

**MAPPING OF RESEARCH CAPACITY
IN AFGHANISTAN**

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Submitted to the Department for International Development
by Paul Fishstein, Anna Paterson, and Alan Roe

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAN	Afghan Analysts Network	CBE	Community-Based Education
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghanistan Relief	CC	Community Council
ACSOR	Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research	CDC	Community Development Council
ADB	Asian Development Bank	CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
AED	Academy for Educational Development	CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
AGE	Anti-Government Element	CAPS	Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies
AHS	Afghanistan Health Survey	CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission	CIDNE	Combined Information Data Network Exchange
AIRD	Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development	CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network	CSO	Central Statistical Office
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation	DAB	da Afghanistan Bank
ANA	Afghan National Army	DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy	DAI	Development Alternatives, Incorporated
ANHDR	Afghanistan National Human Development Report	DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
AOIs	Areas of Interest	DEWS	Disease Early Warning System
APHI	Afghanistan Public Health Institute	DFID-A	DFID-Afghanistan
APPRO	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation	DoD	Department of Defence (US)
APRP	Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme	DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ARD+E	Agriculture, Rural Development, and Environment	EC	European Commission
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
ARIA	Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan	EFA	Education for All
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund	EMIS	Education Management Information System
ASOP	Afghan Social Outreach Programme	EPHS	Essential Package of Hospital Services
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan	EQUIP2	Educational Quality Improvement Program 2
AusAid	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program	ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services	EVAW	(Law on) Elimination of Violence Against Women
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (US)	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
BSC	Balanced Scorecard	FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
CARE	Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere	FFSDP	Fully Functional Service Delivery Point

FTI	Fast Track Initiative	MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (Afghan)
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation		
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	MCN	Ministry of Counternarcotics (Afghan)
GIS	Geographical Information System	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation (formerly GTZ)	MEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
HMIS	Health Management Information System	MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
HNS	Health and Nutrition Strategy	MOD	Ministry of Defence (UK)
HPRO	Health Protection and Research Organization	MOE	Ministry of Education (Afghan)
HTS	Human Terrain System	MOF	Ministry of Finance (Afghan)
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas	MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education (Afghan)
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development	MOI	Ministry of Interior (Afghan)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre	MOPH	Ministry of Public Health (Afghan)
IHMR	Indian Institute of Health Management Research	MORR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (Afghan)
ILTC	International Legal Training Centre	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance	MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs (Afghan)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	MPH	Masters of Public Health
IMF	International Monetary Fund	MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (Afghan)
IRB	Institutional Review Board	NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action for Climate Change
IRC	International Rescue Committee	NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
IRI	International Republican Institute	NCSA	National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force	NED	National Endowment for Democracy
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan	NEIEP	National Extractive Industry Excellence Program
J2-CJIOC	Combined Joint Intelligence Operations Center	NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency (Afghan)
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency	NESP 2	National Education Strategic Plan 2
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice (survey)	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
KMU	Kabul Medical University	NHA	National Health Accounts
LBG	Louis Berger Group	NHSPA	National Health Services Performance Assessment
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan	NPP	National Priority Programmes
LVAU	Livelihoods and Vulnerability Analysis Unit		

NRRCI	National-Regional Resources Corridor Initiative	SNTV	Single Non-Transferable Vote
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	TINS	Theatre Integrated Nationwide Survey
NSP	National Solidarity Programme	TLO	The Liaison Office (formerly Tribal Liaison Office)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
ORCA	Opinion Research Center of Afghanistan	UCSD	University of California, San Diego
OSDR	Organization for Sustainable Development and Research	UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
PACE-A	Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PAR	Participatory and Action Research	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
PDT	Peace Dividend Trust	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team	UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women)
PTRO	Peace Training and Research Organisation	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
RAMOS2	Reproductive Age Mortality Survey 2	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
RLAP	Rural Land Administration Project	USGS	United States Geological Survey
ROP	Roots of Peace	VAU	Vulnerability Analysis Unit
SALEH	Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods in Eastern Hazarajat	VBDA	Village Benefit Distribution Analysis
SARH	South Asia Research Hub (DFID)	VCA	Vulnerabilities to Corruption Assessments
SDES	Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey	WB	World Bank
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency	WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
SMA/RCU	Strategic Multi-layered Analysis/Rich Contextual Understanding	WFP	World Food Programme
		WTO	World Trade Organisation

List of non-English language terms used in the text

<i>arbakai</i>	tribal police in south-eastern Afghanistan, but now used colloquially to refer to any local security forces
<i>kuchi</i>	nomad
<i>madrassa</i>	Islamic religious school or training academy
<i>sharia</i>	Islamic law or tradition
<i>tahqiq</i>	investigation
<i>tahqiqat-e elmi</i>	scientific investigation; i.e., research
<i>wolesi jirga</i>	lower of the two houses of Parliament

Executive Summary

Introduction, purpose, methodology, and caveats

This report presents the results of a September 2011 study commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID)'s South Asia Research Hub (SARH) and DFID-Afghanistan (DFID-A) to map research capacity in Afghanistan and identify gaps in research and analysis which would be valuable to Afghan and international development partners. The methodology consisted of a review of Afghan government, DFID and other donor policy documents; review of research and analytical outputs; and interviews with relevant producers and consumers of research, as well as stakeholders in the Afghan development process. The main focus was on the sectors contained in DFID-A's operational plan, although many of the observations apply more broadly across other sectors.

As the purpose was to understand the production and use of analysis for policy and program purposes, the team took a broad and flexible definition of research to include information produced related to project or program implementation, including monitoring and evaluation. The focus was on research and analysis done since 2008. Given the inevitable constraints of time and mobility, and the immense volume of published analysis on Afghanistan since 2001, the mapping aims to be representative rather than exhaustive. The report presents information current at the time of the fieldwork, September-October 2011.

Research capacity, constraints, and quality

In 2001, research capacity in Afghanistan was extremely limited, and the massive post-2001 development programmes were launched with limited understanding of the environment. Even before 1978, independent social science research in Afghanistan was virtually unknown, and the war years badly damaged Afghanistan's academic and analytical institutions. In the ten years since 2001, research capacity has greatly increased, the combined result of revival of the education system, international academic exchanges, renewed exposure to technical and analytical fields, and the influx of donor money to fund research and analysis.

Despite the significant gains, research capacity in Afghanistan remains low. With some notable exceptions, the most limiting constraint is human resources, which means that most research is still designed and led by foreigners. Additional constraints are posed by incomplete demographic and socio-economic data, cultural issues, challenging geography and poor infrastructure, and insecurity. Most public sector institutions have institutional and reward structures which discourage initiative and make it difficult to retain qualified staff. Weakness in the university sector also affects research capacity down-stream, as it limits the capacity to produce new generations of Afghan researchers.

Respondents were largely sceptical about the extent to which research and analysis were used by either Afghan or international institutions to formulate policy. A number of factors limit the demand for and use of information, including political concerns which drive policy or discourage acceptance of unpalatable results, language and accessibility, timeliness of results, information overload and the lack of mechanisms for validating quality research, institutional policies and conditions (e.g., rapid turnover in donor and implementing agencies,

pressure to make decisions within short timeframes), and the lack of a widespread culture of analysis in Afghanistan.

Although a number of factors make it difficult to evaluate systematically, the quality of research produced in Afghanistan is quite variable. Some of the variability in quality was attributed to lack of public scrutiny of outputs (especially in the case of proprietary research), the difficulty of monitoring field research, and, in some cases, the lack of credibility of assessments and evaluations related to project implementation, which were often done by the project implementers themselves. A wide range of research methodologies have been used in Afghanistan since 2001, including Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), non-experimental and quasi-experimental quantitative methods, qualitative studies, public opinion polls and perception surveys, action and participatory methods, and remote sensing. The challenges and resource requirements of maintaining rigorous research standards (i.e., RCTs) in Afghanistan are significant.

Available research and analysis

Due in part to donor demand for rapid analysis to meet tight program schedules, the large majority of studies conducted in Afghanistan are relatively short term and one-off, notable exceptions being some of the repeat surveys (e.g., National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, the annual opium survey, annual Survey of the Afghan People) which produce time-series analysis and which are heavily referenced. A survey of representative research suggested that much research has followed the dominant public policy issues (e.g., democracy and elections, justice and rule of law, corruption, peacebuilding, livelihoods, microfinance, the opium economy, access to education, quality of education, women's rights), which the donors play a significant role in defining.

A key gap in reviewing research and analysis is the significant amount of outputs which are not shared publically due to proprietary arrangements, including research supported by the international military. The lack of clearing houses or centralized repositories for research also makes it difficult to comprehensively determine what research has been done in certain areas. The limits put on fieldwork by insecurity have influenced the geographic distribution of research and resulted in knowledge gaps on certain areas of the country.

Who is doing research?

Research is conducted by a range of institutions, including public sector institutions, universities, dedicated policy research institutions, NGOs with research and assessment capacity, and commercial firms/ contractors of research services, as well as international institutions with research mandates. Due to lack of resources and capacity, Afghan public sector institutions produce limited rigorous research, although they provide some of the most consistent condition assessments, reporting, and longitudinal data. Some studies are linked to bilaterally funded projects and external technical assistance. Universities are primarily focused on teaching, and what limited research that does occur is usually at the initiative of individuals. Despite isolated efforts by some donors to assist the universities, there has been limited systematic investment in the university sector and the institutional environment largely does not encourage research; the study found little evidence of progress since the 2008 DFID-funded analysis found an almost complete absence of active social science

research in the university sector. There is little liaison between government and universities, so any research produced in the universities would have limited policy relevance.

Dedicated policy research institutes are an important part of the research landscape, although some of the newer 'think tanks' are seen as representing certain political or factional outlooks and therefore not as objective and disinterested observers. NGOs and contractors who are project implementers are important contributors to research, as well as to data collection and monitoring, often with a sectoral focus; studies are stand-alone, part of an advocacy strategy, or to inform project or programme planning. Driven by the demand for (and funding of) research, there has been a major growth in Afghan and international commercial firms who conduct public opinion polling, surveys, and other forms of research, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The quality of this work is considered to be variable.

Who is funding research?

It was not possible to be systematic about the amounts being allocated by funders to research, but most research is donor commissioned, often in connection with development projects, so the majority of funding comes from the major donors. Not surprisingly, this leads to supporting data collection and research in particular sectors, thematic areas, or geographic areas. Given the absence of trusted repositories for data and evidence, and often the lack of confidence in others' research, there is a tendency for institutions to commission new studies without exploring whether relevant information already exists. Repetition of similar research is expensive and can lead to 'research fatigue' in relatively secure and accessible communities near Kabul and other major cities. The run up to the 2014 Transition seems to be accelerating the trend towards impact assessments and program monitoring at the expense of longer-term research. Given reduced resources and the array of daunting needs, research may not be at the top of donors' lists of priorities.

Policy research needs

While most thematic areas have been covered in some manner, the study identified a number of potential thematic gaps relevant to the National Priority Programmes (NPPs) and donor program interests. While some research may have been conducted in these areas, additional research might provide additional policy-relevant insights. Also, some of the research may not be publically available or visible. As the geographic distribution of research has been strongly influenced by security and donor interests, in some areas the evidence base remains patchy. Research outside of Kabul is skewed towards the north and central parts of the country, although research related to opium and security-related issues has focused on the south and east. A more even geographic distribution of research would provide a more complete and balanced view of the varied conditions across Afghanistan.

Recommendations for building policy research capacity

Recommendations for building research capacity have to be placed in the context of Afghanistan's evolving political and security environment. In this uncertain time, there may well be a retreat from the spirit of enquiry that was more pervasive in the early years post-2001 in favour of a focus on more basic needs. It seems inevitable that the overall reduction in resources will lead to a reduction in the number of institutions which are doing research.

At the same time, with fewer development resources available, it is even more important that wise, evidence-based decisions be made on how to allocate those resources. The team identified the following major needs:

- Technical, methodological, and analytical skills to enable Afghan researchers and research institutions to take the lead in identifying and producing high quality analysis.
- Independent research capacity, both to ensure that non-aligned, critical analysis is produced and also to build confidence among wider segments of the Afghan population in the integrity of analysis.
- Greater demand for research and analysis on the part of sections of the Afghan public because they see it as informative and valuable rather than as either irrelevant or biased.
- Repositories or focal points for research, analysis, and information so that it is accessible to all and that studies are not needlessly replicated.
- Improved quality and standards for analytical work.
- Stable funding which allows the pursuit of topics which are important, long-term research, and more institutional stability through the reduction of job-hopping among trained and qualified staff.

The following are some specific recommendations for DFID and other donors to consider.

1. Improve management of and access to data and information to reduce duplication, make analysis more widely available, and elevate quality through public scrutiny.
2. Establish strategic framework(s) for research, while considering the considerable variation among sectors and types of research.
3. Support partnerships between international research institutions and local institutions, as they have the potential to be complementary and mutually beneficial.
4. Encourage collaborative partnerships that lead to multi-disciplinary research and methodological pluralism.
5. Distinguish between analytical capacity to be strengthened in the public sector and independent research capacity.
6. Find opportunities to support research at Kabul University and provincial universities by supporting promising, motivated faculty and students to work on 'real-world' problems.
7. Make longer-term research and institutional funding available to generate insights missed by short, one-off projects, and to encourage stability in research organisations.
8. Continue to invest in international degree programs for select and promising Afghans, as these have already substantially enriched the research environment.
9. Support quality research through the establishment of an independent research fund which would especially encourage the application of research to policy.
10. Target research at identified data and evidence gaps, including sectoral and geographic ones.
11. Encourage the demand for research among the Afghan population by encouraging a better understanding of the meaning and practice of research and by ensuring that credible and transparent research reaches the public.

I. Introduction

I.A. Purpose

This report is the output of a research mapping exercise commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID)'s South Asia Research Hub (SARH) and DFID-Afghanistan (DFID-A). The report presents the findings from a three-person team charged in September 2011 with mapping research capacity in Afghanistan and identifying the gaps in research and analysis which would be valuable to Afghan and international development partners. The mapping sought to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the main funders of research and policy analysis in Afghanistan?
2. What are the main areas in which research is being carried out and by whom?
3. What is the current capacity for high-quality research and policy analysis by sector?
4. What are the capacity building needs for Afghan research institutions and think tanks?
5. What are the evidence gaps in DFID-A's Operational Plan and other development partners planning documents?
6. What research and analysis currently available could fill these gaps?
7. Who is best placed to commission research and analysis to fill identified gaps?

The Terms of Reference (TOR) are given in Annex A.

I.B. Methodology

The methodology for the research mapping consisted of a review of Afghan government, DFID, and other donor policy documents; review of a representative sample of research and analytical outputs; and interviews with relevant producers and consumers of research, as well as stakeholders in the Afghan development process. The main focus was on the sectors contained explicitly or implicitly in DFID-A's operational plan, namely governance and security, agriculture, natural resource management, rural livelihoods, environment, wealth creation, gender, health, education, and humanitarian assistance, although many of the observations made about research in these sectors apply more broadly across other sectors.

The team took a broad and flexible definition of research. While attention was mostly focused on academic or policy research, as the purpose of the exercise was to understand the production and use of analysis for policy and program purposes, attention was also given to information produced related to project or program implementation, including monitoring and evaluation and sector or area studies. Many implementing agencies carry out surveys, reviews, quality assessments (i.e., healthcare), and evaluations which are linked to improvement of their own projects.

While the line is not always clear, the team attempted to exclude some of the vast amount of 'research' and analysis which has been done using secondary sources, undocumented

interviews, and existing research, and which is often simply a re-packaging of previous work by people who are far from the field. This type of analysis was particularly common in the realms of governance, gender, civil-military cooperation, security, and counter-terrorism. The team mostly excluded conference papers and conceptual or theoretical models based on data originally from Afghanistan. This is not to say that secondary and tertiary analysis has not produced useful information and analysis, but the team tried to focus on primary research, partly due to the massive volume of secondary and tertiary analysis, but also because of the interest in understanding existing capacity to produce evidence drawn directly from the field. The focus was on research and analysis done from 2008 onwards, although in cases of significant research or other factors, the team was flexible and referred to earlier work.

I.C. Caveats

Given the inevitable constraints of time and mobility, the mapping does not claim to be exhaustive. On the policy side, even with more time it would have been beyond the scope of this study to map out the policy and programming focus of all key donors in the above-mentioned sectors. This would be difficult to achieve with great accuracy in part because donors have not systematically reported off-budget assistance (which has made up the majority of international aid 2002-2010) to the Afghan Ministry of Finance (MOF), which complicates the task of finding accurate estimates of expenditure across sectors.¹ On the research side, as noted above, there is an immense amount of published research and analysis on Afghanistan since 2001, although much of it is not in the public domain and much that is in theory available to the public is difficult to find. As discussed below, there are limited comprehensive bibliographies for social science research on Afghanistan.²

The mapping focused on research and analysis available in English. Given the dominant role that the international community plays in all aspects of the research agenda and the general character of international support to Afghanistan, this is not such a serious shortcoming. While this may miss some research being done by Afghans in Dari and Pashtu, the relative volume of that research is quite limited.

The team tried to talk with or contact all or most significant producers of research, but undoubtedly overlooked or were unable to contact some. Likewise, in this report the team tried to cite examples of significant or interesting research rather than attempt the impossible task of being exhaustive; the exclusion of certain studies should not imply that they were not up to standard.

In sum, while it is impossible to do justice to the complexity of research in the various sectors, this report attempts to sketch out some of the main characteristics of research institutions and overall capacity, and to note some representative examples of research. Finally, the report contains information current at the time of the fieldwork, September-October 2011.

¹ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance (2010) *Development Cooperation Report*, p. 2

² One of the more comprehensive bibliographies, especially for governance, security, and conflict is maintained by Christian Bleuer. *The Afghanistan Analyst Bibliography*. 6th edition. July 2011.

<http://afghanistan-analyst.org>.

I.D. Research in Afghanistan: brief historical perspective

Even before 1978, social science research in Afghanistan was quite limited, and truly independent research was virtually unknown. The Central Statistical Office, the Afghanistan Bank, and other government institutions largely collected statistics and compiled them in official publications. Given the highly centralized and controlling attitude of the state, and the lack of non-state educational institutions, independent scholarship which might ask controversial and divisive questions about social issues was not encouraged. As a consequence, there was little investment in social science research, and therefore little research capacity existed in Afghanistan, other than in the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology.

The war years badly damaged Afghanistan's academic institutions. During the 1960's and '70's, the universities (mainly Kabul University) had been immensely politicized, and due to the preoccupation with survival and the flight of many intellectuals, capacity was further degraded during the war years. Academics with ties to the West were especially suspect, and most with foreign degrees fled the country. From the time of the April 1978 coup and the subsequent December 1979 Soviet invasion, Western research and scholarship was extremely limited, in large part due to the daunting security conditions. For instance, the January 2010 edition of the 187- page 'The Afghanistan Analyst Bibliography' contained only six academic publications in the 1980s and 1990s related to humanitarian and development issues in Afghanistan.³

During the 1980s, numerous documents were produced related to the cross-border aid efforts from Pakistan, although these were mostly project evaluations, assessments, and monitoring and program reports related to implementation. Most were produced by the donors or implementing agencies themselves, who were not disinterested parties. The short-term focus was encouraged by the inevitable transitory nature of refugee life, the constant crisis atmosphere, and the focus on basic survival needs. There was simply no time (or resources) for research, and resources were allocated to doing practical activities such as managing programs. Many of these documents were collected at the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) Resource and Information Center in Peshawar, and eventually made their way to the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University.

In the aftermath of 9/11, it quickly became apparent among the international community how little was known in a rigorous sense about Afghanistan. The massive inflow of financial, material, and human resources across all sectors therefore meant that development programmes were being launched with limited understanding of the environment. There was extremely limited capacity among Afghans to do research. Due to the practical focus of most aid and development projects during the preceding years, project management skills were relatively plentiful, but more rigorous analytical skills were not. As no Afghan educational institution granted PhDs, the only persons who would have been trained had received degrees from foreign institutions, and most had left Afghanistan due to the conflict. Most of

³Christian Bleuer. op cit.

those who returned post-2001 took positions in the government or otherwise became involved in project implementation

In the ten years since 2001, research and analytical capacity has greatly increased. Driven by the need for information about the country as well as the large amounts of money for research (broadly defined), there has been a huge growth in the research sector, including NGOs, think tanks, and for-profit companies, as well as international researchers coming to Afghanistan to do research. This is discussed in more detail in Section IV. Given the current uncertainty and the inevitable reduction in donor resources, the research sector is almost certain to contract over the next several years.

II. Current research capacity

II.A. Overall research capacity

Despite significant gains made since 2001, overall research capacity in Afghanistan remains low, due to the historical factors described above. The most limiting constraint is human resources. Due to the limited numbers of Afghan academics qualified to do methodologically rigorous research, the majority of research is led by foreigners. Beyond that there are a number of other factors which pose constraints to research, including limited or incomplete demographic information, difficult geography and infrastructure, and insecurity.

On the other hand, it is clear that research and analytical capacity has greatly increased since 2001, the combined result of revival of the education system, international academic exchanges, exposure to technical and analytical fields from which Afghanistan had been removed for many years, and, not least, the influx of money to pay for research and analysis. More Afghans now see the importance of research, and in general there are more Afghan institutions and colleagues who are familiar with research. The health sector appears to have developed relatively more capacity than some other sectors. For instance, in terms of human resources, on the Institutional Review Board (IRB), there are currently three PhDs and 9-10 Masters of Public Health (MPH) holders, whereas when the IRB was established in 2005 there were no Afghan degree holders.

This section discusses the major capacity constraints in the research sector in Afghanistan.

HUMAN RESOURCES

By far the most important constraints to producing quality research in Afghanistan are human-resources related. With some notable exceptions, there is a shortage of persons who can design and lead research, as well as of well-trained research personnel down to the enumerator level. This is due to the historical factors noted above, including lack of emphasis on social science research, poor quality basic education, and generally low levels of human capital. Research institutions in Afghanistan are challenged to recruit and retain high quality research staff, with many of the most skilled and qualified being recruited to international development contractors or agencies which are able to offer premium salaries. The frequent result is that as staff are recruited, trained, and gain skills, they leave and must be replaced by new recruits.

Most public sector institutions also have institutional and reward structures which discourage initiative and make it even more difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff. Some smaller research organisations have attempted to build their own staff's capacity through training and even overseas degree programmes, while minimizing the organisational risk that staff will jump to better-paying jobs for which they would then be qualified. Small organisations also cannot send staff for 3-4 month trainings if they do not have alternate staff to do the work in their absence. The general uncertainty leading up to the 2014 Transition may make it even less likely that qualified staff will prioritize long-term career development over short-term income.

For the above reasons, international researchers still dominate the research establishment in Afghanistan. For example, of the 171 research reports and assessments in the agriculture, rural development, and environment (ARD+E) sector reviewed for this study, only 23% were led by Afghan researchers, these being predominantly among the contract research organisations. Language is certainly a barrier to advancement of Afghans within the research establishment where most research outputs are first produced in English. (The issue of research in non-Afghan languages is discussed further below.) Furthermore, the current lack of opportunities for formal post-graduate studies in Afghanistan means that if a cadre of Afghan senior researchers is to be built up, it must be done on-the-job within a very limited number of applied research institutions.

Even below the level of research leader, trained enumerators and supervisors are vital to the success of research, including survey research. While there are now more qualified and experienced Afghans able to do research in the field, another human resource issue is limited mobility for female research staff due to both insecurity and cultural factors. Availability of female enumerators who are permitted by their families to travel into the field is a key constraint in the Afghan environment. For instance, the survey firm Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR) reported that maintaining a 45% female interviewing team in each province was a serious challenge during the initial rounds of The Asia Foundation (TAF) surveys, and the first female team in Kandahar quit *en masse*.⁴

Kabul University, which would be expected to be a national centre of research, has, with a few exceptions, been unable to fulfil this function. This is in part due to the damage incurred during the years of conflict, but also because given the historical central role played in scholarship by the government, Afghanistan has little tradition of independent research in its academic institutions. Weakness in the university sector also affects research capacity further down-stream, as it limits the capacity to produce new generations of Afghan researchers. There have been some interventions to build capacity and knowledge management in the campus of Kabul University, for example the International Legal Training Centre (INLTC) and the support provided by the Konrad Adenauer-funded National Center for Policy Research (NCPR) and the UNDP-funded Center for Policy and Human Development (CPHD). But many of these interventions have suffered from poor coordination within the University, inability to find qualified staff, limitations imposed by institutional

⁴ACSOR & D3 Systems (2008) *Afghanistan Survey Methods and Challenges*. Presentation for the SAPOR Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA: <http://www.slideshare.net/karlfeld/Afghanistan-Survey-Methods-and-Challenges-735596>

structures, and, in some cases, management issues within the international institutions.⁵ The role of Kabul University is discussed further in section IV.A.2.

II.B. Additional constraints to research

Aside from human resources, there are a number of additional constraints to doing research in Afghanistan.

Incomplete demographic and socio-economic data

In Afghanistan, virtually all hard numbers should be treated with caution. Even the most basic demographic and health variables are either lacking or subject to debate. Afghanistan has never had a complete census (the only attempt, started in 1979, was not completed due to insecurity), and so even the total national population is contested.⁶ Data on more challenging indicators such as fertility rates and contraceptive prevalence are even more scarce and patchy. A household listing conducted between 2003 and 2005 in preparation for a 2007-08 census is considered the most reliable available population sample frame for generating robust random samples of the general population. The census itself has been repeatedly delayed, and it seems unlikely to be carried out in the foreseeable future. It would be extremely difficult to cover the entire country due to security reasons, and a partial census would raise questions about validity. Also, given the sensitivity of certain categories of information (e.g., ethnic composition), some feel that there is not sufficient political will to carry it out. Partly in lieu of the census, the CSO is carrying out the large scale Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey (SDES), under which CSO will collect provincial data annually, on a rolling basis, although funding has only been found for a few provinces. The survey has already been undertaken in Bamiyan, with plans for Ghor and Dai Kundi in 2012..

Aside from the lack of complete and reliable demographic data, financial constraints in government offices often limit access to certain types of data which are more expensive and technically difficult to acquire. For instance, the CSO reported that it is working with “sub-optimal maps” from the Soviet era which often have wrong or unclear district boundaries. While they do have satellite images for the rural areas, they don’t show administrative boundaries. It was noted that the international military has better geographical information system (GIS) data, but has been reluctant to share it with the CSO.

In 2010, DFID commissioned an in-depth assessment of the reliability of the socio-economic data most frequently used to measure social, economic, and political progress. While this was an internal review, in the interest of improving project planning, reporting, and accountability, results were shared with partners and the Government on a case-by-case basis. Overall conclusions were that there is great variation across data sources, although , reliable data do exist in Afghanistan; more problematic data come from insecure areas;

⁵ Wiles, Royce (2011) *Trophy libraries and strategic opacity: challenges setting up information management functions for the Afghan legal sector (2003-2011)*. Draft chapter awaiting publication.

⁶ For example, the mid-decade estimates of Afghanistan’s population included 22.1m (CSO, 2005-06), 24.8 m (IMF, 2005-06), 29.9 m (WHO, 2005), and 31.0 m (CIA, 2006), a difference of approximately forty per-cent from the lowest to the highest estimate. Taken from *Afghanistan Research Newsletter, Number 11/12, October 2006/January 2007*. AREU.

“social desirability bias” “contaminates” many opinion polls, although data trends can be used with caution; and, the empirical basis for much of the economic data needs strengthening.⁷ Moreover, the general lack of reliable economic data (e.g., employment, sectoral breakdowns, asset valuation), especially disaggregated below the national level, poses another constraint to what would be routine economic analysis.

Cultural issues

At the data collection level, a number of cultural factors, including the lack of familiarity with research methods among a largely non-literate population, affect the reliability of certain types of data collection techniques. For instance, in group settings, tradition may cause the voices of the elders and leaders to be heard, with others who are younger and lower down in the social hierarchy either keeping quiet or deferring. This is especially true for topics that touch on important social norms, the influence of local powerholders, the characteristics of the government or local officials, or which occur in insecure environments where respondents may feel constrained from speaking their minds. This is exacerbated by factors which make conducting individual interviews difficult, such as the general lack of privacy and the fact that in many social settings it is considered rude to ask people to leave; in many such cases, individual interviews planned for government offices or public space evolve into *de facto* focus groups. Finally, because there is no tradition of socio-economic research, especially in rural areas, research may be seen as a ‘survey’ to determine whether or not a development agency will provide development or other assistance.⁸ In such a situation, the potential for respondent bias is obvious.

Cultural attitudes associated with gender roles pose another significant constraint to research. Traditions of female seclusion mean that interviews and focus group discussions with females generally have to be conducted by females (with the possible exception of Kabul or in official settings), which requires that research teams contain females. However, the same cultural traditions make it difficult for research organisations to find females who are willing and able to travel away from their homes, especially to rural areas and to the more conservative and conflict-affected parts of the country. Even in cases where research or survey teams contain females, it may be difficult to find female respondents, in part because especially in more conservative areas, limited mobility means that they will not be found in markets and other public places. While some organisations have found ways around this challenge, by and large females are under-represented as respondents, and therefore the female perspective often lacking.

Geography and poor infrastructure

The remoteness of many Afghan settlements coupled with poor road infrastructure in many areas make many respondents difficult to reach. This can obviously have implications for coverage, but also create challenges for supervision and increase the costs of doing research. These all have implications for the quality of data and information gathered from the field.

⁷ DFID Afghanistan. Data quality assessments, September 2010.

⁸ The English word ‘survey’ has been adapted into Dari and Pashtu to mean a process carrying the promise of aid.

Insecurity

Insecurity can also introduce geographical bias into national survey results, as well as coverage bias in terms of what geographical areas get selected for other types of research. This is particularly problematic where increasing insecurity over time has made some areas too dangerous to send enumerators into the field, meaning that there can be different geographical coverage between successive waves of the same survey. Ironically, insecurity related to insurgency limits the ability to do research in the areas of the country of most interest to many major funders of research. Local suspicion of researchers can also pose a security threat to enumerators who can face harassment or worse (swapping out mobile phone SIM cards for blank or innocuous ones without incriminating government and agency phone numbers is a standard practice for research and NGO staff traveling to the field), and there have even been cases of enumerators being kidnapped or imprisoned.⁹ Elaborate security measures (i.e., controlled movement, armed escorts) are certain to negatively affect the quality of data collection in the field.

II.C. Capacity for use: demand-side gaps

While it is often assumed that the supply of research and analysis is a key constraint to evidence-based policymaking in Afghanistan, more important constraints may in fact be posed by a number of factors related to the demand for and use of information. By and large, most respondents interviewed for this study were sceptical about the extent to which information drives policy and programming. While some in the international community seem to use information well, there was a widespread belief that policy and planning is not always well informed by research, due to the factors discussed below. Some donor agency staff noted that even research and analytical work which is commissioned by the donors themselves, ostensibly to inform policy, may not always be used within donor organisations. Demand-side gaps include research and analysis which is produced but not shared with potential users; the lack of a culture of analysis and use, both historically and perhaps currently accentuated by the focus on transition; and, the tendency for institutions to set policies and allocate resources at higher levels (i.e., home country capitals), and in response to other factors rather than based on evidence. These factors were described as having an effect on both international and Afghan institutions. Because it is largely a capacity issue, it is discussed in this section.

II.C.1. Political factors

One factor that was said to affect the use of research, of course, was the lack of political will to act on the basis of unpalatable findings. Relatedly, respondents discussed cases where political motivation provided the impetus for programmatic decisions (e.g., distribution of agricultural inputs or other commodities so as to be seen as “doing something”) rather than the evidence base. One respondent captured a general belief in noting that “donors use

⁹Varughese, George (2006). *Practical Challenges: Conducting Survey Research in Afghanistan*. The Asia Foundation Website:

http://www.publicopinionpros.norc.org/from_field/2007/apr/varughese.asp

research – if it fits their ideology or their pet projects.” On the Afghan government side, many respondents noted a defensiveness on the part of some officials, likely due to the lack of tradition or experience in dealing with external criticism. For instance, the government was said to be upset by a report that ten per-cent of teachers had reported corruption in the education sector; most observers would say that ten per-cent is actually quite good! The 2007 Human Development Report (HDR), which made the seemingly neutral point that roughly eighty per-cent of legal cases were settled through traditional justice bodies, caused a reaction in parts of the formal legal establishment, which resulted in some of the authors being temporarily taken into custody.¹⁰

At the same time, ministry respondents said that they have been very open in sharing data with donors and civil society, but that donors had not been transparent, especially with financial information, because they didn’t want to be held accountable. As the head of a Kabul-based think-tank noted, “institutions want research, but not the conclusions.” There was a sense that non-governmental organisations used more data, in part because the government was not capable of using it, but perhaps also because the scale of decisions made by the government and major donors was so large that they were unlikely to be influenced so much by individual pieces of research.

On the other hand, a number of instances were cited where decisions were made based on information. For instance, when health financing pilot studies showed that user fees were not working well and might have been discouraging people from seeking health services (which was also reinforced by the international literature), the MOPH announced that fees would be suspended.¹¹ Similarly, the MOPH attributed the development of new health sub-centres and mobile teams to an evaluation which had been done under one of the donor projects, and that a study on gender-based barriers to healthcare was used to set gender policies within the MOPH.

II.C.2. Language and accessibility

There is also a gap in the audiences that are being targeted by existing research considered here, which can be identified by the fact that it is mostly available in English. Although some organisations publish some research outputs in Dari and Pashtu, most material is in English and therefore of less use in promoting sustainable evidence-based policy making in Afghanistan than in meeting the demands of English-speaking donors for data to inform their decisions and monitor their interventions. Research is also much less likely to inform the public discourse if it is not presented in local languages.

II.C.3. Timeliness

Respondents also noted the lack of availability of timely research and analysis, and the often very significant time lag in producing results, which were already obsolete or overtaken by

¹⁰ Wardak, A. et al 2007. *Bridging Modernity and Tradition: Rule of Law and the Search for Justice*, Afghanistan Human Development Report. Center for Policy and Human Development.

¹¹ It may also have been helpful that user fees were politically unpopular, in part because one reading of the Constitution suggests that health services will be free to all Afghans.

events by the time they were acquired. For instance, respondents noted that the delay in releasing the official data from the EMIS means that agencies are using numbers from several years ago; the most recent version is from 1388 (2009).¹² The *aide memoires* published by the World Bank are also considered good, substantive sources of information, but donor officials said that they typically get them only after they have been vetted by the cognizant ministries. While they are considered useful, they are less so the more delayed they are.

II.C.4. Information overload, lack of validation, lack of repository

Some respondents commented that in fact there was too much information, and that they suffered from information overload. Yet this was related to another issue, namely that with so much information and an inability to validate what was good and what was not, one didn't know what to use. In Afghanistan, there is no central, relied-upon repository within each sector for relevant evidence. It is therefore extremely difficult for research users to ascertain what is already available or how to access it. One consequence of this was that many users came to depend largely on what they were producing themselves and that new studies were commissioned unnecessarily.

There is poor cooperation between some donors/research stakeholders, meaning a considerable proportion of studies and research never enter the public domain (or are too difficult to access). There were also complaints about some of the large donor agencies not being willing to share information, even within their own embassies. This was attributed to institutional rivalries and to instinctive barriers resulting from on-going criticism of their work.

II.C.5. Other institutional factors

Respondents consistently noted a set of institutional and management issues within the international community that constrained the effective use of research. The most important ones were short staffing rotations and frequent staff turnover in aid agencies and contractors, exacerbated by short handover periods. New staff were said to not buy into research that was done under previous staff rotations because they were not familiar with it. Users reported a large dependence on personal links and relationships, and a problematic lack of corporate memory. Institutional "stovepiping," with different offices within the same institution isolated in their own tasks and not drawing on the work done by other offices, as well as between institutions, was seen as another constraint. This was also seen to have become accentuated due to security issues. For instance, the simple issue of the lack of reciprocity on base passes was said to be reducing the ability to interact with colleagues elsewhere. Some respondents in donor institutions cited technical issues such as not being able to get into others' shared network drives or even be able to send and receive email to and from certain addresses. Some of this was due to traditional institutional competition issues ('knowledge is power'), but not entirely.

¹² Subsequent to the field research, an updated version of the EMIS was released.

An additional constraint is that some embassies are required to use official information issued by certain international agencies (e.g., ISAF polling numbers) or, as noted above, only officially published data, in their reporting to home political institutions, which can be problematic in the case of delays in publication of up to date information or where findings are seen to lack validity.

Respondents also saw the short timeframes in which decisions had to be made as another constraint, especially considering the lack of timely information noted above. One western diplomat noted that meeting readouts were used to set policy, rather than waiting for more formal analysis. Relatedly, short-term programming (especially by the military) didn't have the "luxury" of waiting for analysis. Users also noted the lack of relevance of many of the policy recommendations from research, which were often beyond the manageable interest of personnel at their level or else were unrealistic. Some noted that they "get the same things year after year." Finally, as noted above, significant decisions may be made in home capitals.

II.C.6. Culture of research

Among the Afghan population at large, there is limited popular demand for research and analysis. Respondents were sceptical about the extent to which Afghans listened to or had faith in the surveys that were reported in the media. There is widespread suspicion, well-founded or not, that polls and surveys reflect the positions of the donors who sponsor them. To a great extent, research is also perceived as telling people what they already know; the validating function of research is not well understood. For instance, when Oxfam and a group of seventeen NGOs produced a report on girls' access to education that received wide media coverage, commentators on media outlets such as Tolo TV said that it was "nothing new." In addition, the report was not owned by the government, which further limited the extent to which it would be used. Because of the way media operates, caveats and qualifiers on research and polling results, not to mention methodology, often get lost in the public discussion. This is not a problem which is unique to Afghanistan, of course.

There is also a lack of capacity in the Parliament, including among the technical commissions (committees) which are responsible for overseeing the ministries and constructing or reviewing draft legislation which responds to social needs. With a few exceptions, this lack of capacity results in there being little demand for research and analysis. The on-going crisis atmosphere in the Parliament is also not conducive to analysis and reflection. After the installation of the first Parliament in early 2006, a number of large donor-funded programs aimed to build the analytical capacity of the new parliamentarians and their staff, but results have been uneven.

In fact, the notion of "research" is poorly understood among Afghans who have not been educated to a certain level. The most common Dari translation for "research" (*tahqiq*) is the word used by the police for "inquiry" and "investigation," which has connotations of crime and spying. Field teams often had to explain that they were there to conduct interviews as a part of "scientific research" (*tahqiqat-e elmi*) in order to put respondents at ease. Given the reputation of the police and the general suspicion about outsiders asking questions about sensitive topics, this is not a trivial matter.

II.D. Quality of research

There is a stated interest amongst Afghan and international policymakers in the quality of research in and on Afghanistan. For very good reasons, policymakers should want to know how reliable are the data and analysis on which they base their decisions and which they use to monitor the success of their interventions. Due to the factors mentioned above, however, the quality of research produced in Afghanistan is quite variable.

For this review, making judgements on the quality of individual research organisations would be highly problematic. Such judgements would inevitably be subjective in nature, and, moreover, the market for research in Afghanistan makes such judgements difficult. There can be significant variation in the quality of different research outputs produced by the same organisation because these outputs, and the methodologies they use, can differ dramatically according to the demands of those commissioning the research, as well as to the capacity of the individual researchers.

More broadly, a number of other factors make it difficult to systematically assess the quality of research in Afghanistan. First, questions of research quality are intimately bound with methodological choices. Different types of research questions require different methodological approaches. Some methods, specifically Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), make unique claims to rigour in providing unbiased estimates of programme effects. Participatory methods, which are criticised from some quarters for lacking rigour, are aimed at capturing the voices of the poor and marginalised. This report covers Afghan research in a number of different disciplines and sub-disciplines from health to agricultural research to economic and political science research. It would therefore be inappropriate to impose a preference for certain types of methodological choices (for example experimental research designs) in considering the quality of such a broad range of research. However, it is important to know, and to be explicit about, the methodologies on which research findings are based and to consider whether these methodologies have been properly implemented. This is especially important in Afghanistan, where a paucity of existing data, human and technical capacity constraints, and insecurity create a unique combination of constraints on research. Ultimately, however, the question of quality of a specific piece of research is a function of whether it answers the given questions.

Second, a number of tools typically used in the North to assess the quality of research are not appropriate for the current Afghan context. Bibliometric analysis (i.e., counting the number of citations in peer reviewed journals), for example, is problematic through most of South Asia, and in Afghanistan is impossible as very few Afghan research outputs are published in Northern journals. Afghan research organisations' peer review processes may be quite informal. Also, because so much research is not made publically available, it is difficult to count the number of publications, let alone citations in peer reviewed journals.

Some of the lack of quality control over research was attributed, in part, to the lack of public scrutiny of outputs that might enforce some sort of standards. The weakness of many evaluations was in particular attributed to this factor, with assessments often done by the implementers themselves and then not made public, perhaps due to concerns about

budgetary, political, or reputational risks from negative findings. In all, this reduced the incentives to do quality work. On the other hand, public opinion polling attracted the most scepticism on quality. As one Afghan head of a research institution noted, “knocking on every five doors simply can’t be done in Helmand.” Staff from private research firms readily acknowledged that research fraud was extensive, although they typically ascribed it to other firms or to their own firms in the distant past, and described their own protocols and procedures for avoiding fraud. A recurrent explanation offered for this was that some of the owners of research (contractors) didn’t care about accuracy and therefore turned a blind eye.

Finally, with the increasing focus on transition and the apparent scaling back of ambitions, some respondents felt that the prevailing ethos was what’s “good enough.” This may also affect the interest in quality of research.

II.D.1. Types of research methodologies employed in Afghanistan

A range of research methodologies and approaches have been used in Afghanistan since 2001.¹³ All have their advantages and disadvantages in Afghanistan’s challenging research environment. Moreover, combining different methodological approaches is becoming increasingly important in that it offers the flexibility and depth of insight to analyse extremely complex situations and sets of variables. The challenging research environment in Afghanistan and the fact that especially in governance and security research questions may be deeply shaped by diverse political, economic, and social contexts makes a compelling argument against relying on findings generated by a single method. For instance, the recent Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) funded study of Helmand by ALCIS used an innovative approach by combining household survey data (systematically collected by the Organization for Sustainable Development and Research OSDR [OSDR] over three years) with political and environmental geo-spatial datasets to analyse whether reductions in opium cultivation were sustainable within the context of Helmand livelihoods¹⁴. Confronted by increasing complexity, it is likely that researchers will seek ever more innovative ways to mix and match available research tools to enhance analytic capacity.

Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs): Properly conducted experimental designs, especially RCTs, are considered the ‘gold standard’ in providing unbiased estimates of effects of a given programme. They are therefore a good research method to consult when looking for clear quantitative measures of causal effects and in overcoming attribution problems faced by other evaluation methods. However, their use in applied social science is controversial and actual field experiments may suffer from threats to internal validity; a badly designed and conducted RCT does not offer what it promises. Not all development academics and practitioners accept the gold-standard claims of RCTs across all disciplines.^{15 16 17}

¹³ For more detail on robust use of different research methodologies see Trokhim, William & Donnelly, James (2008) *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, Kengage Learning: Mason, OH.

¹⁴ Mansfield, D. (2011) *Managing Concurrent and Repeated Risks: Explaining the Reductions in Opium Production in Central Helmand between 2008 and 2011*. Kabul, ALCIS.

¹⁵ Angus Deaton *Randomization in the Tropics*
www.princeton.edu/~deaton/.../Instruments_of_Development.pdf

Although RCTs are becoming more common in international development, especially in the fields of health and education but also increasingly in democratisation and governance, there have been limited RCTs conducted in Afghanistan. This is not surprising given the general challenges of conducting research in Afghanistan, the resource-intensive nature of RCTs, and the need to manage them carefully to ensure that different rates of attrition in, or contamination between, the treatment and control groups do not threaten the validity of the trial. RCTs require continuity, and in Afghanistan entire villages (treatment or control) may drop out due to insecurity, or groups within the villages may drop out for a variety of reasons. An International Rescue Committee (IRC) report reviewing its experiences with RCTs identified finding qualified and experienced evaluators to conduct RCTs as a challenge.¹⁸ Properly conducted RCTs can give an accurate answer on the impact of a programme in the particular setting in which it has been evaluated (high internal validity), but may not be able to answer questions about scaling up to other settings, unless a systematic set of RCTs have been conducted on a given programme in a number of different locations.¹⁹ RCTs may use qualitative research and social and economic theory, to answer the 'why' questions about their findings. As is the case in most developing countries, the few RCTs which have been conducted in Afghanistan have been led by academics from northern universities.

Non-experimental and quasi-experimental quantitative methods: Non-experimental and quasi-experimental quantitative methods either rely on existing data or generate their own data, often through a variety of survey methods. Quantitative studies that generate their own data face the same constraints as any type of survey research in Afghanistan, as described below, while studies that rely on government statistics and statistics from existing surveys incorporate the weaknesses of these data into their own findings. For contracted surveys, survey design and analysis may be provided by the contractor, or may be undertaken by the client. These methods can produce outputs of mixed quality, with some studies compromised by poor research design and others by poor quality data.

From a service-provider's point of view, quantitative surveys can be conducted by staff with relatively low levels of formal education or literacy. This is very significant in the Afghan context, where for security reasons, research field staff may need to be drawn from the communities they are working in. One other potential pitfall that results from local adaptations that implementers have to make to different conditions in Afghanistan is that NGOs who offer their sites for research may have different structures and qualities to their programmatic interventions, which makes strict comparability difficult.²⁰

¹⁶ Short ODI paper *The gold standard is not a silver bullet for evaluation*.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=2811&title=impact-evaluation>

¹⁷ ILAC Working Paper 13. *Randomised Control Trials for the Impact Evaluation of Development Initiatives: A Statistician's Point of View*, by Carlos Barahona. <http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/content/working-papers>

¹⁸ Nelson, Jodie Lee. *Program Evaluation: Are we ready for RCTs?* In 'InterAction Monday Developments'. March 2008.

<http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2007/program-evaluation-are-we-ready-for-rcts-irc-jodi-nelson.pdf>.

¹⁹ Frans Leeuw and Jos Vaessen (2009). *Impact Evaluation and Development: NONIE Guidance on Impact Evaluation, The Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation*, p. xv.

²⁰ For an example of this pitfall, see Islamic Republic of Afghanistan MoPH, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur.

Qualitative studies: ‘Qualitative research’ covers a very broad array of methodologies, tools, and methods. Qualitative methods of data collection range from participant observation, direct observation, and unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews to focus groups. In Afghanistan qualitative research encompasses a spectrum with rigorous research, involving high academic standards of data collection and analysis and validation and triangulation of results on the one hand, and much quicker research projects or ‘expert opinion’ pieces on the other.

A criticism frequently levelled at qualitative research is that it is often not replicable, making it difficult for another researcher to disprove the findings. Over recent decades, qualitative researchers have developed a stronger focus on criteria for assessing and promoting the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of qualitative research. Being explicit about the research methodology used and the changing context in which it was used is a key part of this focus on quality, but this best practice is not always seen in Afghan research outputs.

Because qualitative research is particularly suitable for generating theories about how change happens, for providing a rich understanding of complex social phenomena, and for understanding the way phenomena are experienced and understood by respondents, qualitative methods have been widely used in livelihoods, private sector development, and governance research in Afghanistan. Unless methodologically rigorous and underpinned by established conceptual and theoretical frameworks, qualitative studies may be insufficiently robust. As noted above, opinions expressed in focus groups may be influenced by the cultural tradition of deferring to one’s elders and social superiors. At their best, qualitative studies can provide vital nuance and insight to policymakers. Also, there is a very perceivable bias in favour of quantitative studies, as hard numbers give the appearance of substance. The low n’s common to quantitative research are often disdained.

Qualitative research is implemented by a smaller number of policy-focused research organisations including Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation (APPRO), Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), and Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD), and to a lesser extent by NGOs. Some contract research providers such as Altai have brought market-research techniques such as focus group studies to the ARD+E sector²¹. However, many qualitative studies take the form of case studies, and comparative analysis of multi-site case studies has been a widely employed approach, particularly in studies of rural livelihoods²².

Public opinion polls and perception surveys: Survey research is one of the most important tools of measurement in social science, and in Afghanistan it has become one of the most visible in the media and the public discourse. Survey data, especially perception survey data, are widely used by donors and military forces to measure the success of political and military strategy, as well as development interventions in governance and security. Survey

Final Evaluation Report on Health Financing Pilots: The Effects of User Fees vs. Free Services on Primary Care in Afghanistan.

²¹ Altai Consulting (2008) *Afghanistan small and medium enterprise development: Milk and Yoghurt*, Kabul

²² Pain, A. and Paula Kantor. (2010) *Understanding and addressing context in rural Afghanistan: How villages differ and why?* Issues paper Kabul, AREU.

data are also an important resource for academics. Several organisations have commissioned either one-off or longitudinal survey research of governance and security in Afghanistan, for a number of different clients. A number of surveys were conducted in connection with the 2009 presidential election. Most of the surveys relevant to governance and conflict are perceptions surveys or opinion polls, although some surveys go beyond asking about perceptions to ask about experiences, of corruption, for example.

The most widely known survey is The Asia Foundation (TAF) Annual Survey of the Afghan People, conducted in 2004 and then annually from 2006 by ACSOR, which uses a nationally representative sample and covers public perceptions of reconstruction, security, governance, and poppy cultivation, the role of women and Islam in society, and the impact of media. BBC/ ABC News/ German ARD conducted annual Afghan opinion polls annually between 2005 and 2010, involving face-to-face interviews with a random sample of almost 1,700 adults across all thirty-four provinces.

Some survey research is available in the public domain and some is proprietary research – or research which is kept by clients and is not publicly available. Various surveys conducted for military clients by research and polling firms covering perceptions of security, service delivery, economy and governance. These are used to inform ISAF regional commands and no outputs are publicly available. This makes it impossible to offer an exhaustive list of governance-related surveys here. Well known surveys are connected with the organisations that commissioned them, but are frequently contracted to research organisations to conduct. Sometimes the work is also sub-contracted, and as with other sub-contracted development work, it is often not obvious who has conducted the bulk of the field-work.

A number of Afghan-registered organisations have been established to meet the demand for survey research since 2001. These organisations range from relatively well established players to smaller organisations, about which the team was unable to find much information.

Perception surveys are of obvious utility to policymakers in a post-conflict environment, where Afghan perceptions of government effectiveness and legitimacy and of the security situation are crucial measures of success. Many governance outcomes in the areas such as service delivery, anti-corruption, democracy and rule of law are notoriously difficult to measure directly, so subjective surveys are often the best quantitative tools available.

Opinion polls have been controversial in Afghanistan, however. In 2010 the validity of ABC/BBC/ARD opinion poll, which showed a sharp improvement in approval for foreign forces, for the government and its policy direction and for President Karzai, who was re-elected in a controversial election in 2009, was openly questioned by some researchers and other pundits.²³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the methodological validity of individual polls, or the strengths and weaknesses of individual research organisations in conducting perception surveys. Moreover, some commissioners of research, including DFID and the US Department of Defence's Strategic Multi-layered Analysis/Rich Contextual Understanding (SMA/RCU), have produced or commissioned their own studies of the validity

²³ Grim, Ryan (13 January 2010), *Experts on Afghanistan Doubt Survey on Foreign Occupation: Results are Impossible*. Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/13/afghanistan-experts-doubt_n_422482.html

of individual surveys and methodological considerations that identified limits to the ways in which they can or should be used.^{24,25}

It is within the remit of this study, however, to consider some of the unique challenges posed by the Afghan environment to reliable and valid findings from survey research. There are some broad constraints facing any kind of survey research in Afghanistan, and some considerations that are specific to perceptions surveys. A number of the constraints identified in Section II.B above apply especially strongly to opinion polling and surveys, including lack of complete demographic information upon which to base sampling and insecurity that restricts enumerators' safe access to geographic areas but also may affect respondents willingness to participate and give unbiased answers, and which can therefore easily bias results. These challenges are important to bear in mind when commissioning or using survey research in Afghanistan.

Action research and participatory approaches: Action research and other participatory approaches have been used widely in Afghanistan, especially within the ARD+E sector (e.g., alternative livelihoods, natural resources management), and for peace-building studies, which have employed these methodologies as a tool to enhance community engagement as well as to produce research findings. Participatory and action research (PAR) is itself aimed at effecting empowerment and positive organisational and or societal transformation. These forms of research to some extent make a compromise between the rigour of scientific trials or pure research approaches and the practical value of working with communities. Action research has been favoured by donors because they can deliver visible on-ground impacts in combination with detailed research outputs. Action research has been typically favoured by NGO's which have strong links into communities, but also by a wide range of institutions and projects. PAR approaches are controversial, however, with some criticising them for lack of rigour, and others arguing that they can produce greater rigour for real-life research questions, or research questions that ask whether an intervention, or group of interventions, work in complex real-world conditions.²⁶

Notable recent examples of PAR include Aga Khan Foundation's (AKF) participatory rice farming trials funded by the European Commission (EC)²⁷, the DFID/Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) funded (Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods in Eastern Hazarajat (SALEH) project²⁸ and the World Bank-funded AREU and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) land conflict resolution project²⁹. The International Center for Agricultural Research in

²⁴Baker T, Orlina R, Pagano S, Salwen M, Williams R (2010) *Methodological Considerations and the Use of Data from Afghanistan: A Review of the Utility of SIGACTS, TCAF, KLE and Polling Data for Population-centric Assessment*

²⁵ DFID. September 2010. op cit.

²⁶ Carolyn Petersen (2010), *Draft Participatory and Action Research (PAR): A Review*. Commissioned by Governance, Conflict & Social Development, Research & Evaluation Division, DFID

²⁷ Thomas, V. and M. Ramzi (2009) *System of Rice Intensification (SRI) 2009 Campaign results and recommendations*, Kabul, AKF

²⁸ Wily, L (2008) *A set of guidelines developed from lessons learned arising from the Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods in Eastern Hazarajat (SALEH) pilot project*, Kabul, FAO.

²⁹ Deschamps, C. and Roe, A. (2009) *Land Conflict in Afghanistan: Building Capacity to address vulnerability*, Kabul, AREU, Issues paper

the Dry Areas (ICARDA) also conducts and evaluates pilot projects within the community³⁰. Action research generally involves a long term commitment and has clear application to certain types of research questions but not others.

Remote sensing: Remote sensing and interpretation of geospatial data is of growing significance in providing evidence for making decisions in ARD+E, as well as in triangulating the findings of other methods of data collection. Increasing insecurity in some parts of the country that makes alternative methods of 'ground-truthing' less feasible has likely been a factor in the increase in the number of institutions applying advanced technologies to the production, interpretation, and analysis of data, but logistical and cost advantages have also contributed. As noted above, remote sensing can complement other methods of data collection. Alcis, a regular research partner of DFID/FCO has undertaken multiple studies to remotely determine agricultural and livelihood conditions through interrogation of geospatial data³¹. Likewise, funded by USAID, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has undertaken much of their analysis of change in the eastern forests complex through remote sensing techniques³². Remote sensing has found particular utility for monitoring opium cultivation and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has utilised it heavily in their annual opium surveys³³. A high proportion of USGS geological and resource exploration is now driven by analysis of geospatial data. In particular, the USGS's Agro meteorological Information system has become a key resource for WFP, FAO, and other members of the Early Warning Information Group³⁴.

Other research: In addition to and alongside the social science research covered in this review, there are other types of scientific and physical investigations, such as human or animal medical trials, agronomic trials on farmers' fields or within the universities or Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) land to see the response of crop varieties to various levels of irrigation, and other types of scientific exploration. For obvious reasons these are more common in the health and ARD+E sectors, notably in environmental and geologic areas. For instance, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) undertakes extensive field research exploring and ground-truthing within the context of hydrological studies, non-fuel minerals exploration, and fossil fuels exploration although this is increasingly being supplemented by remote sensing and analysis of geo-spatial data. As with social science research, these investigations are mostly funded and guided by donors.³⁵

II.D.2. Time series vs. short-term research

³⁰ICARDA (2008) *Cultivation of mint as a viable Alternative Livelihood In East and North East Afghanistan*, RALF 2 project final report.

³¹ALCIS (2008) *Drought and reduced crop yields across Afghanistan*, Kabul

³²Etienne, D. and Rahmani, H. (2008) *A preliminary assessment of forest cover and change in the eastern forest complex of Afghanistan*. Wildlife Conservation Society. Kabul

³³UNODC (2009) *Afghanistan opium survey*, Kabul

³⁴USGS(2010) *Agro-Meteorological Seasonal Bulletin 2009-2010*, Kabul

³⁵For examples of agricultural and mineral-related research, see respectively Ward, R. Glenn and M. Hill, J. (2010) *Assessment of Agricultural Research in Afghanistan*, Kabul, USAID and Peters, S. King, T. Mack T. and Chornack, M. (2011) *Summaries of Important Areas for Mineral Investment and Production Opportunities of Nonfuel Minerals in Afghanistan*, Kabul, USGS

It is noteworthy that some of the most heavily referenced sets of evidence for policy-making have been the NRVA and UNODC repeat surveys. These have established data sets in time series which have highlighted trends of change and generated public policy discussion. Even longitudinal qualitative research offers dividends in terms of insights into changing behaviour; AREU's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) -funded livelihoods trajectories study was able to analyse the evolving livelihoods strategies of a group of households across multiple provinces over a period of eight years, reflecting on the whole experience of rural living post-Taliban and the impact of international assistance through this period.³⁶

With some notable exceptions, the large majority of studies conducted in Afghanistan are relatively short term, usually the product of a single period of field work, and so at best produce a snapshot rather than a long view of a dynamic situation. This is often due to the demand for rapid completion and analysis of surveys and assessments so as to meet tight program schedules. While some of the more established research institutions in Afghanistan have benefitted from long term commitments from donors and multi-year project funding, many organisations exist from one contract to the next. This may be related to the changing evidence needs of donors as they focus increasingly on program impact assessment. It is important that at least some funding is earmarked to support on-going long-term research into the future.

The desirability (under some conditions) for rapid studies and appraisals should be weighed against the qualitative advantages of longitudinal studies, giving time for adequate research design, capacity building of staff, a systematic, time-series approach to data collection and the possibility of exploring dynamics through time. The evidence of this study further suggests that just as the northern provinces of Afghanistan are subject to the largest amount of regionally specific research, so does the northern half of Afghanistan benefit from the highest proportion of long term, in-depth studies

III. Available research and analysis

III.A. Research available: overview

The following brief survey of research conducted in Afghanistan over approximately the last three years is meant to be representative, and in no way is intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive. The survey was done in September-October 2011, and does not include research or publications after that time. The focus was mainly on research done by institutions in Afghanistan, but given the significant role of international institutions in research as well as the complex relationships between Afghan and international institutions, it was not always possible to draw an exact line. To avoid unwieldy footnotes in the text, the surveyed research is listed in Annex B.

³⁶ Kantor, P and Pain, A. (2011) *Running out of options: Tracing rural livelihoods*, Kabul AREU Synthesis paper.

As noted in the methodology section above, the team used a broad and flexible definition of what constituted 'research'. With the international community shifting its focus in Afghanistan to Transition, some respondents noted that there was less interest in broader research and more on narrow impact and other types of evaluation. Categories of Afghan research do not map neatly into the six clusters and subordinate twenty-two National Priority Programmes (NPPs).³⁷ There are overlaps in many areas, and in many cases research questions cover issues of relevance to several of the NPPs, often in more than one of the six clusters.

One of the key gaps in the global pot of knowledge about Afghanistan is donor-funded data, research, and evaluation that is not shared with GIRoA or the public. The MOF noted in 2010 that donors were not in the practice of sharing their results or monitoring and evaluation reports with GIRoA.³⁸ It is impossible to quantify, but anecdotal evidence and discussions with producers and consumers of evidence in Afghanistan suggest that the proportion of research which never enters the public domain may well exceed the volume of published studies. Many of the research outputs that were mentioned to the authors by research organisations could not be shared. Whether studies and information are made available and to whom will depend on the donor and on the project. In some cases, the institution which commissions the work may only be willing for it to be made public after it has been circulated internally or modified to remove information that they do not wish to circulate.

Some research organisations noted that with commissioned work they did not have the additional financial resources required to produce public versions of the analysis, including in some cases Dari or Pashtu translations. This was attributed to a mix of funding issues and lack of donor interest in making the research publically available. In at least one specific case a local research firm was contracted by an international firm to produce research on a number of politically sensitive topics (illegal trade, radicalization) only to have the findings either suppressed or re-written. Another major issue is the lack of central clearing houses or repositories for research which is, in theory, publically available. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain with accuracy how much data or evidence actually has been produced during this period. The only public knowledge-management system that stores and makes available research and other publications on Afghanistan, in English, Dari and Pashtu, is the library at AREU that has a searchable online database.

Known research and analysis that was not available to the public included ISAF outputs Afghanistan Country Stability Picture³⁹, Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE)⁴⁰, and Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR).⁴¹ Other

³⁷ The National Priority Programmes (NPPs) represent an attempt by the Afghan government to prioritise the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). They were presented at the 2010 London Conference based on the major themes of the conference, and were grouped under the newly defined 'clusters' of ministries. See Table 1, page 50.

³⁸ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance (2010) *Development Cooperation Report*, p. 40.

³⁹ A database published by CD quarterly on projects which have been implemented. In general, information is incomplete, unreliable, and difficult to use, in part because donors and other producers of information do not provide it. While officially not available to the public, it has circulated among the analytical community.

⁴⁰ Also produced by ISAF is a database collected by international forces on general infrastructure plus health (i.e., staffing, use, availability of medicine). This is used by the international military, but may not be shared with MOPH or other users.

non-public research and analysis included various assessments by PRTs, polling data available to the military and military-linked users from the quarterly reports prepared by the Afghanistan Analysis Group, KDW WAVE polling contracted by RC-South, and the US military's Human Terrain System (HTS). HTS provides "operationally relevant socio-cultural research and analysis"⁴² to the military through the deployment of a range of social scientists. Categorized as an "intelligence support activity," HTS has been controversial among some social scientists due to a number of practical and ethical concerns.

This report is intended to map research capacity in Afghanistan, so focuses mostly on Afghan-based organisations and their research outputs. However, some research led by non-Afghan academic and other institutions is referred to here, where it is particularly high impact because of its method, its subject, or the scope of its Afghan field work. It must be noted that research conducted by Afghan-led organisations still constitutes only one part of overall research and evaluation done in Afghanistan since 2001.

The following is a description of the types of research which have been done under the seven sectors of governance and security, wealth creation, ARD+E, health, education, gender, and humanitarian assistance. The studies and publications themselves are listed in Annex B. The studies listed in Annex B are intended to be representative only and by no means are comprehensive. As noted above, the most comprehensive bibliography for Afghanistan is *The Afghanistan Analyst Bibliography*.

III.B. Research available: Governance and security

For the sake of the review, the extremely broad governance and security sector was mapped into the six areas or sub-sectors below. Some of the public opinion polls described above also covered one or more of the sub-sectors. Available research was done using a wide variety of the methodologies described in section II.D.1 above.

DEMOCRACY

Given the international community's focus on introducing democracy after 2001, a significant body of research and analysis related to democratic institutions and politics, including presidential and parliamentary elections. One RCT study was conducted to evaluate the impact of using a photographic monitoring technology on differences in ballot counts and on 'displacement' effect that might cause candidates to cheat in a different way. A number of international and Afghan organisations produced analytical reports during and after the presidential and parliamentary elections, some of which tracked voter fraud and local and national political dynamics in very close to real time. One institution created a web site to make available the data (in raw, map, and other formats) from the two presidential and two *wolesi jirga* elections in order to encourage transparency.

Beyond the actual elections, research was produced on the broader dynamics of post-2001 democracy, including Afghan attitudes to elections and democratic institutions at national

⁴¹ Additional sources mentioned by ISAF included J2-CJIOC, US Congressional 1230 reports, Upper Quartile, and the Norfolk Fusion Center.

⁴² See <http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/htsFAQ.aspx>.

and local levels, general perspectives on democracy, political party evolution, dynamics within the parliament, politics (including the political economy of the *wolesi jirga* or lower house of parliament), and the role of gender in the parliament. A number of organisations conducted opinion polls at the time of the August 2009 presidential election covering general opinions on political and security developments as well as voting intentions and whether or not free and fair elections were anticipated. Under the broader area of democracy, a number of studies have looked at the phenomenon of civil society in post-2001 Afghanistan, some of which concluded that there had been limited interaction between different actors with respect to law and policy making, in part due to the limited understanding of civil society and the distrust between government and civil society. Many of these studies were related to donor-supported projects aiming to strengthen civil society.

JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW

Due to a combination of the importance of rule of law in state building and the focus on justice and human rights by many NGOs and civil society organisations, there has been a fair amount of research on justice and rule of law, especially on formal and informal justice and dispute resolution, with some overlap with human rights and conflict. Several organisations, some in collaboration with the International Centre for Transitional Justice, produced research on the legacies of conflict and the state of transitional justice in Afghanistan, publishing a number of briefing papers and documents for advocacy.

Another significant focus of research, especially in the last several years, has been the relationship between the formal and non-formal parts of the justice sector and on how informal mechanisms for dispute resolution relate to the formal statutory processes. Interest in the non-formal sector was reflected in the 2007 Afghanistan Human Development Report which focused on the relationship of the two parts of the sector, and which was considered highly controversial in some parts of the Afghan legal establishment.

Some of the research on the justice sector examined the contribution of international donor support and Afghan government programmes on access to justice, including a number of surveys which were done of perceptions on the performance of the Afghan National Police (ANP). Attitudes to the ANP and the broader justice sector are included in a number of the general public opinion polls, including the TAF annual nationwide survey.

CORRUPTION

Given the centrality of corruption as a political and development issue, it is not surprising that it is a key cross-cutting issue that emerges in many research outputs. With a few exceptions, the research on corruption that has been available to the authors is concentrated in surveys of perceptions and experiences of corruption. Several national or multi-province surveys of corruption have been conducted, some of which went beyond general perceptions and included questions on how respondents had personally experienced corruption. Some studies have looked at corruption at the sub-national level in the larger context of state-building and state legitimacy, while others have looked at the process by which contracts were agreed and signed for the Aynak and Hajigak mines.

As attention has been increasingly paid to the corruption arising out of international development and security assistance, a number of studies have been done on this area, including several specific studies made publically available by the newly created office of the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction and the US General Accountability Office. Some of the more recent 'forensic' work on corruption by parts of the military is not likely to be available to the public. Corruption is one of the variables that is included in the TAF annual nationwide surveys. Given the cross-cutting nature of corruption, related studies which touch on corruption are mentioned under other categories of governance research as well as under wealth creation below.

SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

While there have been repeated accusations that the international community's focus has been too 'Kabul-centric,' there has been increased focus on sub-national governance, including formal and non-formal sub-national institutions and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). Impetus may also have been provided by the establishment in 2007 of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG), which reflected concern that the weakness of formal sub-national institutions (and appointments) were failing to generate support for the state. To some extent, the geographic distribution of research on sub-national governance is limited by mobility and security issues. A recent qualitative study looked at formal and informal structures, administrative, and elected bodies in seven provinces with respect to policies and responsibilities of both donors and the government, accountability for the state, and progress on services and infrastructure.

A major RCT evaluation of the NSP underway since 2007 by international academics with the support of the World Bank looks at a number of issues which are of direct relevance to sub-national governance, including security and counter-insurgency, and whether NSP affects perceptions of well-being and attitudes to the government. Villages in seventy-four districts, which were chosen to be representative of Afghanistan's ethno-linguistic diversity (although without the inclusion of the south due to insecurity) were organised into matched pairs, with one of each pair randomly assigned to receive NSP. Additional experimentation was done through variation in the type of CDC election methods used and a Village Benefit Distribution Analysis to see whether creating representative governance structures would have any effect on village leaders and lead to a more equitable distribution of assistance coming from the outside.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The attention paid to human rights reflects in part the significant investments made in civil society institutions post-2001, along with the framing of post-Taliban Afghanistan in terms of justice and freedom. A significant part of research in this area is made up of advocacy and documentation of cases and larger trends. There is an obvious overlap with other areas, including 'conflict, security, and peacebuilding' and 'justice and rule of law', especially in the area of civilian casualties.

The most systematic production and dissemination of information comes from the constitutionally-mandated Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), which produces a variety of daily and ad hoc reports on a range of human rights issues (e.g.,

torture and violation of detainee rights, gender-based violence, the legality of amnesties, and civilian casualties) as well as more focused, thematic topics such as children in conflict, actions of international forces/international humanitarian law, economic and social rights, child labour, and women's rights. The Commission collaborates with the Human Rights Unit at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which draws on a broad range of primary and secondary sources.

More focused studies have been done, sometimes through collaboration between local institutions and international centres, on research concerning the effect of international military forces on human rights and on other related issues. Research has also been done by NGOs and NGO consortia on issues related to human rights, including democracy and elections, gender and women's rights, economic rights, security, and education.

At least two studies of child labour have been done, one commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the other funded by UNICEF and the Child Rights Consortium.

For understandable reasons, a significant amount of the more high profile human rights research and advocacy is done by institutions based outside of Afghanistan, some of whom do not have a permanent presence in the country (e.g., Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International). Some of the analysis produced by such organisations relies on research and data collection done by AIHRC, UNAMA, and other sources.

CONFLICT, SECURITY, AND PEACE BUILDING

Particularly in the last several years, conflict, security, and peace-building, including research on the insurgency, security sector reform, and local and national reintegration and peace-building initiatives has received a lot of attention, as has researching, monitoring, and analysing trends in conflict and security, especially in looking at the inner workings of the Taliban and other insurgent groups, reconciliation and reintegration, tribal structures and alliances, and the consequences supporting local defence forces/militias. Some of the vast literature is substantial, while some of it is based on limited data and unlimited conjecture. Some of the studies have specifically looked at conflict-mitigating impacts such as building cohesion and improving relations between ethnic groups. Research on PRTs and civil-military coordination is an entire genre in itself. In this area, the amount of research being done by military-related institutions is significant.

Not surprisingly, a relatively large amount of security sector research is not released for public distribution, although some of it (e.g., trends in the conflict) makes its way into the public. One publically available monitoring activity on human security involved gathering consistent information from similar groups in nine districts on a monthly basis, but this seems to have been discontinued after twenty months.

The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP), aiming to reintegrate lower level insurgents and reconcile with higher level insurgents through political dialogue, has generated a number of perception studies, policy analyses, and expert opinion pieces both from international and Afghan research organisations. One recent survey done of nearly

5,000 persons in sixteen provinces looked at levels of support for a political settlement and on understanding of the process.

A significant amount of research has been done by a number of organisations looking at the impact of key policies and interventions designed to deliver security, including the use of communication for stabilisation; the impact of mobilising and arming informal institutions for community defence; and, the effectiveness of the use of aid and development to promote stability as part of the counter-insurgency strategy. The latter is also addressed by the RCT on the NSP described above.

Another significant area of research has been on the drivers of radicalisation, including the extent to which they are related to local conflict, ideology, alienation from the state, the international presence, or economic factors.

III.C. Research available: Wealth creation

Major themes in the broad area of wealth creation have included livelihoods, credit and microfinance, corruption, and banking, although in parts of which surprisingly little public research and analysis has been done. A number of areas overlap with governance and with ARD+E, the former because of the importance of institutions in encouraging (or discouraging) economic activity, and the latter because of the importance of the agricultural sector in Afghanistan's economy. Analysis often draws on existing data sources such as the NRVA, but is then extended using additional analytical tools.

LIVELIHOODS

Due in part to the lack of funding for long-term research, livelihoods research has tended to be of the 'snap shot' variety, although a couple of multi-year programs have tracked livelihoods trajectories in rural communities by visiting some of the same villages after intervals of several years. The existence of the NRVA database has allowed further analysis of the relationship between poverty and other variables, including developing a profile of poverty and estimating the impact of the 2007-08 global food crisis on household food security in Afghanistan.

CREDIT AND MICROFINANCE

Due in part to the interest in microfinance and the high profile failures in the formal credit sector, as well as the belief that credit is a constraint to expansion of economic activity, a significant amount of research has been done in these areas. In addition to studies which have surveyed the microfinance sector and tried to estimate poverty reduction and other impacts, more specific studies have included the demand for *sharia*-based financial products in urban and rural areas, the demand for and supply of credit in parts of agricultural value chains, the demand for savings services in urban areas, and the role of informal credit and social networks in managing rural livelihoods and risks. A number of these studies have been done or commissioned by the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA). While the difficulties in Afghanistan's banking sector have gained much attention in the media and in policy circles, there is surprisingly little visible research on the sector. It is

highly likely that much of the analysis of this sector is proprietary, and therefore does not circulate publically.

SECTORAL, MARKET, OR INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES

Much of the research and analysis in this area has been made up of applied sectoral, sub-sectoral, or legal/institutional studies done or commissioned by donors as part of project planning or implementation, often by the project implementers themselves. Many of these studies are not released into the public domain (although their existence is well-known), and there were reports of some studies which raised sensitive issues having been suppressed or otherwise taken out of circulation. Due to its focus on small and medium enterprise development, USAID in particular has funded numerous market value chain studies for key Afghan products, including gems, fresh fruits, dry fruits, and carpets. There have been surprisingly few visible studies of regional or local markets, although two studies of local markets in the northeast were examples of village or town-level field research done by a collaboration of local researchers and international institutions. Project evaluations or pre-project assessments often contain research and analysis (e.g., roads' socio-economic impact assessment), but these are often not public or are hard to locate.

CORRUPTION

As noted above under governance, there have been numerous studies and assessments related to corruption. With respect to wealth creation, there is a notable literature of research and surveys related to the role corruption and other factors play in constraining economic development in Afghanistan. Some research, including a study of Afghan business attitudes, is one-off, while a number of studies are repeated regularly in order to show changes in conditions over time. Some of these are conducted worldwide by the World Bank so enable international comparisons, while others have been conducted by local institutions. Local institutions have also produced specific studies of mining contracts as part of planned long-term monitoring of extractive industries. Additional analysis is provided by the compliance and corruption-related reports produced by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, General Accountability Office, and Inspector General, as well as advocacy work done by NGOs.

SYNTHESIS AND COUNTRY-LEVEL STUDIES

Another significant area is the compilation and synthesis of existing country-level materials into analysis, often by multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank. While not always original research, it does make analysis broadly available, including data that would not otherwise be available to the public. Most of this work is based on internal World Bank data, although some of it does analysis based on theory and secondary sources. Some of this is driven by internal processes such as expenditure reviews and country program strategy reviews, some of which cover a number of different sectors.

ADVOCACY

There is also a fairly extensive genre of advocacy pieces related to specific issues such as poverty, Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and economic social rights.

DATA

Finally, there are periodic analyses and the collection of data presented by multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Asian Development Bank (ADB), intended to aid policy makers and analysts, including quarterly country economic updates, country reports, working papers, press releases, transcripts of press briefings, and miscellaneous other documents. These institutions, especially the IMF, maintain historical financial and economic data including exchange rates, trade statistics, price indices, and other economic and financial indicators.

There are also various MA and PhD theses and dissertations on the above topics. In addition, there is much repackaging of mostly open source material for public or military use (e.g., documents produced Civil-Military Fusion Centre).

III.D. Research available: Agriculture, rural development, and environment (ARD+E)

A wide range of research activity has been undertaken relevant to ARD+E in recent years by the major research institutions in Afghanistan. Within the sector, rural development and livelihoods-related themes dominate the corpus of evidence. This is perhaps inevitable given that livelihoods-related policy objectives underlie much agricultural and environmental research and the close relationship between them, and is also not surprising given the role of the donors in setting the research agenda. This predominance of livelihoods-related research may also reflect the increasing significance of assessments and evaluations within the context of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) program implementation and the Millennium Development Goals. After rural development and livelihoods, agriculture, natural resource management, and opium were the most widely researched areas.

Within rural development and livelihoods, the strongest focus was on rural livelihoods, especially on household strategies and the related areas of poverty, debt, and vulnerability, followed by food security and diversification. Within agriculture, a main focus was on condition assessments, agribusiness (including market chain analysis), and livestock. This is consistent with the focus of donors on encouraging market-led growth, wheat production, and horticultural exports. One International Development Research Centre (IDRC) -funded study looked at gender and agricultural innovation in rural Afghanistan. As noted above under wealth creation, an extensive volume of market studies focusing on specific commodities (e.g., marble, fresh and dried fruits) have been done related to project implementation but these are not always visible.

Within natural resource management, research focused on water resources management, followed by environmental governance. A USAID-funded research and development programme focusing on reducing risks and enhancing livelihood security for *kuchi* (nomadic)

pastoralists has produced several publications and a considerable volume of data with thematic *foci* on natural resource management, rangelands, livestock production, and pastoral livelihoods and advocacy. An ADB- and DFID-funded action research project hosted by MAIL and designed to pilot new community-based approaches to land registration and administration produced several research papers. Another action research project, with multi-year funding from the EC Panj Amu River Basin project, aimed to foster improved and more collaborative irrigation management systems. In addition, the Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2011, produced by the Centre for Policy and Human Development hosted at Kabul University, and funded by UNDP, is a collection of research and discussion papers with the common theme of human access to water with respect to the Millennium Development Goals. Individual papers explored irrigation water management and conflict, *kuchi* access to water, the effects of drought and river basin development. Individual papers have been released and distributed, but due to some complications with the involved institutions, the 2011 HDR has not yet been issued, and it is not clear when it might be released.

Opium research and analysis focused overwhelmingly on cultivation patterns, drivers of cultivation, impact of eradication, and 'alternative livelihoods' – again reflecting donor interests. As discussed further below, opium research was focused in certain specific geographical areas of the country. In contrast, the themes of environment and climate change are much less evident within the reviewed body of visible research and are extremely limited.

More than in other sectors, ARD+E research tends to span multiple themes, including significant long-term research projects on the inter-relationship between various aspects of the rural economy (e.g., water management, livestock, opium economy, livelihoods). One EC-funded four-year project drew on evidence from eight provinces to produce thirty-four publications exploring the relationship between all aspects of natural resource management, agricultural systems, and rural livelihoods, including dynamics which affected the opium economy.

A number of other significant data collection and monitoring activities which might not be considered 'research' produce some of the more substantial parts of the ARD+E evidence base, including the NRVA which is coordinated by the MRRD/VAU and the CSO and is one of the most significant analytical exercises in Afghanistan. The NRVA was carried out in 2003, 2005, and 2007/08. The 2011/12 is currently in the field, and future versions are planned for 2012/13 and 2013/14. Additional activities which contribute to the ARD+E evidence base are the Agricultural Prospects reporting program led by MAIL; Agro-Meteorological Seasonal Bulletins; and, the annual Opium Survey conducted by UNODC.

Additional major analytical work included the *National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA)* and *National Adaptation Programme of Action for Climate Change (NAPA)*, which was a two year program of analysis, review of data and capacity building to identify priority activities for adapting to climate change led by the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) with support from UNEP, and a multi-year program of USGS and USAID with the objective of identifying mineral resources with potential for extraction.

III.E. Research available: health

A significant amount of policy, academic, and medical research has been carried out in the health sector. In line with the main important policy areas, the main focus of health research has been on women's and reproductive health, health systems (including performance-based contracting) and health-seeking behaviour/obstacles to healthcare, health financing, and HIV/AIDS. Much of the research has been done either by implementers or connected with implementation. Several large, national-level studies contribute to policy discussion within the MOPH and with donors.

In line with the focus by the donors and the Afghan government on women's and children's health, much research has been done in this area. The recently released Afghanistan Mortality Survey provided the first national estimates of maternal mortality, as well as other information on health indicators and service utilisation. Results showed remarkable improvements in access to health care and health outcomes, although some of the results and interpretation are controversial. The RAMOS II study repeats part of the 2002 study which showed staggeringly high maternal mortality rates in parts of the country (Badakhshan), and which helped set the public narrative around women's health in Afghanistan.

Two of the most visible studies reflecting concerns about increasing costs of providing health care to Afghanistan's growing population were the National Health Accounts, which uses an internationally standardized approach to measure resource flows in the health sector, and a set of health financing pilot studies that looked at the effects of users fees on health service quality and access.

Although perhaps more properly considered monitoring, the most visible analysis in the health sector is the Balanced Score Card (BSC), in which an external organisation contracted to the MOPH annually evaluates a random sample of more than 600 health facilities across the country using a set of twenty-nine indicators, in order to allow the MOPH to identify and prioritize overall areas of concern, and to oversee the performance of the individual NGOs who have been contracted to deliver services under the system of performance-based grants introduced in 2003. UNICEF's internationally standardized household Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) was carried out in 2003 and again in 2010, with the 2010 results expected for release during 2012. UNICEF recommends repetition every three years, and provides support to governments in its implementation.

A fair amount of research has taken place on HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan, focusing mainly on prevalence and knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) among the high-risk groups of IV drug users, truck drivers, commercial sex workers, and men having sex with men. Aside from the practical difficulties of engaging with these socially-marginalized groups, the research process also raises some extremely challenging ethical dilemmas, given the sensitivity of the topic and concerns about the security of respondents. The MOPH and international and local partners did a first round of surveillance in 2009 for both biological and behavioural data, with a second round being conducted in 2011.

Despite anecdotal and speculative information on the extent of depression and other maladies among the population, research on mental health in Afghanistan has been quite

limited, due to factors such as the lack of Afghans trained in mental health issues, assumed cultural sensitivity, and fundamental questions about the transferability of western models of mental health. There is, however, increasing interest in mental health studies. In a randomised trial in northern Afghanistan where sixty-one Afghan women with mental health symptoms received either standard pharmacological treatment or alternative psychosocial counselling, results indicated the effectiveness of a counselling approach. A number of studies have focused on the cultural transferability of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other conditions, and on what appropriate diagnostic and treatment approaches would be in the Afghan context.

There has also been more medically-oriented research on infectious diseases, new strains of HIV and other diseases, the effectiveness of pharmaceuticals, and other technical medical issues, some of which has been either conducted or financed by the US military, which has offered partnerships to researchers in the health sector. The US military has a worldwide 'US Military HIV Research Program', which along with its partners in Afghanistan have conducted HIV seroprevalence research focusing on high-risk groups. They have also done research on KAPs and seroprevalence among ANA recruits.

Monitoring and evaluation activities produce some of the more substantial parts of the evidence base, including the national HMIS and the annual NHSPA, as well as the Disease Early Warning System (DEWS). The NRVA is also a source of some health-related information.

Finally, at any given time a number of Afghan and international MPH and PhD students are in the process of doing research as part of their thesis or dissertation requirement. While the methodological rigor is variable, the research is done with some linkages to personnel in the MOPH and it is often on topics which are of some interest to the public health policy community.

III.F. Research available: education

Much of the research which has been conducted in the education sector has been related to community-based education (CBE), girls' education (access and performance), and quality. As is the case in other sectors, much of the research done in the educational sector is related to donor-funded projects (therefore indirectly bearing out the involvement of donor funding in setting the research agenda), and is often done by the implementing agencies themselves. Many of the NGOs who are involved in implementation and research have a long history of involvement in education in Afghanistan, some going back to the 1980s or even pre-war years. While this research may be very useful for its feedback into projects, it may not get disseminated as widely as it might be. With a few notable exceptions, there seems to be very limited independent academic research.

Studies on CBE have focused on the impact of village-based schools on enrolment, test scores, cost effectiveness, avoiding insurgent attacks on schools, efficacy in remote and resource-scarce settings, and the benefits, especially for girls. Research has also looked at the effect of schools' distance from homes, again especially for girls. A sub-area of research has been the issue of integration of CBE schools with the larger government system. Given the great demand for education since 2001, yet at the same time the variability in

educational participation among different groups and communities, a number of studies have looked at decision-making related to school enrolment and attendance, including among girls. The attacks on schools, particularly those which are seen to provide education to girls, have received some attention in looking at the factors which are associated with higher or lower probabilities of attacks, and mobilization by advocacy groups.

Another area of research has been on the role and functioning of education in emergencies and in conflict. Again, much although not all of the research has been done related to projects implemented by NGOs, some of whom have made cross-country comparisons with education in other post-conflict settings.

A number of studies have looked explicitly at learning outcomes and the quality of education, especially in light of the strains that the post-2001 expansion in students have put on the education system. At least one mental health study explores the potential for schools to provide a protective environment and sites for interventions for children's mental health.

Additional analysis and sources of information including comprehensive education sector reviews, the MOE's Annual Education Summary Report, and the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which is based on school surveys conducted more or less annually since 1386 (2007). Since 2008, school surveys have been completed by school personnel themselves rather than by visiting surveyors. There remain a number of areas of limitations and concerns about accuracy.

III.G. Research available: gender

As the rights of women and girls have been a major focus for the international community and donors since 2001, there has been a significant amount of research and analysis done on gender-related issues. Perhaps more than in any other sector, gender-related research has been in the context of advocating for women's rights, and much of it has been done by advocacy organisations. Some but not all of this analysis has been evidence-based.

Perhaps the largest body of gender-related research has been in the area of political and economic participation, with research conducted on the dynamics and outcomes of women's participation in development programmes such as the NSP and MISFA and their participation in elections and parliament. Another body of research has looked at women's livelihoods and vulnerability, sometimes also in the context of development programmes designed to reduce vulnerability (i.e., ANDS pillar 7 benchmark related to social protection).

There has been extensive analysis and journalistic reporting, much of it anecdotal, on gender-based violence. Most studies on gender-based violence fall roughly into one of two areas: quantitative estimates of the incidence of such violence in different settings (rural/urban, regional, ethnic, linguistic) or more qualitative analysis of factors and dynamics that put households at risk of experiencing violence. For a variety of cultural, technical, and logistical reasons (not all unique to Afghanistan), there are no firm estimates of the incidence of domestic violence in Afghanistan.

Relatedly, the justice sector and legal system has also been the focus of much attention, including significant advocacy-related and journalistic reporting on prisons and related to the

moving of the Shiite Personal Status Law in Parliament from 2007 until it was signed by President Karzai in 2009. At the time of the review the implications for women and girls of growing insecurity, a possible political settlement, and the 2014 Transition was growing as an important focus area.

As in other sectors, there have been initiatives to compile data and other information from disparate sources, in this case by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and then-UNIFEM (now UN Women), and program reviews conducted by donors which are intended to look at the efficacy and achievements of their own programs, but often cast a broader eye and include references to other data sources and analyses.

Research in other areas (e.g., health, education, governance) sometimes took a gendered approach, although some informed respondents were sceptical about the extent to which research in other sectors incorporated a true gender analysis or lens, rather than simply aiming for female enumerators and a fifty per-cent female sample in order to show that gender had been taken into account. This was characterized as "add women and stir." Gender was also addressed by questions in public opinion polls.

As gender-related issues are amongst the most sensitive in Afghanistan, many of the issues related to advocacy, credibility of the Afghan voice, and questions of "whose research" were especially relevant here. This is discussed further in Section VII.

III.H. Research available: humanitarian assistance

The humanitarian assistance sector tends to be more focused on data collection and information for emergency action than on research. Similar to other sectors in Afghanistan, the information base is extremely limited; the lack of consistent and reliable data affects the ability to assess and respond to emergency situations. With a few exceptions, there is a lack of consistent assessment instruments, and a general sense that monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian assistance is quite weak. There have been numerous one-off assessments commissioned by donors and relief agencies related to program implementation which contain useful background, analysis, and data. This includes UN OCHA's Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) document and CD.

Aside from condition assessments related to emergency response, the overwhelming majority of the research and analysis in the humanitarian assistance sector has related to questions around humanitarian principles arising out of the integrated approach to the international mission in Afghanistan; i.e., the consequences of blurring of the lines between military and civilian and of military involvement in humanitarian and development work. This has been a fertile field of research and analysis since 2001, with much overlap with some of the governance research mentioned above. Some of the analyses have been Afghanistan-specific, while others have been part of broader multi-country studies. Occasional pieces of action research have looked at how different modalities of humanitarian assistance affect communities.

IV. Who is doing research?

The organisations doing research in Afghanistan were categorized into the following: public sector institutions, universities, dedicated policy research institutions, NGOs with research and assessment capacity, and commercial firms/contractors of research services, plus international institutions with research mandates. See Annex C for a simple listing of research organisations according to these categories and by their sectors of focus, and Annex D for more detailed summary information on organisations doing research in Afghanistan.

IV.A.1. Public sector institutions

Public sector institutions in Afghanistan are quite limited in the amount of rigorous research they produce or commission. Due to lack of resources and capacity (see Section II above), research is largely produced outside of government, although some of the research produced by non-governmental or multi-lateral institutions goes out with the name of the ministry or government institution and/or is produced in collaboration.

The Academy of Sciences was originally established in 1937 and over the years has evolved according to the government in power. Re-established in 2001 with the purpose of conducting and leading scientific research, one of the Academy's three research divisions is devoted to the humanities, including social sciences, but does not appear to have produced any visible policy research. The Academy is directly under the Office of the President.

On the other hand, as noted above, Afghanistan's public sector provides some of the most consistent condition assessments, reporting, and longitudinal data. This includes MAIL, MRRD, CSO, and MOPH. While some data collection activities are on-going through provincial departments and Kabul staff in collaboration with partner organisations, other studies are linked to bilaterally funded projects and external technical assistance. At least three institutions have also hosted their own research units, namely the Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan (ARIA), the Livelihoods and Vulnerability Analysis Unit (LVAU), and (in a partial research capacity) AIRD. Afghan public sector research has in some cases benefitted from strong partnerships and technical assistance from organisations such as the WFP and the FAO. Likewise, the production of the highly significant National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) is the responsibility of the CSO.

IV.A.2. Kabul University and other universities

While universities in Afghanistan are long established, they are primarily focused on teaching. What research does occur is usually at the initiative of individuals and is not fostered through structural incentives. Furthermore, the track record of liaison between government and universities to coordinate research efforts is poor, so such research as does occur may have limited policy relevance. It may also be difficult to access the results of university research if it is not formally published or disseminated.

Kabul University, founded in 1931 and still Afghanistan's premier academic institution, has suffered physically, organisationally, and intellectually through years of neglect and isolation. While some investments have been made since 2001 and some departments and faculty are

more active and have greater capacity and visible potential, this study found little evidence of much progress since a 2008 DFID-funded analysis of applied social research identified a major gap in the almost complete absence of active social science research in the university sector.⁴³ With low capacity and little or no budget, the Kabul University research department is not considered active. Typically, directors have not been technically trained researchers, and some respondents characterized it as a “punishment post.” In a number of sectors (e.g., health), many lecturers are not well versed in research, and there have not been many or any real research programs. For instance, according to respondents in the MOPH, professors at the Kabul Medical University (KMU) say that they do research, but this consists largely of reviewing and compiling hospital records.

Both the UNDP-funded CPHD and the Konrad Adenauer -funded NCPR have attempted to work alongside university faculty to encourage interest in and capacity for research. Starting in 2007, CPHD helped to revive Kabul University’s academic journal ‘Serrana’, which had been created in the 1960s but which had been suspended in 1980 due to the political situation. The revived Serrana was intended to be a quarterly publication, but it appears that only the first and second editions were published, in December 2008 and December 2009.

However, the public university sector is a very difficult institutional environment in which to work productively. Many of the faculty are approaching the end of their careers, have been isolated from modern research for many years, and are not highly motivated.⁴⁴ A recurrent observation was that qualified outside lecturers or researchers, including Afghans who have returned from overseas, are kept at arm’s length, largely because they are seen as threats to the academic hegemony of the old cadres. For instance, new agriculture faculty members are generally recruited from graduating undergraduate classes. In addition, when it comes to opportunities for training or participating in capacity building activities, social and institutional hierarchy often results in older, less active faculty attending rather than younger, more active ones.

Many young members of faculty aspire to advance to overseas post-graduate studies if they can secure funding (and the USDA program at the faculty of agriculture may help create opportunities for this). However, overall exposure to research among junior faculty members is generally low. The comparative isolation of the University from the wider research community also acts as a barrier to the development of a culture of research. Consequently, for primarily structural and resource reasons, the University makes only a limited contribution to fostering new ranks of researchers.

In addition, given the historical central role of the government in education, Afghanistan does not have a tradition of “ivory tower” independent research removed from the state, and the fact that Kabul University is a government institution raises obvious questions about the

⁴³Surkhe, Astri et al. (2008) *Applied Social Science Research in Afghanistan: An Overview of the Institutional Landscape*. Institutional Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI): Oslo. P.12

⁴⁴ At the time of the development of the strategic plan for Kabul University in 2005, only ten percent of the faculty had a PhD. The age structure reflected the years of isolation: over half of the advanced degree holders were above fifty years of age, and over ninety percent of the bachelor’s degree holders were above thirty, which limits their being eligible for overseas scholarships. Source: Presentation: Kabul University: Excellence in Service to Afghanistan. 18 August 2005.

extent to which it can function independently as a producer of disinterested research. At the same time, historically Kabul University has been highly politicized, especially during the 1960's and 1970's, and there is evidence that the University has again become politicized⁴⁵. The political nature of the University with respect to the broader government may be reflected in the multiple changes in leadership since 2001 – which is not conducive to stability and the development of capacity.

A number of private universities have been founded in the last several years, both in Kabul and in some of the major cities. The focus of these institutions is primarily teaching, especially in the fields of business administration, information technology, accounting and financial management, economics, and law. Some of the professors at American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), especially those who have international advanced degrees are doing some limited amount of research, but AUAF is also mainly focused on teaching.

Some recent changes may help reinvigorate and refocus universities contribution to ARD+E research in Afghanistan, including the establishment of the new Environment Department at Kabul University and the nascent Sustainable Land Management Institute at Bamiyan University. USDA supports a programme to strengthen the faculty of agriculture, Kabul University and this may also assist in promoting research culture. Still, the structure, culture, and internal dynamics of the public university sector all mitigate against it being a dynamic leader of research in Afghanistan.

IV.A.3. Dedicated policy research institutions

Dedicated policy research institutes are an important part of the research landscape in Afghanistan. They are distinguished from NGOs (which may also undertake research) in that they do not engage in large-scale program support activities and so seek to maintain independence, outside of the development milieu. This may also have implications for how they access funding and for internal governance arrangements. With a specialist focus on research and analysis, policy research institutes can often partner effectively with other institutions with stronger on-ground presence to facilitate data collection in communities outside of Kabul. There are also a number of new 'think tanks', most of which are dependent on donors and some of which are perceived to be influenced by donors' interests. There are also a number of think tanks which are considered to represent certain political or factional outlooks, and so may be less than fully credible as objective and disinterested producers of analysis. It is highly possible that the political and factional alliances will become more salient within some of these aligned think tanks as Transition approaches and as different factions compete for power and influence.

IV.A.4. Project implementers with research and assessment capacity

NGOs and contractors who are primarily involved in programme implementation also contribute to on-ground data collection for themselves or in collaboration with other institutions. These implementers generally follow a mix of three models: 1) having research capacity built into their in-house structure and capacity; 2) bringing in academic or other

⁴⁵ See Giustozzi, Antonio. *Between Patronage and Rebellion: Student Politics in Afghanistan*. AREU. February 2010.

experts to pursue questions and issues that are of research interest; and, 3) establishing or maintaining a partnership with an international university or local dedicated policy research institution through which research capacity is accessed. Aside from data collection, some of these institutions also have proven research and assessment capacity themselves, usually in the sectors (e.g., education, health, agriculture) in which they implement programmes. Many NGOs have been active delivering rural and agricultural development programs since the fall of the Taliban or earlier, and so may have developed strong links with the communities in which they work.

NGOs may undertake studies either as stand-alone research to inform their own future planning, as impact assessments of programs that they or other organisations are delivering, or simply to generate knowledge. Some NGOs and contractors place a heavy focus on research within their program activities, (e.g. Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, The Liaison Office, and Roots of Peace). Some NGOs working in sectors such as gender, health, and governance/rule of law also prepare advocacy reports. These reports are cited by users of information as containing useful information, although because their main function was advocating a policy position, they are sometimes considered ‘tainted’ with advocacy interests of the producing organisations. This is especially the case when the fieldwork upon which it is based is not the most rigorous.

IV.A.5. Commercial research or survey firms

Due in large part to the demand for information and the supply of donor (including international military) money, there has been major growth in the number of commercial companies, Afghan and international, who conduct research. Over the last several years, the number of firms has increased from 3-4 to 25-30. Commercial firms conduct mainly surveys and public opinion polls.

Respondents noted that there are many organisations which shouldn’t be involved in research because they don’t have the capacity to design or process information, or who are “more about generating contracts than knowledge.” As noted above, respondents noted the existence of research fraud or questionable practices which set up perverse incentives. For instance, the practice of paying surveyors on a per-interview basis encourages rapid completion of forms but in the absence of close monitoring and quality control the potential for abuse is obvious. Supervisors acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining quality control, especially in insecure areas. (One noted that GPS and telecommunications technology could help to identify when entire interviews were skipped, but that there was much less that could be done to identify when questions on a form were skipped.) Quality control is not problematic only in the case of for-profit firms, although in a competitive market there may be pressure to lower costs. One survey manager noted that because quality control costs money, some firms don’t do it.

Current donor strategies and the ANDS itself all highlight the need for effective monitoring and evaluation⁴⁶. This, together with the growing difficulties for donor and other institutional

⁴⁶ See ANDS Prioritisation and Implementation Plan (2010-2013), page 46; Asian Development Bank Afghanistan Country Strategy (2009-2013), page 29; DFID Operational plan (2011), page 11; EC Country Strategy (2007-2013) page 34; and, World Bank Interim Strategy note (2009), page 34.

staff to undertake field visits, has stimulated a market for program assessment and evaluation services. In recent years there is evidence of growth in the number of institutions that offer contract research, monitoring, and assessment services. These include both newly established organisations (e.g. ORCA), and those that have moved to brokering their services commercially from some other operational model. While initially the main focus of these services was polling and opinion research, some Kabul-based contractors have now entered the market for rural surveys and evaluations. Those institutions able to offer evaluation and assessment services in insecure areas hold a strong market position and their services are in heavy demand (e.g., OSDR). By and large, data collected under contract is proprietary, but some reports and data may be released by the contractor with prior agreement of the contracting organisation.

By contrast, many international institutions with a research mandate produce open-source data, reports, and other evidence for wide public dissemination. Some international institutions provide sophisticated and highly technical datasets, which may be beyond the capacity of local institutions to acquire or manage alone, with examples being Agromet data (USGS), interpretation of satellite imagery for opium assessments (UNODC) or trials to genetically enhance productivity of crop varieties (ICARDA). However, most international research institutions have a proven track record of robust collaboration with Afghan institutions such as ministries or established NGOs.

V. Who is funding research?

It was not possible to be systematic about the amounts being allocated to research by funders. Most respondents from research-commissioning institutions (donors) were unable to estimate how much of their overall budgets they currently spend on research, monitoring, and gathering evidence, in part because of the complexity of organisational budgeting and because much of the money that funds research and analysis is embedded within implementation budgets. Research may not appear as a budget line and, if it does, the entry may be incomplete or misleading. (This does not even begin to consider funding for much of the research that doesn't enter the public domain.) Of the respondents who did venture an estimate, the range was from 5-30%. Therefore, the following is based largely on interviews with donors and research institutions, notations in publications, and information available on web sites and other sources.

As noted above, most research is donor-commissioned, often in connection with development projects or other interests, so the majority of research funding comes from the major donors. As would be expected, the main bilateral funders of research included the US (mainly USAID, USDA, HHS, DOD), UK (DFID, FCO), and the EC, as well as AusAid, CIDA, Denmark, Finland, Germany (GIZ), Japan (JICA), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Other bilateral donors also fund specific studies or provide institutional support at smaller levels. Examples include DFID's funding of the Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) and Sida's funding of a strategic conflict analysis, which while national in scope devotes special attention to the northern provinces.

Among the multi-lateral institutions, the World Bank has been the main funder of research, followed by the ADB. Among the UN agencies, the main funders were UNDP, UNHCR,

UNICEF, UN Women, and UNODC. UN agencies tend towards national-scale programmes building strategic capacity, with a few regionally specific studies. Key foci for studies and surveys under UN programmes include the significant issues -- opium and alternative livelihoods, rural livelihoods, food security, and the environment.

In addition, a host of other foundations, institutions, trusts, international centres, and research organisations fund research with grants of various sizes. Some of the funders are issue-specific (e.g., International Center for Research on Women), while others are more generally focused on research, albeit within certain parameters (e.g., IDRC). These organisations included International Center for Transitional Justice, IDRC, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Open Society Institute, Heinrich Böll Foundation, NED, Volkswagen Foundation, Wellcome Trust, and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Funding for research is also provided by academic institutions (e.g., University of Berlin, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), although it was not always clear what the original source of funds were. Across all sectors, some research outputs entering the public domain were produced by individuals either based in or visiting Afghanistan who were supported by grants that they received from academic or other institutions in their home countries.

Another funder of research was the UK's Economic and Social Research Council through the ESRC-DFID Joint Scheme for Research on International Development (Poverty Alleviation) Evidence Synthesis Research Awards (ESRA)]

While most major donors support research at the national level, many also give special attention to particular geographic areas, mostly related to their PRT commitments with DFID/FCO and USAID/DoD major funders in the South, USAID/DoD in the East, and the Germans in the North. The Japanese do not have a PRT commitment, but they have had a long-standing program interest in the Central provinces.

While the major donors support a wide portfolio of research, some leaned towards supporting data collection and research in particular sectors or thematic areas. As noted above, these interests generally align with the foci identified in donor strategy documents and project implementation. In the ARD+E sector, for example, the ADB has a primary focus on rural and agricultural development stemming from improved water resources management and integrated catchment management -particularly in the North and Central regions. By contrast, USAID places heavy emphasis upon funding studies pertaining to agricultural markets, value chains, and rural development for economic growth. USAID is also a primary supporter of environmental research, particularly through its partnerships with the WCS (biodiversity, habitat conservation) and USGS (geology, hydrology agro-meteorological data).

As noted above, in the absence of a clear 'one-stop shop' repository for data and evidence, and with limited understanding of how to find existing studies, there is a tendency for institutions to commission new studies and research without first thoroughly exploring if relevant information already exists. Understandably, tailored studies are desirable in that they offer research consumers a high level of specificity addressing particular issues and locations. They also wear the 'badge' of the commissioning institution. There is also a

degree of distrust about the research which is produced by others, and so producing something oneself may provide a bit more confidence about methodology and therefore of results.

However, repetition of similar research is also expensive and can lead to research fatigue in communities, especially in relatively secure and accessible areas near Kabul and other major cities. There is strong anecdotal evidence of the replication of studies and research within certain communities.⁴⁷ This is a challenge for organisations both to coordinate research and studies between themselves prior to implementation, and to ensure results and findings are (whenever possible) made available to other research consumers, so to avoid the need for duplicate studies.

Commissions for research are made within a context which has evolved considerably over the last decade. In the immediate post-Taliban period, after decades of conflict and at the height of a devastating drought, there was an imperative for rapid appraisals and needs assessments for emergency relief programming. These were initially driven by NGO's and subsequently by UN agencies. After initial stabilisation, and concurrent with a period of sustained policy development in Afghan line ministries, some relatively open and exploratory research was commissioned and undertaken to help inform this policy process. Large scale development programs initiated around this time also contributed to the overall body of research then being undertaken. The conclusion of policy planning processes and movement to implement this policy in the late 2000's precipitated a growing demand for evidence in the form of impact assessments and program monitoring and evaluation. In the run up to the 2014 Transition, this trend seems to be accelerating. In recent years an outcome of this has been the growing market for contract survey, polling, monitoring, and assessment services.

While a portion of research and assessment work is still put out to local tender,⁴⁸ anecdotal evidence suggests a considerable portion of commissioned research and studies are sole-sourced. Respondents gave two principal justifications for this. First, a research organisation may have demonstrated analytical or technical capacity that makes it the preferred research partner for a donor; for example, the FCO have favoured contractors for undertaking their on-going opium and alternative livelihoods studies. A second cited justification for sole source commissioning is that some research organisations may offer strong and demonstrated access into communities and locations which other organisations cannot. The access which TLO offers to some southern provinces is an example of this.

An alternative model for accessing research comes from UN agencies such as UNEP and FAO. Both of these institutions have long standing collaborations with Afghan ministries and with other international institutions. They report undertaking extensive searches for any relevant completed studies, prior to planning their own. Both organisations try to minimise

⁴⁷ One contract research unit gave examples of conducting almost identical surveys (for different clients) within the same communities within a few weeks of each other, so that some participants assumed it was the same study and complained they had accidentally been enumerated twice.

⁴⁸The ACBAR web site is a popular site for recruiting proposals <http://www.acbar.org/RFP.aspx>

the need for contracting research or surveys. FAO favours the approach of negotiating the use of public sector staff, providing training, and using these for data collection. This approach contributes to its capacity-building mission while reducing costs. However, when contracting has to go through government channels the process can be immensely cumbersome, as it may require the alignment of at least three institutions: the multilateral funder, the government, and the contractor.

For the major bilateral donors who are significant consumers of research and evaluation services, protocols requiring contractors to meet strict administrative, financial, and security criteria may result in the majority of those services being contracted to companies and other institutions from that country. Thereafter, the contractor may sub-contract local NGOs or other organisations to do the actual work, but as a consequence the actual researchers may not be visible.

Looking ahead, the reductions in available resources may leave the donors with 'tough choices' about what to fund, and given the array of daunting needs, research may not be at the top of the list. As noted above, the team observed an increasing focus on specific results- and project-focused monitoring and evaluation as opposed to long-term research. For some donors and sectors, much broader research may go into the 'nice to know' but not crucial category.

VI. Policy research needs

The language and conceptual categories used in government and donor priorities have changed over the years since 2001 and research, especially longer term research, has not been able to align itself precisely with each new formulation of policy priorities. The 2008 DFID-funded report on applied social science in Afghanistan noted that donors have an extraordinarily strong influence on the research agenda in Afghanistan. As mentioned above, this is still the case; the bulk of research in Afghanistan continues to speak to donor priorities largely because donors continue to fund the vast majority of research outputs. The 2008 report also noted that short-term interests and access to short-term information often 'takes priority over more thorough social science analysis'.⁴⁹ This also remains true. Individual research organisations are still competing for donor funds, meaning that short term difficulties such as loss of repeat funding for a particular output, or difficulties at management level can completely derail research programmes.

The ANDS⁵⁰ is currently the major overarching policy document. The almost immediate recognition upon its issuance in 2008 that there was a need to improve the integration and prioritisation of programs prompted preparation of the ANDS Prioritisation and Implementation Plan which was presented to the Kabul Conference in 2010⁵¹. At the Kabul Conference the international community pledged its support for the National Priority Programmes (see Table 1), and agreed to deliver at least fifty per-cent of its assistance through the Afghan Government.

⁴⁹Surkhe, Astri et al. op cit. p.12.

⁵⁰Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan: National Development Strategy 1387-1391 (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. (Kabul: 2008).

⁵¹GIRoA (2010) *ANDS: Prioritization and Implementation Plan 2010-2013*, Kabul

TABLE 1: Clusters, National Priority Programmes, Cluster Coordinator and lead ministries

National Priority Programme	Lead Ministries
CLUSTER: Agriculture and Rural Development (Minister Rahimi/MAIL)	
1. National Water And Natural Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock • Energy And Water
2. National Comprehensive Agriculture Production And Market Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
3. National Rural Access (NRAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock • Rural Rehabilitation and Development • Public Works
4. Strengthening Local Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Rehabilitation and Development
CLUSTER: Infrastructure Development (Minister Sharani/Mines)	
1. National-Regional Resources Corridor Initiative (NRRCI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mines • Public Works • Transport and Civil Aviation
2. National Extractive Industry Excellence (NEIEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mines
3. National Energy Supply (N-ESP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy And Water
4. Urban Planning Technical Assistance Facility (UP-TAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Planning
CLUSTER: Private Sector Development (Minister Ahadi/ Commerce & Industry)	
1. Integrated Trade & SME Support Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commerce And Industry
2. E-Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications & Information Technology
CLUSTER: Human Resource Development (Minister Wardak/ Education)	
1. Facilitation Of Sustainable Decent Work Through Skills Development & Market-Friendly Labor Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour and Social Affairs
2. Education For All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education
3. Expanding Opportunities For Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Education
4. Capacity Development To Accelerate NAPWA Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Affairs
5. Human Resources For Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health
CLUSTER: Governance (Senior Minister Arsala)	
1. Financial And Economic Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance
2. National Transparency And Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Office Of Oversight
3. Efficient And Effective Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Service Commission
4. Local Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Directorate Of Local Governance
5. Law And Justice For All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice
6. Human Rights And Civic Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
CLUSTER: Security (Minister Stanekzai, APRP Secretariat)	
1. Peace And Reintegration (APRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APRP Secretariat

VI.A. Policy research needs: governance and security

As noted above, in the governance and security sectors there may be a large gap between what is actually being produced and what is available in the public domain. (This is also consistent with the relative invisibility of the security sector in both the ANDS and the NPPs.)

Governance and security have been key GIRoA and donor priorities running through the succession of pledging conferences and strategic documents on Afghanistan since 2001. Research under the broad umbrella of governance and security is most relevant to two of the NPPs under two of the thematic clusters of ministries, 'governance' and 'security,' and to the 'agriculture and rural development' cluster, and to the NPPs under each (see Table 1). The 'peace and security' cluster includes the APRP, and the 'agriculture and rural development' cluster includes the NSP. This category corresponds mainly to two pillars/strategic priorities of DFID-Afghanistan's Operational Plan. The DFID Afghanistan Operational Plan 2011-2015 focuses on building peace, security and stability by improving the performance and perception of government at provincial level and supporting participation in elections and to get the state to deliver by supporting line ministry budget execution and fighting corruption.

Other key donors in this area include USAID, Japan, Canada, the EC, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the World Bank.⁵²

Governance and security have loomed large in overall spending, especially where security is concerned, with the Afghan MOF estimating that 51% of all international assistance to Afghanistan from 2002-2010 has been invested in security.⁵³ Security and peace-building remains a paramount concern as international forces have already begun the transfer of responsibility to Afghan security forces that is set to be complete in 2014. The MOF estimates that of the remaining forty-nine per-cent of assistance, donor expenditure on governance from 2002-2010 was US\$6.45bn committed and US\$4.67bn disbursed -- the third largest non-security related spend after infrastructure and agricultural and rural development.⁵⁴

One of the more significant gaps is information on aid flows in general and on the local content of aid more specifically. Donors don't collect systematically this information, and there appears to be a reluctance to share what information is available. The 2009 study by Peace Dividend Trust⁵⁵ on the local content of aid is still considered the best source. Another gap in the security sector is for disinterested estimates and analysis that challenge the analysis being produced by contractors who are implementing or overseeing projects in that sector.

With the next presidential elections scheduled for the same year as Transition, there are research needs which would underpin plans to strengthen mechanisms and provide advocacy, but also to help understand the complicated and rapidly evolving political dynamic. There is still surprisingly little empirical research on the effects of the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) voting system.

VI.B. Policy research needs: wealth creation

DFID's 'wealth creation' pillar/strategic priority relates to a number of the NPPs under at least three clusters (see Table 1). The NPPs make a number of assumptions. For instance, the two NPPs which deal with mineral extraction, the National-Regional Resources Corridor Initiative (NRRCI) and the National Extractive Industry Excellence (NEIEP) make broad assumptions about mineral wealth as an engine of growth and a source of fiscal sustainability, the downstream benefits of monetizing the mineral wealth of Afghanistan, including employment creation, and the likelihood of attracting private investment and public-private partnerships.

In the wealth creation and governance areas there has already been a fair amount of research that would be relevant to these assumptions and upon which further research should be based. On the other hand, very little research seems to have been done on the

⁵² For more detail on involvement of donors from 2002-2010, see Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance (2010) *Development Cooperation Report*.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 23

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 27. These estimates included anti-corruption aid as part of a separate unclassified category, whereas here anti-corruption will be included in the theme of governance

⁵⁵ Peace Dividend Trust. *Spending the development dollar twice: the local economic impact of procurement in Afghanistan*. July 2009.

distributional aspects of the structural changes and growth in the Afghan economy post-2001. While economic growth rates have been extremely high, the persistence of poverty and in fact the keen sense of relative deprivation has become a political issue which appears not to be well understood. Aside from the political implications, the underlying empirical basis for this concern (i.e., the extent to which people are in fact materially better off than they were in 2001) is not at all understood, at least in the public domain. Critics have noted that the issue of poverty was not prominently featured in the ANDS.

Given the assumptions made by the NPPs, including their reliance on public-private partnerships and on attracting investment, a better understanding is needed of the political economy of mineral extraction in Afghanistan, including relationships and dynamics among people, parties, and institutions which affect (encourage or retard) economic development (i.e., land and property rights continue to be a serious constraint). While specific research on Aynak and Hajigak has been done, more general research is needed. There is fairly extensive international experience in this area, and some of the research done on the war-aid economy in Afghanistan may be relevant. For Afghanistan, some very basic questions include: what are the likely effects of mineral extraction and development corridors on employment? What is the likelihood of attracting investment under current conditions?

More broadly, related to the prospects for growth, more research is needed to better understand Afghanistan's potential sources of economic growth and comparative advantages, and to identify what sort of policy and programme choices will be most effective. The discussion of comparative advantage will be especially relevant in consideration of the goals related to regional trade. Another set of research questions relate to the effectiveness of the state. For instance, a number of NPPs (e.g., NRRCI) are constructed based on prioritization and sequencing with other programs, which seems a questionable prospect.

Aside from the NPPs, interest is now increasingly focused on the economic aspects of Transition, in particular the immediate need to understand what the effect of the transition will be on the Afghan economy, specifically on to what extent withdrawal of international personnel and assets will impact the Afghan economy (the "negative multiplier"). The World Bank's paper on transition, so far released only in executive summary, provides some estimates, although some observers feel that they are optimistic.⁵⁶

It should be noted that the negative effects of fraud and corruption have been well documented. Responding to them is a political not a research issue.

VI.C. Policy research needs: ARD+E

The ARD+E sector is encompassed largely within the 'wealth creation' strategic priority of DFID-A's Operational Plan. A specific ARD sector strategy was under preparation at the time of the review. However, the Operational Plan does specify a food security related target –achieving 80% grain self-sufficiency by 2015. The Agriculture and Rural Development 'Cluster' (MAIL, MCN, MEW, MRRD) includes four NPPs⁵⁷, which constitute the Afghan

⁵⁶ Subsequent to the field research, the full version of the paper was released

⁵⁷ MAIL, MCN, MEW, MRRD (2010) *Agriculture and Rural development Cluster: National Priority Programs*, Kabul

Government's latest statement of policy and programme intent for Agriculture and Rural Development, and which are receiving significant support from the UK.

Agriculture and the natural resources which sustain agricultural production have long been fundamental to the construction and security of rural livelihoods in Afghanistan. Historically, agriculture was the dominant sector in the Afghan economy and today the strengthening of agricultural systems is seen as key to securing environmental sustainability, contributing to national economic growth, and fostering rural security⁵⁸.

Nevertheless, the evidence base informing decision-making and planning for the rural sectors remains patchy, in part because of the logistical and security challenges of accessing many outlying districts of the country. Indeed, even in recent years planning and programming for management of some natural resources still draws heavily on extrapolating from biophysical data collected decades previously (e.g., surface water flow regimes, biodiversity inventories, rangelands and forest productivity)⁵⁹.

Analysis highlighted some significant research gaps and areas of weakness relating to ARD+E NPP objectives and international partner strategies. Many of the gaps relate to the more 'technical' program objectives, including natural resources assessment, information management, cold storage, industrial crops, and commercial poultry. On the whole, there exists at least some research addressing other aspects of agribusiness mentioned in the NPP.

There were fewer actual research gaps with respect to individual partner strategies. Areas of weakness in the evidence base include studies of farmer support services, agricultural exports, phytosanitary conditions, pest management, and the related issues of investment and growth. Gaps were identified with respect to the EU's program for afforestation and also with respect to GIZ's rural power objectives. However, research pertaining to this latter issue would probably be found in infrastructure sector studies.

The wealth creation part of DFID's Operational Plan puts a particular *foci* on food and livelihood security and on stimulating agricultural growth. DFID has historically supported natural resource management programs to try and establish an enabling environment for this food security and economic growth.

Many aspects of this general policy agenda have been addressed through the reviewed research. There was less, however, focused on the more technical issue of natural resource condition assessments (baseline studies), or indeed the policy process for natural resource management. This study also highlights potential knowledge gaps around enhancing productivity, and the impact of improved management techniques, including pest and disease control and veterinary extension. Equally there has been little research addressing the opportunities and challenges of food safety and certification, vital for development of markets and, in particular, exports. Furthermore, while there has been some research on rural infrastructure development and village and needs assessment, less appears to have

⁵⁸ Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (2009) *National Agriculture Development Framework* Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

⁵⁹ United Nations Environment Program (2008) *Afghanistan's Environment 2008*

been done on strengthening local institutions for natural resource management, governance, or other purposes.

It is worth noting that the most prolifically researched issues tend to be those that are addressed through rapid rural household surveys and assessments. By contrast, policy or program areas requiring longer term, more technical or analytical studies are less well represented. This reflects the nature of the research process, with in-depth technical research being more time-consuming with a lower rate of output. Another possibility is that researchers working in technical or specialist fields might be less inclined to put their results into the public domain. To offer an example, very little of ICARDA's research output is available online or in the public domain, in comparison with the work of the (equally specialist) USGS.

The other major thematic area within ARD+E where major deficiencies exist is the vital one of environmental research, particularly for studies relating to pollution and waste. This is in part because of the complex nature of the environmental policy agenda, partially delivered through the ARD NPP and partially through the Environmental Law, with no single ministry driving it. While the biodiversity and geological aspects of environmental research are supported by USAID, the less glamorous but critically important development issues of waste and environmental pollution have been largely overlooked. A significant indicator of this gap is the NEPA's continuing delay in compiling evidence for the second Afghanistan State of the Environment report, which was scheduled for 2010. The organisation is struggling with low capacity and poor resourcing to achieve this task.

VI.D. Policy research needs: health

The health sector is contained in the NPP titled 'human resources for health' (which is a bit of a misnomer, since it deals with the overall health sector), which falls under the Human Resource Development Cluster. While Afghanistan's health sector is rightly considered one of the post-2001 success stories, to avoid the slippage that some analysts feel has already happened, it faces a number of policy challenges that are captured within the three objectives of the health strategy: 1) to improve health financing, 2) to improve and expand existing health service delivery, and, 3) to enhance and expand the human resources, systems, and institutions of the health sector.

The three key donors in the sector are the World Bank (WB), USAID, and the European Commission (EC), who in 2002 divided up the provinces to financially and technically support the BPHS in different versions of a performance based contracting mechanism. The BPHS, EPHS, and "vertical programs" (e.g., malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, other communicable diseases), as well as monitoring and evaluation, technical assistance, institutional development (capacity building, renovation and construction) are being supported by these donors along with DFID, JICA (Japan), the Global Fund, UNICEF, WHO, GAVI, GIZ (formerly GTZ), CIDA (Canada), TICA (Turkey), and Sida (Sweden). DFID supports health activities through its contribution to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

Significant program issues are related to maintaining and improving access to healthcare; increasing quality; determining the structure of the health sector (i.e., the respective roles of the public and private sectors); ensuring financial and human resources to respond to an

ever-increasing demand for health services; and, providing for the delivery of healthcare in a challenging and unpredictable security environment.

The listing of health financing underlines its importance, and also suggests a number of key research areas, some of them interlinked. The Government recognizes the need to find ways of sustainably financing an increasing share of the 85% of health services currently funded by donors. The results from the repetition of the NHA expected mid-2012 should help to illuminate and refine some of the questions.

Given the rapid growth of private sector health services, both through the Government's contracting arrangement and through the private-for-profit sector, for generally higher-end care, the role of the private sector will be an important research topic, especially as the MOPH is actively looking at public-private partnerships for hospitals. This would include comparing the experiences in terms of quality of care and health outcomes between the various modes of service delivery. Relatedly, given the focus on engaging the private sector, there are a whole set of questions about the enabling environment and quality of care. The structure of the pharmaceutical industry from both a health (i.e., quality of drugs, over-prescribing) and political economy perspective would also be an important research area, especially given the formation of trade groups and the prospects for increased regional trade.

In addition, other key areas in which more research is needed include household decision-making in care-seeking; drug abuse, including of (legal) psychotropics; prevalence and possible pathways of the spread of HIV; culturally appropriate models mental health diagnosis and treatment; and, environmental health. Somewhat as is the case in the ARD+E sector discussed above, environment has received little attention in the health sector, but is identified in the NPP in several contexts.

In September 2011, the MOPH, with technical assistance of the Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), prepared a draft health research policy which affirms the utility of policy derived from evidence and sets out the government's key strategies for strengthening health research in Afghanistan.⁶⁰ Implementation of this comprehensive and ambitious policy will be a challenge.

VI.E. Policy research needs: education

The NPP for education, 'education for all', falls within the Human Resource Development Cluster. 'Education for all' has four objectives: 1) increased access to basic and secondary education; 2) improved quality in basic and secondary education; 3) increased access to and quality of Islamic education; and, 4) improved management and administration of all schools. There is also a stress on improved monitoring

DFID will continue to provide support to education through the ARTF, as well as £36m non-ARTF funding for technical and vocational training. The education sector's major donor is USAID, with other significant donors including the World Bank and Denmark, along with

⁶⁰ *Health Research Policy for Afghanistan*. Afghanistan Public Health Institute, Ministry of Public Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. September 2011.

Sweden (Sida), Canada (CIDA), UNICEF, France, Netherlands, India, Italy, Germany (GTZ), Japan (JICA), UNESCO, New Zealand, and ISAF/PRTs. A relatively recent development is the endorsement of the Interim Education Plan by the Global Partnership for Education (until September 2011 known as the Fast Track Initiative), making it eligible for support.

Post-2001 achievements in revitalizing education in Afghanistan include the enrolment of seven million children back to school, notably the nearly 2.4 million girl students who are emblematic of the post-Taliban era. There have been huge increases in public demand for education, seven-fold according to some sources,⁶¹ including both public and private sectors as well as training academies, leading to triple shifts at primary schools. Between 2002 and 2011, Afghanistan built 4,000 schools and recruited and trained more than 100,000 new teachers.

Despite the significant achievements, the education sector faces serious challenges in responding to the increased demand for education, first and foremost finding sufficient financial and human resources. Human resources are critical both for teaching, with twenty-four per-cent of the teaching force having only a grade 12 education, and for management and leadership; less than seven per-cent of MOE personnel have university degrees, and the MOE has an over-reliance on consultants and advisors – 1,500 during National Education Strategic Plan I (NESP I). Human resource constraints are exacerbated by low public sector salaries, which make it hard to retain trained teachers, especially in rural areas, and makes it difficult to get them to focus on their responsibilities. Other issues include the physical capacity of school infrastructure; quality of education; monitoring, evaluation, and analysis, including ensuring integrity of the work force (i.e., overstaffing); the respective roles of private and public sectors in regulating, guiding, and supporting education; improving access of under-privileged groups to education of quality; the role of Community-Based Education and Islamic schools/education; and, the relationship of education for the economy for graduates (or vice versa).

Education research has addressed a number of the important issues facing the sector, most prominently pedagogy and the factors which encourage or discourage households from sending their children, especially girls, to school. Still, pedagogy and its role in educational outcomes is not well understood, as noted in one of the studies reviewed, which observed that a number of variables which should have been associated with better outcomes were not.

Another important area for research is the respective roles of the public and private sectors in education, including how education will be financed. The spread of fee-collecting private schools in the major cities (based in part on Pakistani models) as well as computer and language (mostly English) training centres raises a number of important questions about regulation and oversight, teacher competence, quality of education, coherence of curriculum, as well as potential equity issues. While the MOE's official policy is to accept private schools, there are a number of thorny issues that will emerge as the schools become more common. Relatedly, given that there have apparently been some discussions about the desirability of adopting a 'contracting-in' model similar to that in use in the health sector, formative

⁶¹ Education for All

research, drawing on health sector experience and the experience of other countries, would be useful.

Another potential relevant subject for research is the dynamic around the role of Islam in education, including the status of the government-sponsored '*madrassas*.' While it is likely that research and analysis of this area has been done, most of what is visible to the public is speculative. Finally, given the great expansion of education since 2001 and the keen interest shown, the linkages between education and the economy, both for individuals (i.e., what is the expected return to education) and for society at large (i.e., does the education system produce the types of skills needed to support economic growth) would be a useful and policy-relevant area.

VI.F. Policy research needs: gender

'Capacity Development to Accelerate NAPWA [National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan] Implementation' is the NPP for gender, falling under the Human Resources Development Cluster. The NPP is focused on the six areas of NAPWA: security; legal protection and human rights; leadership and political participation; economy, work, and poverty; health; and, education. Component 4 is for 'policy research and development' and ambitiously proposes creating and operationalizing a new policy research unit, focusing on action research and setting a three-year research agenda in each province. The document notes that the publication 'Women and Men in Afghanistan' had identified research gaps according to the six elements of NAPWA, but that these gaps had not been filled.

While in theory gender is supposed to be mainstreamed, observers have noted that many of the institutional structures (gender units, separate women's shuras) in fact work against this. There is also a widespread belief that progress both towards national policies (e.g., Protocol for the Elimination of Forced and Child Marriage, Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW)) and Afghanistan's international treaty agreements (e.g., CEDAW, MDGs related to girls' education) has been lagging. Also many believe that gender-related issues have not made their way into the other NPPs.

Based on the current evolving political situation, regardless of the final form that negotiations and any political settlement take, in the years ahead there will be contentious issues in the area of gender and women's rights. Therefore, a number of areas for gender-related research would be useful, starting with a better understanding of gender relations in the Afghan context in part so as to be able to better support development initiatives that are more likely to succeed; i.e., what does a "culturally sensitive" approach to gender mean in Afghanistan— and what does it not mean. This includes a better understanding on the ways in which women see themselves in social networks with traditions rather than as having equal rights. This also means developing, especially among research sponsored and led by the international community, a better understanding of various Islamic interpretations of gender so that 'Islamic' is not equated with anti-woman and, conversely, that 'pro-woman' is not interpreted as anti-Islamic.

There has also been a broad recognition that numbers and quotas do not necessarily represent decisive social change, so there is a need to go beyond the numbers of women present in various institutions (*shuras*, Parliament, High Peace Council, etc.) to understand

fundamental changes and relationships. Relatedly, there is a need to understand the extent to which higher-level policies on gender have been reinforced by action, a need which was mentioned by a number of publications and respondents.

Another relevant topic is the extent to which traditional dispute resolution mechanisms/community justice discriminate against women and, if so, whether there are any opportunities for evolution. Although perhaps more a policy issue than a research need, given the advocacy around the role of women in peace negotiations (i.e., UN Resolution 1325), it would be good to understand the actual potential for this to happen.

Finally, one very straightforward, practical identified need is for more data to be disaggregated by gender. The lack of sex disaggregated data limits the understanding of the social, political, and economic environment, and makes formulating relevant policy more difficult.

VI.G. Policy research needs: humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian assistance is a broad sector encompassing natural disasters and conflict-related conditions, and does not appear explicitly as a specific sector in either the ANDS or the NPPs. DFID's indicator for the humanitarian assistance sector relates to the number of persons assisted by humanitarian agencies, and will be determined according to the assessed need in a given year.

The main Afghan government bodies responsible for disaster relief are the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (primarily coordination); the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, whose provincial-level Department of Refugees and Repatriation takes the lead in conflict-related displacement; the National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform; and, the Provincial Disaster Management Committees. For food security issues, the three ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; Rehabilitation and Rural Development; and, Public Health have responsibility for different aspects. Coordination is led by UN OCHA under a system of nine clusters at Kabul and sub-national level, with government participating in varying degrees

There is a general expectation that humanitarian assistance needs will become much more salient as the 2014 Transition approaches, for a number of reasons, including: increased insecurity in rural areas as local power holders jockey for position to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of international forces; reduced development budgets due to donor home-country demands and increasing frustration with outcomes that have not met expectations; reduced social services (e.g., health, education) due to financial constraints and insecurity; downturn in the economy due to reduced international spending; the challenge of re-integrating refugees who may return from the neighbouring countries under various levels of duress; and, reduced ability of both the government and the international community to respond to emergencies due to the above-mentioned factors. At the same time, there is the likelihood that the operating environment will become more difficult and contentious, with reduced access to those in need.

Given the need for timely information to respond to emergencies, the utility of longer-term research should be distinguished between the need to invest in improved information collection and analysis in the sector – a need recognized by all stakeholders.

In this context, key longer-term research needs for Afghanistan include examining the relationship between chronic poverty and acute needs and how they are differentiated, and how chronic poverty increases a household's or community's vulnerability to acute conditions. Especially as donors make difficult funding choices between development and humanitarian activities, an important question is the programmatic relationship between disaster risk reduction, relief, recovery, and long-term development. All of these are questions that humanitarian sector actors are currently struggling with.

Given the widespread concern about accountability and monitoring, especially in light of possible worsening insecurity, another area for research would be the potential role of community monitoring and other innovations in encouraging social accountability, given the weakness of many formal, institutional systems. (As an outgrowth of its work on public administration reform and corruption, several years ago the World Bank did some preliminary analytical work on social accountability, but this seems not have taken hold in a significant way.)

While the integration of aid, humanitarian assistance, and security has been well-studied (see governance section above), there are still questions about the extent to which integration has affected humanitarian assistance and vulnerability. A related aspect of this is the extent to which Afghan actors at all levels understand humanitarian principles, whether as formally stated in international doctrine or informally.

The role of migration and remittances is still not well understood, although given the increased geographical mobility and technological developments over the last decade, this may come to play a more important and perhaps different role in the coming period.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

As noted in the previous sections, the lack of research and analysis from certain areas of the country can also be viewed as a gap. Especially in recent years, the geographical distribution of research has been influenced largely by reasons of security, which has meant that research is skewed towards the north and central parts of the country, with much less conducted in the south and the east. Some areas such as Shamali (the area directly to the north of Kabul, accessible by road on a day trip), Bamiyan, Balkh, and, less so in recent times, Badakhshan and Sar-e Pul, provide fieldwork sites for a disproportionate amount of research. With a few exceptions, proximity to regional centres and secure road or air access has become a necessary consideration in research site selection, although it is somewhat less the case for purely Afghan teams.

While security is often a primary factor in determining fieldwork, donor interest also plays a large role, especially for the significant proportion of research which is linked to project implementation. For instance, DFID's major HMEP mentioned above relates to the UK's significant investments in Helmand Province. More broadly, based on the ARD+E studies reviewed, Nangarhar and Balkh were far and away the subjects of the most research, which

is not surprising given their large population centres, extensive irrigation systems, and importance in trade and industry, but also their focus for donor-supported alternative livelihoods and counter-narcotics initiatives. Moreover, the thematic range there was much narrower, and much more focused on the 'core' issues of opium and livelihoods. For obvious reasons, there has been more research on opium and security-related issues in the south and east. There is also anecdotal evidence that a considerable body of surveys and assessments undertaken by USAID contractors do not enter the public domain.

Given donor interests and insecurity, it is not surprising that research is unevenly distributed geographically, with some areas possibly over-studied and others about which very little is known. Also, research done in the less permissive areas, where development projects are more militarised, is less likely to be visible. As a consequence, there are large amounts of the country about which the evidence base is relatively limited, primarily the south and the east. Due to the concentration of insurgency in primarily Pashtun areas, there is also an ethnic dimension to this.

Although security concerns obviously impose limits on the volume and type of research that is done in certain areas, the current concentration of research suggests that a more even geographic distribution of research would provide a more balanced view of the varied conditions across Afghanistan.

VII. Capacity building in policy research: recommendations

Recommendations about building research capacity have to be placed in the context of Afghanistan's uncertain and changing political and security environment. While the future is impossible to predict, Afghanistan is likely to experience continued or even rising insecurity for at least the next several years. In such an environment, there may well be a retreat from the spirit of enquiry that was more pervasive in the early years post-2001 in favour of a focus on more basic needs. In that case, research may be seen as a less pressing or relevant need, and in a context in which fewer overall resources will be available, they are likely to be allocated to priorities seen as more pressing.

It therefore seems inevitable that there will be reduction in institutions which are doing research. At the same time, with fewer development resources available, it is even more important that wise, evidence-based decisions be made on how to allocate those resources. One has to assume that there will be a continued need for analytical capacity, and that there should be continued support to Afghans who are committed to better understanding their social environment.

Based on the preceding analysis of research capacity in Afghanistan, the following are the major needs identified by the team:

- Technical, methodological, and analytical skills to enable Afghan researchers and research institutions to take the lead in identifying and producing high quality analytical work.

- Independent research capacity, both to ensure that non-aligned, critical analysis is produced, but also to build confidence and interest in research among wider segments of the Afghan population.
- Greater demand for research and analysis on the part of segments of the Afghan public generated because they see it as informative and valuable – not as either irrelevant or biased.
- Repositories or focal points for research, analysis, and information so that it is accessible to all and that studies are not needlessly replicated.
- Improved quality and standards for analytical work.
- Stable funding which allows long-term research, the pursuit of topics which are important and policy-relevant, and more institutional stability through the reduction of ‘job-hopping’.

With Transition rapidly approaching, there may be a temptation to quickly transfer responsibility to Afghan staff. While the assuming of Afghan responsibility for research leadership is inevitable, necessary, and positive (and in some cases has already taken place), individual institutions should carefully think through this process and invest sufficient time and support so that in the rush to ‘Afghanise’ research quality is not lost.

The following is a set of specific recommendations for DFID to consider. As noted in the preceding sections, each sector has different histories, conditions, capabilities, and needs, and so these recommendations may apply in different ways.

1. Improve management of and access to data and information.

Perhaps the most elementary but challenging recommendation is to rationalise the way that research and data resources are currently being managed, used, and made accessible. Although some donors and research institutions are better than others at sharing and disseminating research, there is a strong ‘silo’ mentality evident in the production and consumption of much research. Some of this is due to political sensitivities (i.e., results that cast doubts on policies), while some of it is due to plain institutional rivalries where there is competition for funding and recognition. The commercial nature of research has also contributed to a culture of secrecy and proprietary rights, and the political sensitivity of development and security assistance in Afghanistan increases the pressure on donors to manage information carefully.

The ‘one-stop shop’ desired by many respondents is probably not realistic, but nevertheless it would be in the interests of all research stakeholders to more effectively share and collectively utilise evidence. This should be facilitated, first, by establishing protocols and principles between donors and research stakeholders governing joint access to, and use of, research. Second, there should be established some mechanism for data and evidence archiving and management that provides effective access to all publically available research content. These two initiatives would reduce or eliminate many of the challenges of trying to track down information, reports, and publications from

their individual sources. It could also contribute to an elevation of quality through subjecting research to a more public review.

How to achieve this is much more challenging, as it cannot be done by fiat or by a top-down approach. Rather, research users will have to do this for themselves with like-minded interested and motivated stakeholders, although it might be helpful if it were endorsed by the government and some of the donors. As it is not realistic or perhaps even desirable to create a new entity to take responsibility for the above two initiatives, they could be hosted by or with an existing research stakeholder. There are precedents from some of the sectoral or task-oriented working groups which have been established over the last ten years, some of which have functioned productively. There is at least one informal 'think-tank' network which meets on an ad hoc basis in order to share information, and elements could be taken from that model. Members could possibly be formalized as a national level board. While most likely one institution would have to act as host, presumably a significant portion of the resources could be stored online.

2. Establish strategic framework(s) for research.

At present, much research in Afghanistan is undertaken in a very *ad hoc* manner without common standards, measures, indicators, or methodological consistency. This is particularly true of the diverse socio-economic and impact assessment surveys being undertaken around the country. Not only can this result in very mixed quality of research results, but it often acts as an obstacle to aggregating research outputs to national or even provincial levels.

If research stakeholders could collectively work out some basic standards and protocols for conducting research, local studies and the data they produce could be much better integrated through common points of reference and perhaps even related to national scale datasets. The NRVA has already established itself as a valuable reference point. A set of shared common research standards would also serve an important framework for capacity-building for many research Institutions.

Of course, there is significant variation among sectors and types of research. For instance, health and education may have more standardized measures and approaches than does governance and gender. Likewise, it may be more challenging to develop standard measures for qualitative research than quantitative, and the selection of indicators is a notoriously difficult task for any type of research. Still, while it would not be possible to completely standardize approaches, it seems that more can be done; at present, there are many ways of counting or measure essentially the same thing.

Similar to the recommendation on improving management of data and information, this initiative would have to be led primarily by the research community, getting stakeholders around the table, with a possible national-level working group. Again, this would require buy-in from stakeholders in the research community, based on it responding to their felt needs, helped along by endorsement by government institutions and the donors.

3. Support partnerships between international research institutions and local institutions.

The model of partnerships between Afghan and international research and academic institutions appears to be an effective one and should be encouraged. Afghan respondents were very candid about the comparative advantage of international researchers at research design, proposals, and planning, while international researchers, no matter their experience in Afghanistan, are often largely uninformed about Afghan reality. Partnerships between international and Afghan research institutions therefore have the potential to be highly complementary and mutually beneficial. Afghan institutions can provide local knowledge, access to communities and individuals, and a sense of legitimacy among the Afghan public, while international institutions can provide an international or cross-country perspective, analytical and methodological skills, access to funding, and intellectual legitimacy at the international level. Afghan research institutions would get experienced and technically qualified support, and international institutions would get an opportunity for fieldwork. Such partnerships could also help to avoid the potential downside to rapid 'Afghanisation' noted in the introduction to this section,

One downside of linkages to international institutions is that they can sometimes impose onerous administrative conditions or mobility restrictions which affect fieldwork, but presumably this could be worked out. Partnerships would also allow mentorships between international or regional researchers and young Afghan researchers which can take advantage of respective comparative advantages. Most Afghan respondents were very positive about their experience with these types of partnerships.

4. Encourage collaborative research partnerships.

Beyond the above partnerships, there have been a number of examples of diverse research partners coming together to build innovative collaborations that draw on the strengths of each. Fostering collaboration and multi-disciplinary partnerships will not only be an important strategy in meeting the evolving research challenges of the future, but could potentially offer opportunities for building the capacity of one or all partner institutions, by exposing staff to the methods and techniques of other organisations. For instance, geo-spatial mapping techniques could be useful in parts of the country which are insecure, but would have to be triangulated through other methods. Multi-disciplinary research and 'methodological pluralism' can often provide different perspectives to research questions. Also, a number of large research programmes have successfully managed partnerships between ministries, project implementers, and independent research organisations, with each contributing and benefiting according to its own responsibilities. While such arrangements can be complicated and have to be carefully managed from the start (i.e., creating a steering committee that will be functional and not obstructive, writing a memorandum of understanding that clearly delineates responsibilities), they have great potential for generating and sharing of knowledge and for building capacity on all sides.

5. Distinguish between analytical capacity to be strengthened in the public sector and independent research capacity.

Especially for sensitive or controversial topics and issues, it is not realistic to expect objective and disinterested research from public sector institutions, so investment in and encouragement of non-governmental producers of research should continue. Such support is consistent with the vision for the role that civil society organisations can play in Afghanistan. The US/UK model of making funds available in order to contract for independent research may be more realistic, but it should be adapted to the Afghan context. There are examples of where this has been done successfully. At the same time, some of the most widely used sources of information (e.g., NRVA) have been produced through support to the public sector. As this seems like a core state function, continued assistance should be provided to significant institutions which collect and manage data within the government. While think-tanks and private institutions can assist, ultimately it is the state which must perform this function, as it is the state that has legitimacy with Afghans and this is what people expect from it. Also, where international advisors are engaged with ministries, supporting the establishment or strengthening of internal boards that oversee or manage research would be a good way to encourage quality and relevance of research. International advisors have played constructive roles in institutional review boards in ministries such as Public Health and Education.

6. Find opportunities to support research at Kabul University and provincial universities.

Kabul University should be the engine driving research capacity and innovation in Afghanistan, but it is not. Given fiscal, political, and organisational realities, it is not at all likely that this government institution could fulfil that role anytime soon. At the same time, there are clearly pockets of energy and motivation, especially among some of the younger faculty and students and concentrated in some faculties.

Comprehensively building the capacity of the University is an extremely daunting task, but smaller amounts of resources could be strategically made available to support promising research. This could in a small way help to overcome the current lack of rewards and incentives (financial and institutional) within the University to do research. Extra value could be gained by ensuring that this investment only be directed to 'real world' research problems identified by the ministries or other institutions, and possibly foster relations between government agencies and the University. In addition, such resources might stimulate considerable research activity and competition. Working on a small scale in an applied, task-oriented way with intellectually ambitious students and taking advantage of their energy makes much more sense than larger, top-down and comprehensive programs that try to engage the entire institution. Although the team was not able to visit any universities outside of Kabul, it became aware of research activities taking place; these activities also merit similar support.

The above could be done through a couple of mechanisms. First, funders of research, especially those working with ministries on real-world problems, could specify that a certain proportion of research money be earmarked or dedicated to involving faculty or students. This could apply to project implementers who are doing their own research or are contracting with other agencies. Depending on their capacity, this wouldn't

necessarily require that faculty or students take the lead, but it would give them an opportunity to participate in research. This arrangement would presumably require at least the tacit agreement of the University administration, but the mechanism would not formally go through the University system. Second, creating a fund to make small research grants available on a competitive basis to faculty could stimulate research. The guidelines could be written to encourage research on real-world problems rather than abstract or desk-based academic research, and funding decisions would be made by an external review board that had University representation.

7. Make longer-term research and institutional funding available.

While this may be a tough sell in a time of shortening horizons and increasing focus on immediate-term measurement of project outcomes and outputs, not to mention stretched donor budgets, longer-term funding, both for specific research projects as well as institutional support, would have a number of benefits. First, longer-term research can generate insights which are missed by short, one-off projects which take a 'snap shot' at one moment in time. Second, longer-term research can offer an opportunity for institutions to foster a cadre of research staff exposed to and versed in sophisticated and in-depth research methods. Third, and related, longer-term funding may enable research institutions to offer a more secure career progression for staff and therefore be able to retain more of them to advance to senior research positions. Ironically, the coming period of Transition is one that well deserves a nuanced and multi-faceted long-term study.

Longer-term funding might also reduce the pressure for research organisations to choose between doing quality research and building capacity. Some institutions have tried to find a balance between the two, and possibly achieved neither. Some institutions have greatly underestimated the amount of time, effort, and accumulated experience which is needed to build capacity, and have provided very short trainings (i.e., one-week) in research methodology to participants without previous research experience. Such short-term, one-off 'capacity building' is not likely to yield much in increased capacity to do research. Other institutions have decided that they cannot do both, so have chosen to focus on outputs rather than capacity.

8. Continue to invest in international degree programs for select and promising Afghans.

Afghans who have returned from abroad with advanced or even undergraduate degrees have already substantially enriched the research and analytical environment. As Afghanistan does not currently have degree programs through which aspiring researchers can acquire skills needed to do rigorous research, such research will largely only be led by Afghans once they have acquired international degrees or other types of training in addition to on-the-ground experience. One well-documented risk, of course, is that students who go overseas for study will not return, either through informal means or through staying on legally. For their current employer, another risk is that they will jump to a new job upon return. The first risk will simply have to be endured, while in some cases the second one can be managed. Eligibility should be first for those candidates who would be more likely to return to Afghanistan and make a productive contribution to the research environment.

An additional suggestion is to build on and reinforce networks of returning graduates and to draw on them as intellectual resources. It seems that the Fulbright program maintains this sort of network, and something similar could be done for Chevening or other programmes.

9. Support quality research through the establishment of an independent research fund.

Establish a research fund whose purpose would not be just to provide and administer grants but to address a number of the issues which were raised in this report, including encouraging the application of research to policy ('demand side'); focusing on the quality of research; allowing long-term research; encouraging the management and administration of information (see recommendation 1 above); and, focusing on sector and thematic areas which are policy relevant. For political and administrative reasons, this fund should be based outside of DFID. Given the difficulty of establishing a new institution, the fund could be based in an existing cultural or educational institution. The fund should reside in an institution has the following characteristics: be as Afghan as possible, but be open to the possibility of external technical assistance; possessing a governance structure that ensures not just transparency but the appearance of transparency; and, maintaining independence from government and donors which might be seen to have influence. Financial and technical contributions could be encouraged from other donors and existing institutions.

10. Target research at identified data and evidence gaps.

Efforts should be made to target research actions to the sectoral and geographic gaps and imbalances highlighted in this study. As noted above, the regional imbalance in the evidence base limits the scope for formulating policy. There needs to be some type of mechanism or facility to direct research activity to under-researched topics, as the bulk of investment currently goes into socio-economic appraisals. This will be a major challenge, because on the sectoral side donors largely invest in analysis which is relevant to their interests, and on the geographical side insecurity is the main reason for the regional imbalance. A mix of incentives (financial and otherwise), creative mechanisms, and new technology can be used.

11. Encourage the demand for research among the Afghan population -- a better understanding and culture of research.

The scepticism about research expressed by much of the Afghan population can only be reduced over time by encouraging a better understanding of the meaning and practice of research and by ensuring that credible and transparent research reaches the public. The issue here is not just the production of quality research, but also the verification and endorsement by the population. If research is seen as unreliable or, even worse, as 'cooked' to represent the political aims of donors, then there is not going to be any uptake. A sector of the population that has confidence in public analytical work can play a strong role in social accountability. Some of this may be a function of the legitimacy of the people and institutions who are producing research. Although clearly far beyond the scope of this exercise, in the long-term building analytical capacity as well as the ability

to use information in the generations ahead requires the lifting of the quality of education at primary and secondary levels.

**Annex A:
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Mapping of research capacity in Afghanistan

Background

1. DFID has recently established a South Asia Research Hub (SARH) to improve the outreach of its global research into country and regional programmes to increase the linkages between DFID research and our country offices and their partners. The SARH works to support DFID country offices and their partners to better users and commissioners of research and to ensure that south Asian concerns are reflected in the centrally commissioned research. The SARH also has dedicated funds to support better coordination of research efforts, fund programmes of operational-focused research and support capacity-building in the south Asian research community.
2. High quality research gains prominence within DFID's commitment to improve policy and programming in the region. In Afghanistan, as elsewhere in the region, it thus forms a vital part of the evidence base underpinning DFID's focus in country on promoting peace, security and political stability and its aims to stimulate the economy and strengthen government effectiveness and accountability.
3. There are concerns that (due to the high turn over of staff and speed at which policy develops in this environment) development partners are not fully aware of the current research and analysis that already exists nor clear on what new analysis may be required to fill knowledge gaps. There is currently no system to track new research and analysis or to capture key findings and ensure lessons are learned. This is particularly pertinent as development partners consider the impact of transition (the withdrawal of troops and transfer of leadership over security from international to Afghan forces).
4. In order to address the above concerns it would be useful to identify the real evidence gaps, the research and/or analysis needed to fill these gaps and the division of labour among development partners on how this may be delivered.
5. In addition, there is no clear picture of the capacity that is available in the country to deliver high quality and relevant research and policy analysis. Decades of violent conflict have been responsible for near collapse of academic institutions, think tanks and other research organisations in the country. As a result, the research landscape in the country is fragmented and highly dependent on foreign resources.
6. A mapping of the national research and policy analysis landscape in Afghanistan will help to understand the capacity that is available in the country. Further, it will provide insights into the future potential of institutions and groups and the types of support that could most effectively build capacity for conducting high quality research and policy analysis in the country. A report was published by CMI in 2008 providing mapping of applied social science research which provides a useful guide to the types of resources available.
7. By national research and policy analysis landscape we mean all providers of research (both basic and applied) and policy analysis, including universities, think tanks and other providers including private sector organisations and NGOs that are either national organisations or external organisations with a permanent presence in Afghanistan.

8. As mentioned, given most Afghan contracted research is funded by foreign sources, it will be important to follow the chain from provider to source to include information on who is commissioning research, from where, for what purpose, and with what results, to complete the mapping picture.

Objective

9. The overall objective of the task is to identify the gaps in research and analysis which would be valuable to development partners and the comparative advantage of different partners in taking forward work to fill this gap, and to map and describe the architecture for research and policy in Afghanistan. The specific questions to answer are:
 - 9.1. who are the main funders of research and policy analysis in Afghanistan?
 - 9.2. what are the main areas in which research is being carried out and by whom?
 - 9.3. what is the current capacity for high-quality research and policy analysis by sector?
 - 9.4. what are the capacity building needs for Afghan research institutions and think tanks?
 - 9.5. what are the evidence gaps in DFIDA's Operational Plan and other development partners planning documents?
 - 9.6. what research and analysis currently available could fill these gaps?
 - 9.7. who is best placed to commission research and analysis to fill identified gaps?

Recipient

10. The recipient of this work will be DFID Afghanistan, other development partners and the DFID South Asia Research Hub based in New Delhi, India.

Scope

11. The mapping will involve identification of the institutions that carry out research and policy analysis in Afghanistan including both national institutions and external institutions with a permanent base in the country. It will describe their main areas of focus and provide an initial assessment of the quality of the research and analytical output. The mapping will also provide an overview of the major funders and commissioners of research and policy analysis in the country.
12. The team will be expected to update the information in the CMI 2008 report on applied social science research and in particular ensure that issues of governance and the rule of law are adequately covered. The team should ensure the key findings of the CMI 2008 report are fully integrated into the report to DFID. In addition, the team should undertake a mapping of research: human development (health, education, HIV, watsan etc); natural resource management (water, forests, land); agriculture; climate change.
13. The service provider will also review the DFIDA Operational Plan and programme plans of selected other key development partners to assess if and in what areas evidence gaps exist and how these may be best filled, including which stakeholders are best placed to support this activity.
14. The service provider will set out clear definitions of research and policy analysis used in this assessment at the start of the assignment. It is anticipated that this will be based on a definition of research as 'an activity focused on the generation of evidence' and that analysis is the process of reviewing evidence in combination with other factors to identify options for action.'

15. It is expected that a mapping of research capacity in Afghanistan will provide an overview of the following:
 - 15.1. The range, key institutions and groups undertaking research and policy analysis in Afghanistan.
 - 15.2. The main thematic focus areas of groups or institutions, including geographic areas
 - 15.3. The range of research and analysis that is available in the public domain
 - 15.4. The major sources of funding for research and policy analysis and the mechanisms of commissioning, whether competitively or sole sourcing
 - 15.5. An assessment of the relative strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for research and policy analysis in different sectors in the country
 - 15.6. Capacity building needs within institutions and groups providing research and policy analysis
 - 15.7. The research gaps in development partner plans, including the DFIDA Operational Plan, and assess comparative advantage of different partners in taking forward the research agenda in terms of filling the gaps
 - 15.8. Identify mechanisms and potential partners for strengthening Afghan capacity to undertake and use research, and coordinating and harmonising international organisations research activities.

16. The assignment will primarily be a desk review of existing reports and information on capacity in Afghanistan. The major research and policy analysis conducted over the last three years in Afghanistan will be documented and catalogued and an initial assessment of quality of the outputs from research and policy analysis. It is expected that the service provider will make a visit to Kabul to meet the major research and policy analysis providers.

17. For each institution and group identified, the following should be provided: location and group name; a short paragraph of background information on the groups' overarching thematic interests; a web link; and contact details (postal and central email addresses). Recent research and policy analysis will be assessed, and if appropriate a bibliography prepared of publically available research outputs.

18. More than one group within the same institution may be referred to, as might more specialised whole academic institutions or units. Personal opinions of the author or unsubstantiated claims made by organisations themselves will not be accepted.

Outputs

19. A final report, including an executive summary will be produced. The report will address all the issues listed in section 9. The report will be in the form of a narrative description and will be supplemented by web links and other forms of information, where relevant. The executive summary should be no more than 3 pages in length.

Reporting

20. It is expected that the Consultant will maintain close contact with the Lead Adviser in the South Asia Research Hub on overall progress. In addition, the service provider will be encouraged to discuss emerging findings with advisers in the UK-based Global Outreach team and from the SARH on thematic areas. A draft report of work will be

submitted to the SARH and DFID Afghanistan after 2 months, with a final report submitted after 3 months.

21. The person undertaking the mapping should be an experienced researcher with a good working knowledge of the research environment in Afghanistan and be able to comment on the quality of research. Fluent English and familiarity with Dari, Pashtun or Russian would be beneficial.

Timeframe

22. The mapping exercise will be completed in three months. The assignment will commence in August 2011 and will be completed by the end of October 2011.

DFID coordination

23. The Lead Adviser for the mapping will be Guy Howard. The project officer will be Kanupriya Sharma, SARH. Gemma Wood, DFID Afghanistan will coordinate inputs and review from DFID Afghanistan.

Annex B

Representative research and publications

As noted in Section III, 'Available research and analysis', the following is a list of representative publications and studies done in the last several years under the seven sectors of governance and security, wealth creation, ARD+E, health, education, gender, and humanitarian assistance. The survey was done in fall 2011, and so does not include research or publications after that time. The list is intended to be representative only and is by no means comprehensive.

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Annex C: Institutions active in undertaking research, by type of institution and sector

See notes at bottom of table for sources of information and caveats.

Sector	Sub-sector	Universities/ academic institutions	Public sector/ government agencies	Dedicated policy research	Implementers with research & assessment capacity	Private sector, contractors of research	International institutions/ UN agencies	Other institutions
Governance and security	Public opinion				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTRO • TAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSOR • AIR • Eureka • Gallup • Glevum • Indicium • Kabul Group • Lapis Ltd • ORCA 		
	Democratic institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIAS • NCPR 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • AREU • APPRO • HRRAC • KCSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DI • Glevum • ICG 		
	Justice and rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIAS • KU (Law Department) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • AREU • APPRO • HRRAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW • CPAU • TAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSOR • ICG • PTRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP-LOTFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIZ
	Anti-corruption			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • IWA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNODC 	
	Sub-national governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • AREU • CAPS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSOR • Glevum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WB 	
	Human Rights			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • HRRAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC
	Conflict, security and peace-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCPR 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAN • AREU • CAPS • HRRAC • KCSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW • CPAU • TLO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSOR • AIR • Alcis • Glevum • ICG • Indicium • PTRO 		

Sector	Sub-sector	Universities/ academic institutions	Public sector/ government agencies	Dedicated policy research	Implementers with research & assessment capacity	Private sector, contractors of research	International institutions/ UN agencies	Other institutions
Wealth Creation		• AIAS		• AREU	• ADA • CARE • DACAAR	• AIR • Altai • Upper Quartile		• GIZ
Natural Resource Management	Water	• KU (Geo- science Faculty) • USGS		• AREU • CPHD	• AKF	• Alcis • ORCA		
	Forests	• KU (Ag Faculty)			• AKF • MC	• Alcis	• UNEP • WCS	
	Land		• ALA	• AREU	• TLO	• Alcis		• SLMI
	Minerals	• KU (Geo- science Faculty) • USGS	• AGS					
Agriculture	Food security		• AIRD • FEWSNET • LVAU	• AREU	• ACF • ADA • MC • ROP • TLO	• Alcis • OSDR	• FAO • WFP	
	Livestock	• KU (Ag Faculty) • MAIL	• ARIA	• AREU	• DCA • PEACE		• FAO • ICARDA	
	Crop	• KU (Ag Faculty) • MAIL	• ARIA • FEWSNET • ISE		• DACAAR • ROP	• Alcis	• FAO • ICARDA	
	Opium			• AREU	• DACAAR • TLO	• Alcis • OSDR	• UNODC	
	Agricultural livelihoods		• AIRD • LVAU	• APPRO • AREU • CPHD	• ADA • CARE • Oxfam • PEACE • TLO	• Alcis • Altai	• FAO • ICARDA • WCS	• GIZ
Environment &		• KU (Geo-	• FEWSNET	• APPRO		• Alcis	• UNEP	

Sector	Sub-sector	Universities/ academic institutions	Public sector/ government agencies	Dedicated policy research	Implementers with research & assessment capacity	Private sector, contractors of research	International institutions/ UN agencies	Other institutions
Climate Change		science Faculty) • USGS	MAIL • NEPA				• WCS	
Health			• APHI • CDC • MOPH (M&E)	• AREU • HPRO	• ACF • AICF • AKDN • CARE • FG • HI • HNI/HNTP • IIHMR • IMC • JHPIEGO • JHSPH • SCA • SCI • URC	• Altai • ARC • Macro	• WHO	
Education				• AREU • HRRAC	• AKDN • CARE • Mercy Corps • Oxfam • SCA • SCI	• Alcis • Altai		• GIZ
Gender			• AIRD	• APPRO • AREU	• CARE • DACAAR • Oxfam			
Humanitarian					• ACF • AKF • CARE • HI			

Notes: The above was constructed based on the team's informal review of visible research. It is intended to be representative and does not claim to be exhaustive. It also does not reference work done in other than the above sectors. For acronyms, see list of acronyms at front of main text. See notes to Annex D for caveats on completeness and timeliness of information.

Annex D: Basic information on research Institutions

See notes at bottom of table for codes, sources of information, and caveats.

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
1.	Academy of Sciences Char Rahi Shirpur, Shahr-e Naw, District 10, Kabul Nasrullah Mangal, Deputy for Human Science Section www.aos.af/ www.afghanistan.culturalprofiles.net/	GOV	1937	Designated key national research agency. Conducting and leading scientific research, and working with ministries and agencies to enhance quality of teaching, find solutions in different areas, supporting high-level authorities in drafting of national plans, and ensuring that Afghanistan stays current with global developments. Located under Office of the President.	NA	Humanities (including social sciences), natural sciences, and Islamic studies.	Afghan government, international donors
2.	Action contra la faim (ACF) Shashwat Saraf, Country Director hom@af.missions-acf.org kabul@af.missions-acf.org www.actionagainsthunger.org/countries/asia/afghanistan	IMP	1995	Project implementation, technical and policy research	320 staff (implementation and research) QNS, QLP, QLF QLC, SE, MA	Humanitarian assistance, food security, livelihoods, water and sanitation, mental health, disaster risk management.	Own funds, EuropeAid, ECHO, Conference on Implementation & Application of Automata, AIDS Care Fund, UNICEF
3.	Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR – Surveys) Matthew Warshaw House 217, 2nd Street Qalaye Fatullah Kabul District 10 matthew.warshaw@acsor-surveys.com www.acsor-surveys.com/	PS	2003	Conducts market and opinion research for international and Afghan clients. Internal training/capacity building. Has partnered with NCPR.	Qualitative, quantitative; focus groups, in-depth interviews, listening panels. 200 full-time Afghan staff for surveys QNS; QNO; QLF; PA	Social, political, economic, health systems, population, audience measurement, consumer and retail research.	Revenue from market research. Clients are UN, TAF, ABC News, BBC, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe
4.	Afghan Public Health Institute (APHI) Dr Bashir Noormal, General Director Ministry of Public Health, District 10 Charahi Sehat Aama, Kabul http://moph.gov.af/en/page/608	GOV	1963, revived 2003	Public health and management training, developing human resources, research, national disease surveillance, health policy advocacy, think tank for MoPH, and collaborating centre for WHO. Conducts research	Conducts and coordinates research QNS, QNF, QLP, QLC, PA, RS, SE	Public health, medical sciences	MOPH, HHS/CDC, WHO, National Institute of Public Health (Japan)

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
				and assists partners in research.			
5.	Afghan Research Center (ARC) Waheedullah Osmani, President Behind Ministry of Interior, next to Anti-Terrorism Department, Shahr-e Naw, Kabul, 0795-6 56 603 0752-10 50 20 www.arc.org.af	PS	NA	ARC is an Afghan research centre with research operations in different areas of market, media, and opinion polling. ARC has national research network all over Afghanistan. Implements projects on proposal basis. Aims to serve governments, non-profits, and corporations.	Core team of 5 members, network of 800 professionals and field survey assistants. Qualitative and quantitative research methods. QNS, QNO, QLF, QLC	Media, consultancy, government, ICT, health, telecommunications	Revenue from clients
6.	Afghanistan Development Association (ADA) Esmatullah Haidary, Deputy Managing Director House 264 & 265, Kabul River Bank Road, Pul-i-Surkh Karte Char, Post Box 199 Phone: 0799-566902, 0799-329664, 0700-329291 ada.headoffice@ada.org.af www.ada.org.af	IMP	1990	Multi-sectoral development and rehabilitation project implementation for vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially in agricultural and rural sector. Poverty eradication, capacity building, surveys and social research.	Conducts surveys and research for partners QNS, QLP, QLF	Child and youth protection and development, agriculture and livestock, rural development, economic recovery	USAID, international NGOs
7.	Afghanistan Geological Survey (AGS) Dr Atiq Sediqi, President Afghanistan Geological Survey building, next to slaughter house, Jalalabad Road District 9, Kabul amsediqi@sbcglobal.net www.bgs.ac.uk/AfghanMinerals/Index.htm	GOV	1955, resumed 2004	Established in Ministry of Mines with core functions of geological mapping, evaluation of mineral and hydrogeological resources, and creation of geological and mineral databases and geographical information systems. Mining cadaster office to be established. Training of Afghan geologists.	Research on Afghanistan minerals and mining through support of BGS and USGS. Compiles research reports from BGS and USGS for policy and exploration purposes. Afghan cadre is being trained. RS, SE, MM	Agro-meteorology, airborne geophysical surveys, coal, earthquake hazards, geospatial infrastructure development, minerals, oil and gas, and water.	DFID through BGS, USGS
8.	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) Pul-i-Surkh, Karte Seh	OTH	2002	Established under Article 58 of Afghan Constitution to protect and promote rights and	Mostly through collaboration with research	Human rights, women's rights, children's rights, disabled rights,	UNICEF, UNHCR, UNAMA, CIDA,

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
	Post Box 829 Phone: 020-2500676, 0794-631816, 0700-276283 Mohammad Musa Mahmodi, Executive Director mahmodi@aihrc.org.af aihrc@aihrc.org.af www.aihrc.org.af			freedoms enshrined in the Afghan Constitution and international human rights instruments. Produces daily and annual reports, ad hoc reports, monthly magazine,	organisations, overseen by commissioners. Monitoring and investigation QLP, QLC,	transitional justice	USAID, other international donors
9.	Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD) Abdul Rahman Shekib, Director Tel: 0700-727778 www.mrrd.gov.af/en/page/2965	GOV	2006	Support for rural development within MRRD and other public sector partners in agricultural and rural development. Focus on training, research, rural technology, and information dissemination. Hosted LVAU before transfer to CSO.	QNS, QLF, PA, AR	Local governance, rural planning, gender	Afghan government, project funding from Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID), CIDA, GIZ, JICA, WB, USAID, AusAid, WFP, EC
10	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation (APPRO) Dr Saeed Parto, Director of Research Tel: 0797-165104 www.appro.org.af/index.html	POL	2008	Independent policy research with focus on improving performance against milestones for reconstruction and development. Provides training and mentoring to the public sector, and commissioned program evaluations	15 research staff, including 3 international researchers. QLP,QLF,QLC,PA	Social aspects of agriculture, political, rural livelihoods, environment, gender.	Project funding and program appraisals. MISFA, Oxfam, ODI, WB, CARE, CIDA, IRC
11	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Flower Street, Lane 2 Shahr-e Naw, Kabul www.areu.org.af	POL	2002	Research, advocacy, promoting a culture of research and learning. Has tended towards longer-term multi-year research projects to inform the development of policy. Public library/resource centre.	35 researchers, 6 international; consultants QNS, QLP, QLF, QLC, QLCC, AR	Governance, political economy, education, health, livelihoods, gender, natural resource management.	Core funds from Denmark, Finland, Norway, SDC, Sweden. Project funds from ESRC EC, UNICEF, others
12	Afghanistan Watch (AW) Near Borje-Barq, Dehberi, Kabul Dehberi Post Office Box No 10083	POL	2008	Non-governmental, non-political. Promotion of peace, justice, culture of mutual tolerance and	Research in collaboration with partners.	Human rights, justice	AAN, AIHRC, CICC, EC, ICC, ICTJ

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
	Tel: 0799-215577, 0799-301434 www.watchafghanistan.org/about-us/statute.html			respect for human rights. Research and report on policies that affect people of Afghanistan.	QNO, QLF, QLC		
13	Agha Khan Foundation (AKF) Kevin Moorehead, Chief Executive Officer House 297, Street 17, Wazir Akbar Khan, Kabul Tel: 020-2301189 www.akdn.org/akf.asp	IMP	2002	Private NGO development agency, part of AKDN, working in rural development, humanitarian relief, and civil society. Evaluation, research, and learning unit works through program staff and in collaboration with other institutions in studies, surveys, assessments.	Focus on action research QNS, QLF, QLC, QLCC, PA, AR	Rural development, livelihoods, micro-finance, natural resource management, humanitarian relief, education, civil society, cultural heritage	Project funding from New Zealand Aid, AusAid, EC, GIZ, CIDA
14	Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan (ARIA) Mohammad Aziz Osmanzai, Director of Research http://mail.gov.af/en Tel: 0700-207045	GOV	1982	Affiliated with MAIL as peak body for directing and coordinating agricultural research, primarily on new crop varieties and techniques.	Approximately 230 research staff, most qualified at BSc level. 17 provincial research stations, of which 10 are active.	Farm management, including livestock, irrigation, and forestry. Focus on horticulture and cereals improvement.	MAIL. May receive future funding from USAID
15	Ahmad Idrees Rahmani Consulting Services (AIR Consulting) http://prgs.academia.edu/AhmadIdreesRahmani www.policy.hu/rahmani Anticipated: www.theairconsulting.com	PS	2007	A private Afghan survey and research firm established by a group of social scientists in response to the growing demand for good quality data and good analysis. Works with about 463 under-graduate students from various Afghan universities. Partnering with CSO and several international academic and policy institutions.	Four full-time PhD level policy research experts, additional 14 economists and statisticians on call from partner institutions. Social network analysis, randomized experimental studies, cultural consensus analysis, factor analysis, content analysis, QLF, QLP, QNO, QNS	Economic policy, political, social and security sectors, cost/benefit and risk analysis. Some public opinion research.	USAID, GIZ, TAF, Brookings Institution, Chemonics International, OSI, World Bank, USIP.
16	ALCIS Richard Brittan, Managing Director 0798-181604, +44 118 935 7304	PS	2004	Provides advanced geographic information services that enable better understanding of complex	1-4 Kabul-based staff. Advanced data interrogation and	Rural development, livelihoods, land use and agriculture, environment,	Contracts from FCO, DFID, DAI, DANIDA,

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	www.alcis.org			environments. Supports policy makers, donors, and NGOs with information to make decisions through utilization of sophisticated GIS and data integration techniques.	research links with Reading University through KTP Project. QLC, QLCC, RS, MM	counter narcotics, stabilization, education	NATO, AusAid, Afghan Land Authority
17	Altai Consulting Qala-i-Fatullah, Kabul 0799-888111, 0799-888666 info@altaiconsulting.com www.altaiconsulting.com	PS	2003	Executing development-aimed reports, social research, and impact evaluation, and capacity building to aid agencies, donors, government, and the private sector.	25 international consultants and 250 national consultants (includes all of Middle East and Central Asia) QNS, QNO, QNP, QNF, QLCC, PA, MM	Aid and development, telecommunication, corporate advisory, market research, corporate finance, socio-economic research, programme evaluation	Clients include USAID, World Bank, GIZ, BBC, DFID, Nestle, Western Union
18	American Institute for Afghan Studies (AIAS) Dr Omar Sharifi, Kabul Office Director Phone: 0708-324209 aias.kbl@gmail.com www.bu.edu/aias/member_resources.html	ACD	2003	AIAS is a private, non-profit organization promoting and encouraging the systematic study of the culture, society, land, languages, health, peoples, and history of Afghanistan. US base is at Boston University. Information is disseminated through forums, symposia, and Internet.	Network of academics and practitioners. QNS, QNO, QLF, QLC, PA	Social, political, economic	Individual and institutional members, external project grants
19	CARE Haji Yaqub Square, Park Rd. (next to Hanzala Mosque), Shahr-e Naw, Kabul Brian Cavanagh, Country Director brian.cavanagh@af.care.org www.care.org/careswork/countryprofiles/1.asp	IMP	1961, resumed 2002	CARE implements programs in four main areas, and focus on self-reliance, basic human rights, good governance, and social, economic and gender equality. CARE also advocates with and on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized Afghans.	QNS, QNO, QNP, QNF, MM, PA, RS	Education, women's social and economic empowerment, rural development, emergency response	USAID, CIDA, BPRM
20	Center for Policy and Human Development (CPHD) Jamal Mena, Kabul University, Kabul anhdr2011@gmail.com 0708-815971		2004	CPHD supports Kabul University and other Afghan educational institutions through capacity building in research related to human development. Supports improved linkages among	14 member team for research and social research methodology training. QLC, QLF, QNS	Justice sector, water (focus, respectively of 2007 and 2010 HDR)	UNDP

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				Afghan universities; generation and distribution of data; promoting international faculty and student exchanges. Produces Afghanistan Human Development Report. Strengthening of <i>Serrana</i> , academic journal of Kabul University.			
21	Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) Kabul Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Director 0799-750530 www.caps.af/	POL	2006	Independent research centre that conducts action-oriented research aimed at influencing policy-makers in key areas. Core activities are research, education, and capacity building.	7 researchers and 3 visiting fellows. QNS, QLF, QLC	State building, governance, counter-narcotics, conflict resolution and peace building, media in conflict, security and development, violent actors	TAF, other project funding
22	Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) House Number 997 Second Street, Kolola Pushta Road Charahi Ansary, Kabul Kanishka Nawabi, Director 0700- 278 891 info@cpau.org.af www.cpau.org.af	POL	1996	Building an improved and sustainable culture of peace through local-led peace building activities; improved cooperation between local and government justice institutions; greater alignment of local and national justice frameworks; improved justice for women and minorities. Emphasis on human rights, peacebuilding, and education	5 researchers, plus collaboration with other research actors. Action research QNS, QLF, QLC, PA	Justice, human security, religious civil society, strategic conflict analysis, local conflict trend analysis,	EC, USIP, UNDP, NED
23	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) Arif Qaraeen, Director Paikob-e-Naswar, Wazir Abad, District 10, P.O. Box 208, Kabul 020- 22 01 750, 0700- 288 232 dacaar@dacaar.org www.dacaar.org/	IMP	1984	A long established NGO delivering programs and services to vulnerable rural communities. Diverse program activities in agricultural and rural livelihoods development, strong outreach.	Monitoring and evaluation unit. Some studies subcontracted or through collaboration with research institutions. QNS, QLF, QLP, AR	Agriculture, alternative livelihoods, water, capacity building for rural development, gender.	Project funding from DANIDA, Norway, EC, International Relief and Development

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24	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) South of Barakee Square First Street, House #10, Kart-e-Parwan, Kabul Raymond Briscoe, Country Director 020-2200708, 020-2200643 www.dca-vet.nl	IMP	1980	A long established NGO committed to implementing humanitarian and rural development programs, with a focus on livestock as a core element in the rural economy and livelihoods. Research (assessments or studies) incorporated into program activities.	200 national staff with eight senior international staff at three regional offices. Collaboration and joint research with ICARDA and AREU CER, AR QNS, QLF, MM	Livestock focus, with a strong veterinary element, husbandry, dairy, livelihoods	Project funding from USAID, EC, Netherlands, GIZ, WB, IFAD
25	Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) Afghanistan Country Office 0799-078707 Afghanistan@fews.net www.fews.net/afghanistan	GOV	NA	Contractor (Chemonics) works with US-government agencies (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, USGS, USDA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to produce food security assessments, weather updates, and national pre-crop assessments of impact on harvests. Weekly and monthly reports, food security alerts, and weather hazards reports.	Draws on technical capacity of partner institutions. SE, RS	Food security, markets, agricultural production, climate, environment. Focus on identifying vulnerable populations and warning of impending food crises.	USAID
26	Futures Group International House 124, Ahmad Shah Masoud Street, District 10, Qala-e Fatullah Kabul Kathleen Sears, Team Leader HPP Afghanistan 0795-440459, +1-202-870-0646 ksears@futuresgroup.com osayed@futuresgroup.com www.futuresgroup.com	IMP	2006	Futures Group International's Health Policy Project works to strengthen the private health sector through policy development and collaboration with private health associations, and through implementing social marketing and behaviour change communication activities nationwide. Capacity building of local partners is part of all activities.	65 staff (total) working in provinces. PA, MM, QNS, QLF QLP	Health, private sector development policy, social marketing, behaviour change communication	USAID, own revenues
27	Gallup 901 F Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20004 USA Sarah Van Allen	PS	NA	Gallup Poll is a division of Gallup, a research-based performance management consulting company.	Annual survey. QNS, QNO	Public attitudes and confidence towards institutions, employment, access to Internet, food	Clients

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	+1-877-242-5587, 1-202-715-3030 Fax: +1-202-715-3045 www.gallup.com/tag/Afghanistan.aspx					security, and other variables.	
28	Glevum Associates 57 Eastern Ave. Gloucester, MA 01930 USA Andrew Garfield, Founder +1-978-515-7523 Andrew.Garfield@glevumusa.com www.glevumusa.com/presentations.html	PS	2006	Subsidiary of Glevum Associates. Conducts surveys of local populations for US government agencies.	International and local researchers. "Face to Face Research and Analysis". QNS, QNO, QLC	Security sector, local governance, elections	US military
29	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, formerly GTZ) House 33/2, Charahi Sedarat, Kabul 0799-310353, 0706-720221 thomas.lehmann@gtz.de www.gtz.de	OTH	2002	Wide range of programs and projects, mainly commissioned by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).	145 seconded experts and 1,200 local staff in programmes. QNS, QLC, AR, PA	Education, energy, health, development-oriented emergency and transitional aid, good governance, water, economic development, civil peace services, livelihoods.	BMZ and KfW development bank
30	Handicap International (HI) House 548, Street 5, Qala-i Fatullah, Kabul Arvind Das, Country Director 0799-149642, 0785-330927, 0705-468618 cdafgha@hiafgha.org supservcoordo@hiafgha.org www.handicap-international.org	IMP	1982	HI is an independent and impartial aid organization working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster focusing on people with disabilities and vulnerable populations.	Programme staff of ten international and 200 Afghan. Conducted 2004 survey of disabled Afghans. QNS	Rehabilitation, socio-economic inclusion of people with disabilities, mine action, policy and advocacy, disaster risk reduction	Bilateral, UN, multi-lateral donors
31	Health Net International/HNTP House 3, Street 1, District 3, Karte-Char, Kabul 0700-294627 hom_hn_tpo@yahoo.com www.healthnettpo.org/en/1139/research.html	IMP	1993	Primary health care, including mental health, disease control, health financing, and long-term development of strategies and policies. Works closely with other NGOs, MOPH, and local communities. Emphasis on evidence-based activities.	Researchers mainly contribute to studies of other organizations. QNS, AR	Health services, including malaria control, health care support program, and mental health.	USAID, EC, Cordaid, Norway, GAVI
32	Health Protection and Research Organization (HPRO) Dr Toby Leslie, Technical Director	POL	2008	Afghan, non-profit NGO registered with the MOE and MOPH. Specializes in public	Operations research, clinical research, laboratory testing.	Public health, laboratory testing, infectious diseases	AusAid, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,

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	Website anticipated 2012			health research, disease outbreak investigations, health system evaluations and medical diagnostic laboratory capacity building, institutional strengthening. Focus on evidence-based policy to improve diagnosis and management.	Afghan staff with international advisors, consultants QNS, AR, CER, QLC		Columbia University, Oxford University
33	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC) House 108, Street 2, Qalai Fatullah Kabul Nasrat Esmaty, Consultant/ Communication-Publication Officer 0752-017744, 0752-017733, 0799-301083 nasrat.esmaty@afghanadvocacy.org.af hrrac@afghanadvocacy.org.af www.afghanadvocacy.org.af/	POL	2003	HRRAC is an independent Afghan research organization engaged in research, advocacy, and capacity-building.	Supported by a consortium of 13 Afghan and international NGOs. QNS, QLC	Women's and children's human rights, workers' rights, security sector reform, education, justice, and public participation.	Oxfam Novib, EC, membership fees from consortium members
34	Indian Institute for Health Management Research (IIHMR) iihmr@iihmr.org www.iihmr.org/	ACD	1984	Works with MOPH and JHSPH to provide technical assistance in monitoring and evaluation and research and to build capacity in the NGOs and MOPH.	Conducts joint research with Johns Hopkins team and other universities in coordination with MOPH. QNS, QNF, QLP, QLC, PA, CER	Public health, including health sector reform, hospital management, reproductive health, community mobilization for health care delivery, policy formulation, analysis and implementation.	UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, DANIDA, GIZ, CARE, USAID
35	Indicium Consulting contact@indiciumconsulting.net www.indiciumconsulting.net/	PS	2010	Indicium Consulting provides consultancy services in information management, security, and situational awareness. Conducts surveys and area assessments. Maintains incident database and produces weekly and flash reports	International and Afghan researchers. Surveys, focus groups. QLF, QNO, QNS	Security, human and political terrain	NATO, governmental institutions, embassies, private sector
36	Institute for Afghan Studies (IAS)	POL	NA	IAS is a non-profit, non-political	Academic board of	Social, economic,	Run by

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	Dr G. Rauf Roashan, Director www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org/			and independent organization, founded and run by young Afghan scholars from around the globe. IAS's mission is to be a centre for research and a credible source of information about Afghanistan. It provides a forum where contributions could be submitted and posted on its website.	19 Afghan members. Posts contributions of members.	political	members' support
37	Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) Behind the Dutch Embassy Kolola Pushta, Kabul Yama Torabi, Executive Director 0785- 431054 yama.torabi@iwaweb.org www.iwaweb.org/reports.html	POL	2005	IWA is an independent Afghan civil society organization seeking to put corruption under the spotlight through monitoring, research, and advocating policies. IWA measures and highlights trends, perceptions, and experiences of corruption, to increase and promote integrity.	25 staff members involved in monitoring and research. Quantitative and qualitative research. QNS, QLC, AR	Community based monitoring, public services monitoring, extractive industries monitoring, community trial monitoring, budget auditing.	DFID, Norwegian Embassy, Tiri, UNDP, World Bank
38	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) House 165, Near Baharistan Cinema, in front of Power Distribution Station, Karte Parwan first section, Kabul Post Box 1355 Javed Rizvi, Country Manager 0700-195523, 0799-216322, 0799-216324 J.Rizvi@cgiar.org icardabox75@cgiar.org www.icarda.org	IO	2002	Afghan branch of international network, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. Focus on crop improvements for food security, capacity development in MAIL and partner institutions, and at community level.	CER, AR, QLF	Crop improvement, water, seed multiplication, small ruminants, and medicinal plants.	Core funding from ICARDA HQ, project funding from IFAD, Netherlands, Finland, India, Japan.
39	International Conflict Group (ICG) Street 5, near Afghan Turk Hope Primary School, Qalai Fatullah Candace Rondeaux, Senior Analyst 0799-458757, 0799-660990, 0799-412743 crondeaux@crisisgroup.org sdarwish@crisisgroup.org www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/afghanistan.aspx	POL	1995	Independent, non-partisan, source of analysis and advice to governments and intergovernmental bodies on the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. Team of in-country analysts to conduct field-based analysis.	QNS, QLC, AR	Governance, rule of law, conflict, peace-building, political systems	Governments, institutional foundations, individual and corporate.

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40	International Medical Corps (IMC) House 4, Street 4, Opp ANA No. 2 Hospital, beside Abu Horaira Mosque, Shash Darak, Kabul Naik Mohammad Qouraisi, Country Senior Operations Manager 0777-343905, 0700-288229 nmohammad@internationalmedicalcorps.org naik_mohammad1@hotmail.com http://internationalmedicalcorps.org/page.aspx?pid=854	IMP	1984	IMC is a global, humanitarian, non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training, relief, and development programs. IMC rehabilitates devastated health care systems through training and health care to local populations, and medical assistance to people at risk.	Focused on delivery of services and capacity building	Community-based primary health care, including emergency response, health capacity building, women and children's health and well-being, mental health, clean water, sanitation and hygiene.	NA
41	JHPIEGO House 113, Street 3, beside German Clinic, District 4, Ansari Watt Shahr-e Naw, Kabul Denise Byrd, Country Director and HSSP Chief of Party 0799-779448 dbyrd@jhpiego.net nansari@jhpiego.net www.jhpiego.net	IMP	2002	Improving the delivery of high-quality healthcare services to reduce maternal mortality through training of health personnel (e.g., midwives).	Cross-sectional medical data analysis, control studies QNS, QNF, QLP, QLC, PA, CER	Health, including maternal, new-born and child health, family planning and reproductive health, HIV and infection prevention, malaria prevention and treatment, tuberculosis, cervical cancer.	USAID, UNICEF
42	Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health (JHSPH) House 111, Street 3, beside German Clinic, Ansari Watt, Shahr-e Naw, Kabul Kayhan Natiq, Director 0700-059152 knatiq@jhsph.edu www.jhu.edu/	ACD		Supporting analysis and strengthening of the health sector through surveys and joint studies with IHMR and MOPH. Work includes the "Balanced Scorecard" annual evaluation of health facilities.	Surveys, sectoral assessments QNS, QNF, QLP, QLC, PA, CER	Public health, including health systems, health financing, barriers to access, health policy	USAID
43	Kabul Centre for Strategic Studies (KCSS) Pule Surkh, Karte Seh, Kabul Waliullah Rahmani, Executive Director 0794-000077, 0752-091364 rahmani@kabulcenter.org hussieni@kabulcenter.org www.kabulcenter.org	POL	2007	KCSS is an independent, non-partisan, and not for profit research 'think tank'. It aims to provide informed analysis and serve as platform for engagement between members of the Afghan strategic community, policy makers, civil society, government, and	8 staff experts and 5 research analysts. Risk analysis, surveys and opinion polls, trend analysis, doctrinal transformation. QNS, QNO, QLF,	Governance, security, conflict management, economic development, parliamentary research, counter-terrorism.	NA

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				international institutions. Publish monthly issues (Kabul Direct), articles, and reports.	QLC, MM, PA		
44	Kabul University Jamal Mina Street, District 3 Jamal Mina, Kabul Hamidullah, Amin Chancellor: chancellor@ku.edu.af hamedullahamin@ku.edu.af www.ku.edu.af	ACD	1932	Oldest institution of tertiary education in Afghanistan. Primarily focused on teaching. Composed of fourteen faculties: Agriculture, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, Fine Arts, Geoscience, Islamic Studies, Journalism, Language and Literature, Law, Pharmacy, Psychology Science, Social Science, and Veterinary Medicine.	Varies with faculty, but little research undertaken outside of private projects. Some experimental trials on campus. Occasional collaborations with external institutions (e.g., ICARDA, CER). various	Multi-sectoral	Government funding, with occasional small external grants to individual faculty members and some collaboration with external agencies.
45	Lapis. House #3, Street #12 Wazir Akbar Khan P.O. Box 225, Kabul 0796-009038, 0799-321010 Info@lapis.com.af www.lapis.com.af/	PS	NA	Lapis is a strategy and communications agency which is part of the Moby Technology Group. Lapis conducts research at local, provincial, and national levels, as well as surveys centred on the media to understand opinions, trends, and behaviour.	Qualitative and quantitative, including street intercepts, household surveys, focus groups, phone surveys, and interactive voice response. QNS, QNO, QLP, PA, QLF	Research, strategy, media, communication	Revenues from clients
46	Livelihoods and Vulnerability Analysis Unit (LVAU) Main Building, MRRD Compound Nila Bagh Rd, Tashkilat Street Darulaman, Kabul 0202-520216, 0700-171690	GOV	2002	Promoting systematic and comprehensive vulnerability and livelihoods analysis. Established by MRRD with UN assistance, now joint project of EC, MRRD, and CSO. First Vulnerability Analysis Review (2003) evolved to comprehensive NRVA (2005 and 2007/08). Analysis contributes to better targeted humanitarian assistance and	Surveillance, surveys QNS, QLP, QLF, MM, PA	Multi-sectoral	Afghan government budget, EC, UN agencies, World Bank, ADB

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				design and implementation of long-term vulnerability and disaster reduction projects.			
47	<p>Mercy Corps (MC) David Haines, Country Director 0799-399582 dhaines@af.mercycorps.org smohammad@af.mercycorps.org www.mercycorps.org/countries/afghanistan/</p>	IMP	1986	Implements wide range of community-based agriculture and economic development programmes. Focus on implementation of outreach, development, and humanitarian rather than research.	Has partnered with research institutions	Sustainable livelihoods, natural resource management, food security, vocational training, targeting vulnerable populations.	USAID, DFID
48	<p>Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) Opp. Kabul University, District 3 Jamal Mina, Post Box 10004, Kabul Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Minister 020-2500315, 0797-269869 info@mail.gov.af payam.aziz@mail.com asifrahimi@mail.gov.af http://mail.gov.af/en/page/105</p>	GOV	on-going	MAIL aims to develop agriculture, irrigation and livestock of rural and urban communities in Afghanistan. It lays the foundations for a long-term strengthening of local agriculture; promotes governance to rebuild social capital and leadership within villages and neighbourhoods, and to provide assistance for rehabilitation and development to communities	<p>Main research is conducted by donor partners, with support provided by Ministry staff. Databases and reports are available on website.</p> <p>QNS, QLC, PA, SE, RS</p>	Agriculture production and productivity, animal husbandry, natural resource management, economic regeneration, emergency coordination	World Bank, USDA, USAID, AusAid, FAO, IFAD, UNFAO, ADB, WFP, EC, JICA
49	<p>National Center for Policy and Research (NCPR) Kabul University, District 3 Jamal Mina, Kabul Hamidullah Noor Ebad, Director 020-2500390, 020-2500391 ncpr@ceretechs.com admin@ncpr.af www.ncpr.af</p>	ACD	2003	NCPR was established at Kabul University by Konrad Adenauer Foundation and MoHE to serve as a research and training facility. Aims to bring together Afghan expertise and international experience, and provide a forum for discussion and research. Conducts surveys and research for outside organizations. Collaboration with Bochum University (Germany).	<p>Five research staff who are also faculty members in Kabul University. Draw on other faculty and staff from.</p> <p>QNS, QLF, QLC, PA, SE</p>	Law and political science, economics, social sciences, peace studies.	Konrad Adenauer Foundation, DED, Bochum University .
50	<p>National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) Next to Kardan University</p>	GOV	2005	NEPA serves as Afghanistan's key environmental policy-making and regulatory institution. Its role	Environmental risk assessments and conservation.	Environment	World Bank, UNEP, UNDP, UN Global

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	Parwan-e Do, Kabul Sayed Zaher Maher, Contact Person 0772-128649, 0752-017623, 0799-318874 sayedzahermaher@yahoo.com fazqery@nepa.gov.af http://nepa.gov.af/			is to regulate, coordinate, monitor, and enforce environmental laws. NEPA is the focal point for ozone treaties and acting focal point for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.	QNS, PA, MM, SE, QLP		Environment Facility
51	Opinion Research Center of Afghanistan (ORCA) House 36, Street 13, Nahia 7, Ayub Khan Mena, Kabul 0786-233333 info@orca.com.af www.orca.com.af	PS	2008	A full-service Afghan research center operating in the areas of market, media, and opinion research. It provides both qualitative and quantitative research services, as well as experienced analytical capabilities across Afghanistan.	580 interviewers All types of social science research, including experimental and evaluation designs QNS, QLP, QNO, QLF, MM, PA	Public opinion, market, and media research	Revenues from clients
52	Organisation for Sustainable Development and Research (OSDR) House 568, Opposite Kateeb University, Shura Street, Karte She, Kabul Sultan Mohammed Ahmady, Director 0786-451519, 0700-293340 osdr_kabul@yahoo.com sultanm_ahmady@yahoo.com www.osdr.org.af/	PS	2008	Established as NGO for undertaking field studies, surveys, monitoring and evaluations as commissioned by donors or other projects. Aims to foster a cadre of development professionals.	15 permanent technical staff based in Kabul, 300 temporary field staff across different provinces. QNS	Rural livelihoods, agriculture, food security, opium/drugs economy	DAI, other USAID contractors, FCO, FAO, AREU
53	Oxfam GB and Oxfam Novib House 1141, Street 5, District 10 Qalai Fatullah, Post Box 681, Kabul Manohar Shenoy, Country Director Neeti Bhargava, Country Programme Manager 0798-413868, 0796-010045 mshenoy@oxfam.org.uk www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/countries/afghanistan.html www.oxfamnovib.nl	IMP	1991	Country office of International NGO working in more than 80 countries. Oxfam provides relief to poverty, distress, and suffering. Oxfam takes part in both development and emergency projects.	Various methods, including surveys and key informant interviews. QNS, QLC, PA	Gender equality, livelihoods, education, humanitarian relief.	Bilateral donors, private donations
54	Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE)	IMP	2006	Long term research project of the University of	2 permanent international senior	Pastoral systems including rangelands,	USAID

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	House 39, Street 2 Qala-e-Fatiullah, Kabul Michael Jacobs, Chief of Party 0798-201762 mjacobs@cnrit.tamu.edu www.afghanpeace.org/			California/Davis, hosted by Mercy Corps, has the objective of supporting social and economic development of nomadic pastoralists through natural resource management, livestock sciences, market support and political advocacy.	researchers, 5 Afghan staff. Supported by large team of scientists in the US, offering GIS and remote sensing. RS, AR, SR QNS, QLF, MM	animal sciences, and livelihoods.	
55	Peace Training and Research Organisation (PTRO) House 178, Street 2, Road 3, Darul Aman Road, Kart-e-Seh, Kabul Mirwais Wardak, Managing Director 0799-302080, 0799- 261 864 mirwais.wardak@ptro.org.af	PS	2009	PTRO is an Afghan NGO which works on conflict resolution and security analysis, peace-building, linking informal and formal justice mechanisms, promoting participation in governance, and research to inform policy and programming.	20 core research and training staff in Kabul, with 60 in four field offices, plus international advisors. QNS, QNO, QLP, QLF, QLC, QLCC	Conflict, peace-building, governance	OSI, ISAF, other bodies involved in peace and security issues.
56	Roots of Peace (ROP) Karte Char Road (near Technique Bus Stop), Karte Char, Kabul Zach Lea, Country Director 0794-677212, 0799-403248, 0799-313547 zach@rootsofpeace.org gary@rootsofpeace.org www.rootsofpeace.org	IMP	2003	Afghanistan branch of US NGO, committed to rebuilding fragile post conflict societies through mine clearance and agricultural development. Focus on building capacity and expertise to enhance rural and farm productivity.	5 permanent international staff, approximately 250 national employees. Draw on external consultants and share relations with US universities. QNS, QLF, AR, CER	Perennial horticulture, down- stream value chains.	USAID, ADB, EC
57	Save the Children International (SCI) Ayub Khan Mena, Darulaman Road, opp. Ariana TV Station, Post Box 624, Kabul David Skinner, Country Director 0799-803165 www.savethechildren.org.uk www.savechildren.org	IMP	1976	Afghanistan branch of international NGO serves impoverished, marginalized and vulnerable children and families. Programs mainly target children, and work with institutions and communities to build their capacities in child protection and	700 program staff. Surveys assessing conditions of children. QNS, PA	Health, nutrition and food security, education, child protection and child rights.	Private donations, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dubai Cares, OSF, GHR Foundation, AusAid, USAID

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				development.			
58	Sustainable Land Management Institute (SLMI) North of Airport, Dasht-e-Essa Khan, Bamiyan Arid Yousufi, Coordinator 0799- 304 656	OTH	2010	Recently established as a cooperation between a group of NGOs, international organisations and government departments at the University of Bamiyan with the objective of establishing best practice natural resource management in the central highlands and building capacity.	Planned research using participatory and action research methodologies. QLP, AR	Sustainable and integrated land and water management (especially grazing land), rural livelihoods	SDC
59	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) Jalalabad Main Road, Paktia Kot Post Box 5017, Kabul Andreas Stefansson, Country Director 0700-299288 Fax: 020-2320156 andreas.stefansson@sca.org.af info@sca.org.af www.swedishcommittee.org	IMP	1982	SCA is a non-governmental organization working to help rebuild Afghanistan. SCA is active in 18 provinces, primarily in education, health, and disability. Capacity development, advocacy and service delivery. Contributes to research through the Teacher Educators Masters Programme for Afghans through Karlstad University	4 senior advisers work on research part-time QNS, QLF, QLC, PA, AR	Education, health, disability, rural development, human rights, civil society.	Home office-raised funding, World Bank, EC, Sida, Forum Syd
60	The Asia Foundation (TAF) Hs. 48 & 50, St. 1, Hajji Yaqub Square, Shahr-e Naw, Post Box 175, Kabul Bruce Tolentino, Country Representative 0752-023558, 0700-294647 taf@ag.asiafound.org taf@asiafound.org http://asiafoundation.org/country/overview/afghanistan	IMP	1954, resumed 2002	TAF is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization working throughout the Asia-Pacific region. TAF provides support and technical assistance to Afghan governmental institutions responsible for the executive branch, parliamentary affairs, agriculture, sub-national government, and foreign affairs. Conducts comprehensive annual Survey of the Afghan People.	11 research staff QNS,	Governance, law, and civil society, civic education, women's empowerment, education, government-media relations.	USAID, US, DFID, CIDA, AusAID, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Japan (JICA), Korea, EU, foundations, private donors.
61	The Liaison Office (TLO) House 959, Street 6, Qala-i Fatullah Post Box 5934, Kabul Masood Karokhail, Director info@tlo-afghanistan.org	IMP	2003	Afghan NGO focusing initially on improving engagement with tribal civil society in the south and east. TLO is now heavily involved in research and	150 staff, including 60 provincial research staff. 1 senior international researcher and	Peace-building and mediation, governance, and natural resource management	AusAID and SDC, project funding from DFID, USAID, GIZ

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
	massod.karokhail@tlo-afghanisan.org www.tlo-afghanistan.org/about-tlo			delivering monitoring and evaluation and program assessments relating to governance and rural livelihoods in southern provinces.	occasionally other international researchers. QNS,QLP QLC, QLF, PA		
62	United Nations Children's Fund UNOCA Compound, Jalalabad Road, Pul-i-Charkhi, Post Box 54, Kabul Peter Crowley, Representative 0790-507002, 0790-507003 pcrowley@unicef.org Kabul@unicef.org www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan.html	IO	1949	Promotes the rights of women and children throughout Afghanistan and works to bring basic services, including: education, health, protection, water and sanitation to those who are most in need. UNICEF works with government partners, sister UN agencies, local and international NGOs and communities.	NA	Education, child protection, health and nutrition (including polio), WASH	NA
63	United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) Room No. 32, UNOPS Building, UNOCA compound, Jalalabad Road, Kabul Wali Modaqiq, Officer In-Charge 0799-131618 wali.modaqiq@unep.ch www.unep.org/conflictsanddisasters/	IO	1972 (global)	As the UN's environment body, UNEP's focus in Afghanistan is establishing a foundation for environmental management and sustainable development. UNEP works closely with NEPA, National Environmental Advisory Council, NRD of MAIL in policy and training.	3 international and 12 Afghan staff (total) QNS, QLP, QLF, QLC, PA, SE, RS, MM	Environmental law and policy, impact assessment, pollution control, information and education, community-based resource management	UNDP
64	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) c/o Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (opp. Kabul University), Jamal Mina, Kabul Nabi Gul, Officer In-Charge 0700-288154, 0700-295711, 0799-668336 nabi.gul@fao.org www.fao.org	IO	1945 (global)	FAO is the UN's specialized agency that leads efforts to defeat hunger. FAO's mandate in Afghanistan is to support agricultural and environmental rehabilitation and assist the country to become a food secure and self-reliant nation. Works with counterpart ministries MAIL, MEW, and MRRD.	QNS, QLP, QLF, QLC, PA, SE, RS, MM	Livelihoods, food production, off-farm employment, trade, sustainable use of natural resources.	FAO's members
65	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	IO	1997 (global)	UNODC's mandate in Afghanistan is to strengthen	Research and advocacy carries	Research, policy and advocacy; law	Canada, EC, UK, Germany,

#	Name of organization/Contacts/Website	Org. Type	Est. in AF	Key functions/ activities in Afghanistan	Current research capacity & methods	Sectoral focus	Main donors/funding
	Hs. 257, St.149 District 4, Zone 1 Kolola Pushta, Post Box 5, Kabul Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Special Advisor to the SRSG on Counter Narcotics and Representative Afghanistan Country Office 0798-416325, 0796-728167, 0797-222828 fo.afghanistan@unodc.org www.unodc.org			Afghan government capacity in counter-narcotics; improve legislative framework and judicial system for crime prevention; support crop monitoring; drug law enforcement at provincial level; alternative livelihoods, and drug demand reduction.	25% weight among thematic programs QNS, QNP, QLF, QLC, PA, MM, AR	enforcement and border control; criminal justice sector reform; anti-corruption capacity building; penitentiary reform; drug demand reduction and HIV; alternative livelihoods.	Japan, MDG Achievement Fund, Finland, Norway, and other member states
66	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) St. 4, Koshani Watt (Behind Kabul Bank), Shahr-e Naw, Post Box 1093, Kabul Louis Imbleau, Country Director 0797-662000-04, 0797-662116 wfp.kabul@wfp.org Susannah.Nicol@wfp.org www.wfp.org/afghanistan	IO	1963	WFP's focus in Afghanistan is emergency food assistance, school feeding, fighting malnutrition, strengthening grain markets, and the national campaign against tuberculosis. WFP works closely with MAIL. Monthly Market Price Bulletins and the Market Monitor provide information on price changes for the most commonly used staples and their potential impact.	58 international staff and 767 Afghan (total program) QNS, QLF, PA, SE, MM	Food security, capacity development, nutrition	Various donor governments
67	United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) UNOCA Compound, Jalalabad Rd., Pul-i-Charkhi, Kabul Sayed Mazari Nasiri, National Health Coordinator 0700-279010, 0799-761066, 0700-281116, 0799-322134 Mazarin@afg.emro.who.int www.emro.who.int/Afghanistan	IO	1948 (global)	WHO is the specialized UN agency concerned with international public health. It develops and promotes the use of evidence-based tools, norms and standards to inform health policy , and helps provide statistics and analysis on disease outbreaks and immunizations. WHO works with MOPH in strengthening the BPHS and EPHS.	QNS, QLP, PA, AR, SE	Health system strengthening, primary health care, health equity, communicable and non-communicable diseases, reproductive and child health,	Member states
68	United States Geological Survey (USGS) Afghanistan Geological Survey Building (between Pul-i-Mahomood Khan and Charahi Abdul Haq) Mohammad Fahim Zaheer, USGS Liaison in Afghanistan	GOV	2004	To apply scientific expertise, geospatial data, and remote sensing technologies to help assess Afghanistan's natural resources and strengthen earth sciences capabilities. Works in	Small permanent staff presence. Most researchers based in US and strong links to US institutions.	Earth sciences, including mineral exploration, fossil fuel exploration, hydrogeological survey and climatic monitoring and early warning	USAID, USDA

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	0786-700411, 0777-217771 fahimzaheer@gmail.com fahimzaheer@yahoo.com www.usgs.org http://afghanistan.cr.usgs.gov			collaboration with AGS and Ministry of Mines.	Sophisticated technical methods RS, SE	mechanisms for agriculture, food security.	
69	University Research Corporation (URC) 7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 600, Bethesda, MD 20814, USA +1-301-654-8338 Mirwais Rahimzai, Chief of Party mrahimzai@urc-chs.com www.urc-chs.com/country?countryID=6	PS	2007	URC is a global company dedicated to improving the quality of health care, social services, and health education worldwide. URC works with MOPH.	QNS, QLP, QLF, PA, SE, MM	Maternal and newborn health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, tuberculosis, malaria, reproductive health, health systems strengthening, behaviour change and communication, research and evaluation.	USAID
70	Upper Quartile www.upperquartile.co.uk/case.php	PS	2007	Upper Quartile is a private firm whose services include international economic development and reform, and post-conflict economic reconstruction. Upper Quartile has worked in cooperation with MRRD.	Partners and associate consultants	Strategic development, project design, foreign direct investment and trade promotion, monitoring and evaluation	Project funding from USAID, CIDA, DFID
71	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Hs. 5, St. 1, right side of Qalai Fatullah main road, Kabul David Lawson, Country Director 0798-981967 www.wcsafghanistan.org	IMP	2006	International environmental society committed to foster capacity to manage the environment and improve rural livelihoods through research into sustainable natural resource management and enhanced governance of resources. Works with MAIL and NEPA.	10 international and 50-60 Afghan staff (total program). Draws heavily on external expertise. QNS, QLF, SE, RS, MM	Biodiversity, nature conservation, natural resource condition assessment, rural livelihoods	USAID

Organisation type key:	
Academic institution	ACD
Governmental institution	GOV
Project implementer	IMP
International organisation/UN agency	IO
Policy research	POL
Private sector	PS
Other institution	OTH

Research methods key:	
Quantitative (Sample survey)	QNS
Quantitative (Opinion polling)	QNO
Qualitative (Participatory)	QLP
Qualitative (Focus groups)	QLF
Qualitative (Case-study)	QLC
Qualitative (Comparative case studies)	QLCC
Program Appraisal, assessment or evaluations	PA
Controlled Experimental Research	CER
Action Research/ trials	AR
Scientific Exploration	SE
Remote Sensing	RS
Mixed Methods	MM

Notes:

1. The above information was drawn from a combination of interviews, documents, and institutional websites, and therefore can be considered largely self-reported by the institutions themselves. The team did its best to ascertain the accuracy of information, but no doubt there will be omissions and inaccuracies, including in cases where websites were not up to date or where the team was not able to collect the information. Therefore, the institutions should be contacted directly to confirm information.
2. Information was recorded as of September-October 2011.
3. Where institutions were part of larger or worldwide institutions, only their Afghanistan-related work is described (where possible and except where noted).
4. For acronyms, see list at front of main text.
5. For year of establishment in Afghanistan, in some cases the given year may be the year of founding in Pakistan while the agency was working inside Afghanistan.
6. For "current research capacity and methods," in many cases it was not possible to separate research and implementation staff, and therefore the team attempted to label these by indicating "total program."
7. NA = "not available"