003, and is set to expire on May 31, 2009. The cooperative agreement's ceiling is $75,784,416, of which $71,784,416 has been dispersed by USAID.

TAF's assistance under the cooperative agreement is broken down into two components: 1) support for IRoA's strategic needs; and 2) public opinion polling. The first component consists of a broad spectrum of support to OoP and Executive Branch stakeholders. The

stakeholders currently receiving assistance include the OAA's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, the Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (OMSPA), the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), MoFA, the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (OPS), and the fledgling Peace Jirga Secretariat. Under this component of the cooperative agreement, TAF serves as the paymaster for salaries of certain presidential staff in the CoS, OAA, and National Security Council (NSC). TAF also oversees a surge capacity fund related to this component to respond to strategic, unanticipated, and emergency needs of the IRoA. The second component of the cooperative agreement, public opinion polling, entails the nationwide poll of Afghan citizens and culminates in the annual release of findings, data, and trends.

III. TASKS:

The evaluation needs to focus on areas where assistance is needed in the OoP and MoFA. Special attention should be paid to all the institutions or areas listed above with the exception of the following five: 1) IDLG; 2) OPS; 3) the assistance related to polling; 4) administration of the surge capacity fund; and 5) the salary support for Palace staff (side note: continuation of assistance in these five areas is being treated separately).

Among other questions, the evaluation should answer the following.

1. What offices within the OoP and MoFA would benefit most from future programmatic assistance?
2. Are there signs that progress made as a result of current USAID assistance is sustainable? What indicators can be used to define progress?
3. How will future programming build lasting capacity instead of buy temporary capacity?
4. How would future programming play off the strengths and respond to the weaknesses of current programming?
5. What specific management and organizational systems need to be modified, and how might this be done to improve performance? Recommendations should be identified within a 24 month timeframe with priority areas identified.
6. In terms of the overall policy and legal environment guiding the institution, what modifications might be made to improve performance?
7. What specific capacity building skills and management systems have been introduced and to what extent have these been effective?
8. Can skill levels be evaluated to determine where the gaps and types of training needed?
9. What other important issues cropped up during the evaluation exercise that may be outside the scope of this exercise, but that ought to be addressed nonetheless elsewhere in other analyses, evaluations, or programming?
10. What should the explicit objective(s) be of future assistance to the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if any?
11. What should the explicit activities be of future assistance to the Office of the President and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if any?

IV. TEAM COMPOSITION

The team will need to be comprised of two US/TCN consultants specialized in areas such as public management and administration and monitoring and evaluation. Eight to ten years of experience in international development, including relevant project evaluation in the democracy and governance sector, is required. The team will also include a qualified Afghan interlocutor to assist the team and provide local expertise.

V. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE / LOE

The evaluation should take place over a period of 46 working days, all of which will be spent in Afghanistan. Each expatriate team member will provide 46 days of LOE. LOE for the Afghan expert is estimated to be 25 days.

VI. METHODOLOGY:

The evaluation should include a review of programmatic progress reports, project implementation methodology, and data results collected and analyses conducted by the project. In addition, the evaluation should include interviews with key stakeholders (USAID staff, project staff, government institutions linked with the project) and a questionnaire for IRoA officials. The SUPPORT project will be provided relevant reports and studies, including Grantee Annual Activity Reports, that will aid this evaluation. If available, SUPPORT will also be provided with a current organizational chart of the President's Office with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

VII. DELIVERABLES:

All work under this purchase order should be completed on or before August 1, 2008, in accordance with the delivery schedule that follows.

1. Initial Work Plan, which will include methodology and a questionnaire designed to elicit input from keys stakeholders and participants in the organization and a schedule for data collection: four days after the team's arrival in Afghanistan.
2. Initial briefing: within one day after arrival in country.
3. Interim briefings and feedback on the team's findings: as requested by USAID or proposed by the evaluation team.
4. A draft final report clearly stipulating recommendations for future assistance in the relevant areas of public administration in the OoP and MoFA: due one week before the evaluation team leader departs country.
5. Presentation of a final briefing to key USAID staff and other stakeholders: three days prior to the team's departure from Afghanistan.
6. A final report: one day prior to the team's departure from Afghanistan.

VIII. REPORTING FORMAT/STRUCTURE

Format of the Report:

1. Table of Contents laying out the sections and pages on which respective sections begin.
2. Executive summary stating the purpose of the evaluation along with methodology, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and future design implications.
3. Main body providing a more in-depth treatment of the executive summary sections (not to exceed 70 pages, including the Executive Summary).
4. Recommendations for future assistance in the relevant areas of public administration in the OoP and MoFA.
5. Annexes providing names of people interviewed, including organizational affiliations, locations visited, and other information as appropriate.