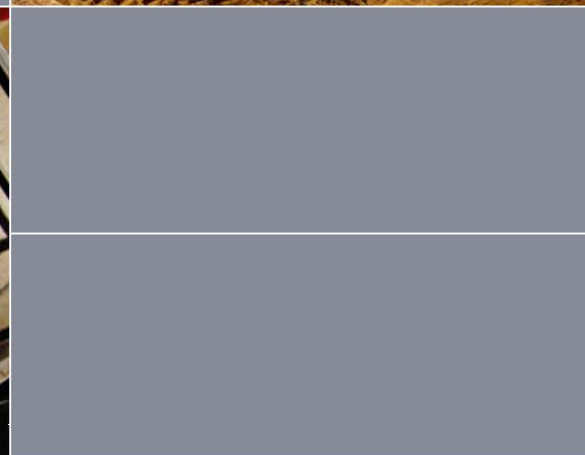
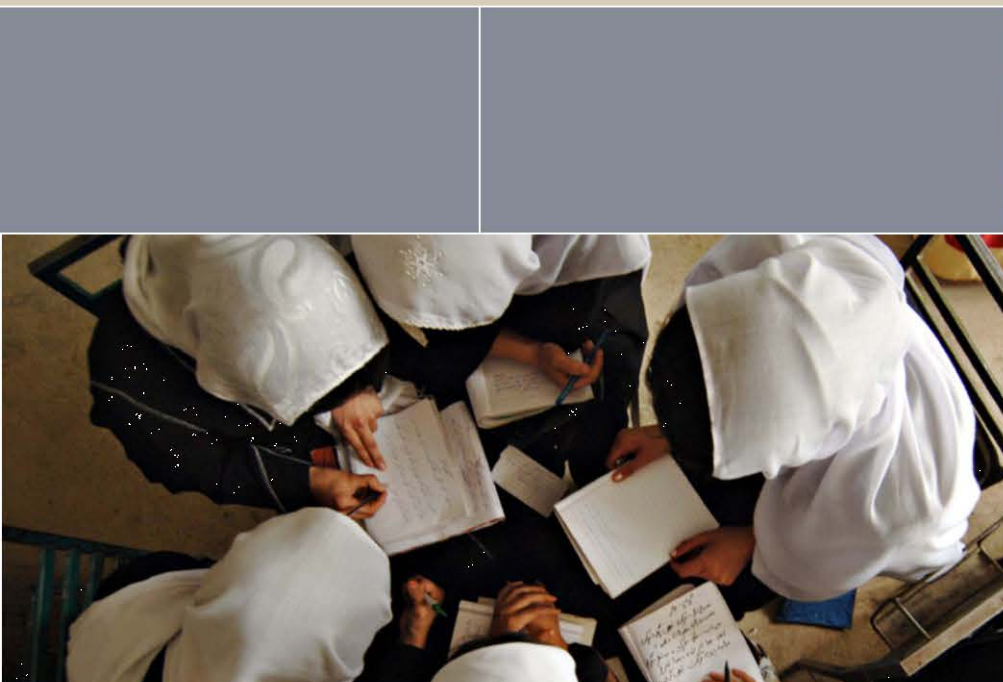




Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011

Report 3/2012



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Final Report

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List of Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AKDN	Agha Khan Development Network
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASGP	Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme
AWSDC	Afghan Women Skills Development Center
BEGE	Basic Education and Gender Equality
CD	Community Development
CDC	Community Development Council
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CERP	Commanders Emergency Response Program
civmil	civilian military
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DDA	District Development Authority
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DoE	Department of Education
DRRD	Department for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
ELECT	Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FOKUS	Forum for Women and Development
FP	Facilitating Partner
GAP	GAP funding (between Emergency and Development)
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
ICLA	Information Counselling & Legal Assistance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEC	Independent Elections Commission
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LOFTA	Law and Order Trust Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDTF	Multi-donor trust Fund
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoRR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation

MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MTR	Mid-Term Evaluation
NABDP	National Area Based Development Programme
NAC	Norwegian Afghanistan Committee
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NIMA	National Institute for Management and Administration
Norad	Norwegian Agency for development Cooperation
NOREF	Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre
NPP	National Priority Program
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSP	National Solidarity Program
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
R&R	Rest and Recreation
SIGAR	Special Inspector general for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM/UN Women	United Nations Fund for Women
UiO	University of Oslo
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
YEP	Youth Education Package

Executive Summary

Purpose and Approach of the Evaluation

The **purpose** of the evaluation is to assess the contribution of Norwegian development cooperation with Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011. It is primarily a summative evaluation and concludes with evaluation against the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, with the main focus on relevance and effectiveness.

The **central evaluation question** concerns the contribution Norway has made to sustainable peace, improved governance and reduced poverty in Afghanistan.

The object of evaluation is all direct bilateral and multilateral development cooperation assistance from Norway to Afghanistan during the period 2001-2011, consisting of more than 800 agreements. Therefore, **scoping** was essential after a broad analysis of the policy and portfolio. We based our project selection on the documentation of a portfolio for 2001-2009, rather than a full list for 2001-2011. The evaluation excludes global funding agreements regarding multilateral channels such as GAVI and UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) programme that also allocate funds to Afghanistan.

The evaluation analyses the Norwegian foreign policy including the linkages to development and humanitarian policy against the background of the political, socio-economic and security developments in Afghanistan during the evaluation period. The military policy and interventions were only addressed in direct relation to the foreign policy. A representative selection was made of the interventions to be analysed in more detail covering the most important sectors and themes for Norwegian assistance (governance, education, community development, gender), the most important channels (the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund- a multi-donor mechanism to support the Afghan government, multilateral programmes by UN agencies and bilateral programmes by NGOs and a series of other actors) and a specific field study in the province of Faryab, for which Norway has developed a comprehensive strategy.

The Norad evaluation department has commissioned the evaluation that was implemented by ECORYS in collaboration with IDN. The evaluation team consisted of international and Afghan experts.

Methodology

The **data collection methods** combined document analysis and interviews in Oslo with field work in Kabul and Faryab. A preparatory phase in October 2011 was used to refine the key evaluation questions and to meet stakeholders including the Embassy in Kabul to discuss expectations and limitations. The main phase took place between November 2011 and January 2012, during which field visits were carried out and a first draft report was submitted. Planning of field work turned out to be logistically formidable, due to the need to plan around the Peace Jirga held in November 2011 and deal with adverse weather conditions, flight cancellations and security constraints. The second draft report that took into account the comments of the evaluation department of Norad was distributed for comments to the stakeholders. The final report addressed the comments of the stakeholders.

Context

Despite rapid economic growth since 2001, Afghanistan remains one of the most developmentally challenged countries in the world. Afghanistan is **heavily dependent on foreign aid** with an aid **dependency rate¹ of 71% for 2010-11**, one of the highest in the world. Foreign assistance accounts for 85 % of the national budget and the entire development budget and 45% of the operating budget are financed by external aid.

Overview of Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan

The total volume of Norwegian aid over this ten-year period was **NOK 5.4 billion**. During the first six years, annual aid hovered between NOK 350 and 500 million. From 2008 onward, the volume of annual aid increased substantially to more than NOK 700 million annually.

At the start of the evaluation period all development aid was humanitarian aid, but after the transition period in 2002-2003, development assistance became the most important part of total Norwegian ODA to Afghanistan. There have been three phases of support: early humanitarian in 2001 during and after the Taliban regime; transitional funding in 2003 to bridge the gap between relief and development; and development partnership from 2004. This is also reflected in the overview of main partners, presented in the following table. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the World Bank administered multi-donor mechanism was the most dominant channel during the past decade. The categories Norwegian NGOs and Miscellaneous include international humanitarian partners such as the Norwegian and International Red Cross and UNHCR. Most Norwegian NGOs have received both humanitarian and development assistance.

Table 0.1 Overview of main partners

Partners	Contributions (billion NOK)	Share (%)	Characteristics
ARTF	1.57	29%	WB administered multi-donor mechanism
UN agencies	1.18	22%	Mainly UNDP
Norwegian NGOs	1.28	24%	Save the Children, Norwegian Red Cross, NRC, NCA and NAC: Faryab
Miscellaneous	1.33	25%	International NGOs, bilateral programmes
TOTAL	5.36	100%	

Support to **Faryab province**, where Norway leads the Provincial Reconstruction Team has comprised up to 20% of **total development funds**, with approximately two-thirds of funds allocated to NGO programmes.

With regard to official development assistance (ODA), **Norway ranks in the top ten of donors** providing development aid to Afghanistan (9th place on the gross ODA list 2009-2010). With regard to external assistance (ODA plus non-ODA, which is mainly security-related assistance, with the USA being the largest provider of security assistance), Norway ranks in the 11th place of total external assistance over the evaluation period with a relative larger share of development and humanitarian assistance.

¹ Aid dependency rate is defined as net official aid divided by gross national income

Political, economic and security developments that shaped Norwegian engagement

The **context in Afghanistan** is profoundly challenging. There never has been a strong state. Afghanistan is a society with dominant Tribal Code of Conduct and Islam integral to Afghan values, but increasingly politicised especially since the rise of the Taliban. Therefore, concepts such as gender equality and democracy are deeply contested. The Afghan political economy thrives on patronage networks, the narcotics industry, and corruption.

The decade covered in this evaluation is from the fall of Taliban in 2001 to 2011 during which time international military intervention has surged and is now working towards drawdown in 2014. While many things such as school enrolment, access to health services and infrastructure have improved for the better, security has deteriorated badly after an encouraging start.

After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the US led Operation Enduring Freedom to eliminate the safe heavens that harboured elements of the terrorist network Al Qaeda. In December 2001, after the ousting of the Taliban, an agreement was reached in Bonn that defined arrangements for a democratic transition of Afghanistan after more than 30 years of war. In Bonn the establishment of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was authorized. The Conference in Bonn in 2001 was the first of a series of conferences on Afghanistan with the conference in July 2010 in Kabul as the first conference organised on Afghan soil.

The international community agrees on the main objectives of **fighting terrorism, peace building, state building and poverty reduction**, but there are clear differences in priority setting. For a long period the international community dominated the Afghan development agenda. There have been two rounds of elections in 2004-2005 and 2009-2010, but the democratic process has yet to be consolidated. Afghan Development Policy was enshrined in the Afghan National Development Strategy only in 2008, which has been largely developed for Afghans and has relatively weak Afghan ownership. Although now in 2010 the international community has agreed that at least 80% of development aid should be aligned with Afghan priorities and at least 50% should be channelled through the Afghan government.

Norwegian foreign policy and the comprehensive approach

Norwegian foreign policy reflects of course the primary objective to safeguard Norway's interests. Norway also has an image of self as a **Peace-Nation**, having no colonial history and no strong agendas. Aid to Afghanistan was since 2001 explicitly based on a combination of global humanitarian priority, concerns about regional stability, and the need to sustain an international coalition in the war on terror. In line with these principles, Norway established in 2004 the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Faryab province as part of its contribution to the International Security Assistance Force and promoted Afghanistan to the status of 'partner in development'. In 2005 Norway decided not to renew commitments to US-led Operation Enduring Freedom, but to undertake military engagements only through NATO and UN.

Norwegian development and humanitarian policy are an integral part of the comprehensive foreign policy and inseparable from it, albeit that in its humanitarian policy Norway respects the need for humanitarian organisations to maintain independence and impartiality. Development policy on Afghanistan is explicitly political and linked to the democratic state building processes as agreed upon in the annual conferences on Afghanistan.

Norway decided in 2005 to increase its development commitments to Afghanistan. In the development policy for Afghanistan main emphasis is given to a coordinated approach and a political solution of the problem. This was in fact translated into alignment with Afghan priorities and

an increasing share of unpreferenced aid via ARTF (Norway being the first country in 2010 to enter into a three-year agreement). Norway also maintained the support to humanitarian partners, unlike many other donors who opted primarily for development aid. Also in the comprehensive strategy for Faryab some specific elements were highlighted such as the clear separation of military and development support albeit with good coordination and the intention to become a driving force for the development of models of *Afghanisation*.

Relevance

Norway's policy and interventions match closely with the international agenda for Afghanistan and within that framework its **development agenda is certainly relevant**. Norway has managed to navigate a position, which reflects its policy to clearly separate military strategy on the one hand and humanitarian and development strategy on the other hand. The focus on governance, gender equality, education and community development has been consistent over the years, just as consistent as the choice of channels and partners. However, it is the question whether this consistency is laudable in itself as it might translate in practice into '**more of the same**' irrespective of results.

Norway's overall context analysis is good and has been feeding the policy debate. However, political economy analysis and conflict analysis could have been better used to develop more operational strategies, risk mitigation strategies and conflict sensitive projects and programs. Although the principles of '*Do no harm*' are well respected, most programs work *around* conflict, or sometimes *in* conflict, but seldom *on* conflict. Furthermore, the separation of the civilian and military components that was supposed to be accompanied by strong coordination, led to a division where the military operate in the insecure areas and NGOs in the safer areas. This limits the possibility to outreach to certain needy or vulnerable communities, although it is consistent with the strategic choice of strict separation of military and civilian assistance.

Alignment with Afghan priorities has always been high on the Norwegian agenda and has been realised to the extent possible. However, Afghan priorities are still to a large extent defined by the international community. Limited participation of Afghans undermines genuine local ownership. This is for example the case for gender equality. Through its support to UNIFEM/ UN Women Norway has contributed to national policies related to women such as the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan. However, there are clear indications that Afghan ownership of this Action Plan is still limited.

Furthermore, the main focus on harmonization and alignment and consequently the withdrawal of targeting to the provincial level has created some dilemma's for the management of the portfolio in the perspective of the realisation of overall objectives. The reduction of targeted funds at the provincial level for Faryab for which now only NGO funds have been earmarked, is contested by the provincial government that does not feel that their ownership and capacity are being strengthened. Also the discontinuation of preferenced funds for the education programme EQUIP might negatively affect performance, especially because very ambitious education targets have been set for Faryab. The lack of targeting might make it also more difficult to pursue the gender equality agenda.

Effectiveness

In output terms, **real achievements** can be reported to which Norway has contributed. This is the return to school for millions of children (enrolment figures for 2010: 7 million children of which 37% girls, 53% of the children in urban areas attend basic education against 36% in rural areas); a

series of high profile elections, thousands of community infrastructure projects, trained police officers, midwives, civil servants (Incl. women); payments of salaries of civil servants, etc.

However, there is still **limited evidence of concrete outcomes**. Exceptions are improved access to services (such as midwifery) and enhanced pedagogy skills of teachers. But the overall quality of newly constructed schools is poor, literacy remains low and school dropout rates are high, governance remains poor and gender equality is still far from reality.

Some explanatory factors that affect effectiveness are a rigid separation of civil leading to an ethnically skewed distribution of beneficiaries and thereby possible implications for the conflict; insufficient integration of conflict analysis in operationalization of plans; limited results-based management, responses to risk mainly at an ad-hoc basis at the level of individual projects, rather than at the level of the Faryab portfolio.

Sustainable peace, after various years of deteriorating security, remains elusive. The necessary political solution is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future. Main features are:

- Governance is still poor and no signs of real improvement are visible.
- Poverty has been reduced for some people, but has deteriorated for others especially in the face of deteriorating security across the whole country.
- There has been some progress on some of the human development indicators.
- Extreme forms of gender inequality continue to persist.
- The political economy – manifested in corruption, use of patronage networks and criminality-hinders real development.

Donors, including Norway, made attempts to reduce corruption, but despite all efforts corruption remains endemic and negatively affects the attainment of real outcomes. .

Efficiency

Various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy in Kabul have been responsible for the management of the large majority of development and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan with respectively 42% and 40% of the total. There has been an important shift in management responsibilities from 2005 onwards when responsibilities were shifted to the Embassy and **in the last three years the Embassy has managed 2/3 of the budget**. This has created a **heavy management burden** for an Embassy that is chronically understaffed. The average size of the agreements has increased over the years, but the management burden is still high. The conclusion is that the management of such a complex portfolio in a very complex environment has received insufficient attention. The political choice to make use of all different channels, to be active in various broadly defined sectors and to work with a variety of different partners have influenced the management burden.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are notoriously weak and Norway relied heavily on generic provision by others. At the beginning of the decade M&E considerations were sacrificed in the favour of speed, whilst from 2005 onwards M&E has become problematic and costly because of deteriorating security, making it difficult to do enough field visits. The arms-length relationship and reliance on other donors has the risk that Norwegian influence to strengthen accountability and results-based management is quite limited.

Given the heavy management burden and the pressure on disbursement of funds, there has been limited room for reflection and learning. However, in one case Norway stopped funding, due to problems with overall management and monitoring by the implementing organisation.

The proper assessment of efficiency is problematic, because of weak M&E systems and a lack of data. No reliable assessment can be made to compare the efficiency of the various aid channels or aid partners. ARTF as a multi-donor mechanism appears to be a relatively efficient undertaking when viewed from the perspective of fund management and administration. However, not all costs are factored into the administration fee, since line ministries, who are responsible for implementing projects, carry additional costs of management and supervision. With the recent discovery of weak construction outputs, more investments, for example to better measure results and to fix construction deficiencies, are needed to raise the quality of outputs to the desired level.

Sustainability

As with all donors, sustainability has not been the most important concern for Norway and has often been sacrificed where higher priority is placed on other objectives. Sustainability is now higher on the agenda given the preparation for the transition from foreign military to Afghan security forces.

Impact

The central question posed for this evaluation is about the contribution Norway has made to sustainable peace, improved governance and reduced poverty in Afghanistan.

The challenges in Afghanistan to realise sustainable peace and development are still enormous. Sustainable peace, after a decade of worsening insecurity, remains elusive and the necessary political solution is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future. Governance has been poor and, by most accounts, is getting worse. It is often cited as a greater threat to the future of the country than security. The local political economy - manifested in corruption and use of patronage networks - has worked against international objectives. Poverty has been reduced for some people but has increased for many, especially in the face of deteriorating security across the whole country. There has been some progress on some of the human development indicators but Afghanistan continues to be one of the very poorest countries in the world with the majority of people illiterate and some of the more extreme forms of gender inequality.

Norway's achievement has been in being a consistent and reliable donor within the framework of the international engagement. Norway has succeeded to put the principles of harmonization and alignment into practice. Norway was the first donor to agree on a three-year Framework Agreement to provide unpreferred core support to the ARTF. Throughout the decade Norway has maintained and still maintains a very broad and complex portfolio. Norway has a very good reputation based on its commitment, its consistent and reliable funding and its modest approach. The implication is that the visibility of Norway is not very high.

More than ten years after the start of the massive support, donors are rethinking their strategies. There is abundant literature that points in the direction of more focused and better strategies that are based on sound theories of change. **Norway should rethink its strategy and aid programming for future engagement in Afghanistan.**

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1) is to assess the contribution of Norwegian development and humanitarian assistance to promoting socio-economic conditions and sustainable peace through improvements in the capacity of the Afghan state and civil society to provide essential public services.

To achieve this purpose the evaluation is expected to:

- a. Compile an overview of political, economic and security developments and identify the key agreements, strategies and policy decisions that shaped Norway's engagement between 2001 and 2011.
- b. Document the rationale for choice of programs and channels and assess the coordination and coherence of efforts made to deliver assistance to Afghanistan.
- c. Document the resulting improvements in the capacity of the Afghan authorities and civil society organisations to deliver public services covering education, community development and good governance.
- d. Document actual improvements in delivery of public services and its impact on the welfare of targeted groups.

Accountability is the stated objective of the Terms of Reference (TOR), requiring a summative type of evaluation which judges the worth of the entire portfolio over a ten year period. During interviews with user groups including the Embassy in Kabul, UNDP and NGOs during the inception phase there was also interest in learning for the purpose of planning for the future.

1.2 Evaluation Questions

The central question for the evaluation, derived from the purpose statement in the TOR and analysis of the content of the portfolio is:

What contribution has Norway made to sustainable peace, improved governance and reduced poverty in Afghanistan?

Investigation of the central evaluation question is guided by a series of evaluation questions related to the four DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

1.3 Main Users

The primary user group for the evaluation is the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). This comprises the political leadership, officials, the Norwegian Embassies and also Norad. Secondary user groups in Norway and internationally are other donors, Norwegian and international NGOs, governmental twinning partners (Ministry of Justice and Directorate of Police) and research institutions. Secondary user groups in Afghanistan may be the central and provincial Afghan authorities and civil society organisations.

1.4 Scope of Work

The scope of the evaluation as defined in the TOR is all Norwegian development and humanitarian assistance through multilateral and bilateral channels from 2001 to 2011². This includes the police contribution to improving rule of law but does not include any aspect of military intervention.

The object of evaluation is the portfolio of assistance which amounted to NOK 5.4 billion to the end of 2010, over 80% of which was allocated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Oslo and the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul. The portfolio consists of over 800 agreements with a variety of partners but mainly the multilateral organisations, Norwegian NGOs and Norwegian government organisations. The World Bank managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) has been the single most important multilateral channel for core support to the Afghan Government. A detailed analysis of the portfolio is presented in Chapter 4.

The report is structured in seven chapters. It begins in Chapter 2 with a description of the methodology used in the evaluation and then continues with a policy analysis in Chapter 3, focusing on the context in Afghanistan and in Norway and how policy was shaped. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the portfolio of Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan. It then continues in Chapter 5 with a case study of ARTF, the central mechanism for providing core support to state building in Afghanistan. Chapter 6 presents separate analyses of governance, education, community development and gender, the four themes that form the core of Norway's development assistance to Afghanistan. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a review of the Norwegian model in Faryab province and Chapter 8 brings the findings of the previous sections together in conclusions.

² This includes all agreements with bilateral and multilateral partners regarding specific aid to Afghanistan. It excludes global funding agreements regarding multilateral channels such as GAVI, UNICEF's Girls Education and REDD that also allocate money to Afghanistan, but this is not registered in the Norwegian statistics.

2 Methodology

2.1 Approach

Norway's development program in Afghanistan is an intervention in a deeply complex context over a decade. As a partner in an international alliance Norway has had limited degrees of freedom and the nature of the challenge in Afghanistan, and Norway's understanding of it, has been constantly changing. The overall design of the evaluation therefore seeks to blend features of various theoretical approaches that are appropriate under the particular conditions and in the context of Afghanistan. These include the realist approach that avoids generalisation and seeks to specify in what contexts, through what mechanisms, and for which people a project has been effective. It pays attention to unintended as well as intended outcomes. The utilisation approach has been helpful in informing our choices about which aspects of the program to focus on. An utilisation approach also emphasises accessing the wisdom of experienced practitioners and some members of our team were able to draw on networks of highly knowledgeable people. For both Afghan and international expert informants, accessing their knowledge across the decade was critical because most of the interviewees for current programs do not have a historic overview. Our utilisation focus also aimed to involve primary intended users, such as the Embassy, to engage in the process. Finally, the contribution analysis has helped us in avoiding impossible issues of attribution of Norwegian aid. As much of Norway's assistance has been channelled through multilateral partners to projects with multiple donor funding the outcomes of these programs cannot be attributed to Norway, which was also not sought by Norway.

These theoretical approaches have only blended the evaluation design, whilst basically we opted for a pragmatic approach based on common evaluation practice and specific knowledge of the Afghanistan background plus insights from evaluation theory and practice in fragile states. Therefore, we have also made use of the OECD DAC Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding activities. We still would like to mention some specific elements of our approach.

Theory of Change

The TOR required us to reconstruct a Theory of Change (Intervention Logic). This would provide, in principle, a solid base for interpreting evaluation findings and we initially envisaged that it would be achieved during the Inception Phase. However, limited access to the archives at that stage and lack of detailed policy documents (see Chapter 3) made it difficult to reconstruct a meaningful theory of change that could serve as an overall evaluation framework. In the end, we were able to reconstruct an overall theory of change that provides clarity about Norway's overarching reason for intervention in Afghanistan.

Scope and selection of specific interventions

Given the enormous scope of the evaluation including various types of development and humanitarian assistance, different aid channels and various aid modalities in the very complex context of Afghanistan, it is clear that firm choices had to be made with regard to the breadth and depth of the evaluation.

Regarding the policy and portfolio analysis the complete scope of the evaluation was taken into account. For the policy analysis foreign policy – with linkages to military intervention- humanitarian assistance policy and development cooperation policy were taken into account. The same applies to the portfolio analysis where we aimed for a complete overview.

In order to assess the specific development interventions we had to deal with the challenges of a complex portfolio. A selection was made on the basis of the following criteria:

- coverage of the most important sectors for Norwegian assistance;
- coverage of different channels and actors;
- focus on the most important – in terms of volume of aid- projects and programmes;
- field visit to Faryab province for which Norway has developed a comprehensive development strategy with various actors.

In practice, the main funding mechanism ARTF, including the most important projects has been covered, just as a selection of projects representative of the most important sectors: governance, education and community development. A field study in Faryab province was planned that covered various interventions, ARTF, UNDP and the most important Norwegian NGOs active in Afghanistan. The finally selected interventions are sufficiently representative of the Norwegian portfolio in Afghanistan as they represent around 2/3 of the entire portfolio. The details of the selection are explained in the various chapters.

2.2 Data collection and analysis methods

A combination of data collection methods has been applied in order to answer the evaluation questions, with an emphasis on document analysis and interviews. Principles used to guide data collection include:

- *No Duplication.* As specified in the TOR, the team has sought to use commissioned evaluations and reviews of projects where available and deemed reliable, with no duplication of work. Availability of quality reviews has varied across the portfolio.
- *Harmonisation.* Where donors have agreed on harmonised approaches to evaluation and where there are existing agreed evaluation mechanisms (ARTF, NSP, EQUIP, UNDP) the team has worked to ensure that, especially in interviews with government officials and the World Bank, Norway is not undertaking its own evaluation.

Document review

A large number of important documents were reviewed during the course of the evaluation. Annex 2 presents a full overview of the documents consulted. However, we experienced a number of challenges in accessing the three archives of MFA Oslo, Norad, and the Embassy. We were introduced to archivists at Norad and MFA in Oslo during the inception phase. In examining the scope of the archive relevant to Afghanistan we found that it exceeded 10,000 documents. Of these 2/3rds were in Norwegian and the early years were on paper. Although EVAL had asked for access to be opened at MFA before the inception phase started this took until November 16 to be granted. Thereafter the practicalities took some time to sort out and the initial suggestion from the archivist to get full authorisation for the Norwegian government electronic documentation system Public360 was never approved by an MFA internal security division.

In Annex 3 more detailed information is provided in relation to the access of archives. In response to the first draft final report, EVAL asked the evaluators to do an additional document search especially of the interventions of the most important NGOs. This was done and the second draft final report is based on additional information from new documents that were analysed.

For the policy and portfolio analysis special data collection was undertaken. Statistical analysis of the portfolio took place. Many documents for the policy analysis were available in the public domain by internet. More generally, internet research was an important means of triangulating evidence gathered in the evaluation.

Interviews

Some 90 people participated in interviews, including 35 in Kabul and 32 in Faryab as listed in Annex 4. Interviews were qualitative. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Kabul, Faryab and Norway were conducted face to face and by video and phone, in English, Dari and Norwegian.

The use of interviews with partners in the World Bank, UN agencies, NGOs and other donors as a main method is constrained by several factors in Afghanistan. These include:

- the regular absence from the country of key personnel on R&R breaks meant that some were not available at the time we were in country and not necessarily available for interview by other means;
- the short time spent in country by the international team members because of security concerns;
- the high turnover of staff in all agencies which meant that many interviews could yield only recent knowledge of the project. Institutional memory was acknowledged to be poor in every agency interviewed;
- the difficulty of talking to other donors for all the above reasons and also the time needed to arrange and conduct interviews because of the very heavy security in embassies. As a result of these factors and time constraints no bilateral donors were consulted. The purpose of interviewing them would have been to gain insights into Norway's participation in multidonor forums but we decided that, unless we could interview a range of donors with different opinions, this would not be a reliable method;
- non-response to email questionnaires. Of three sent to former Embassy officials, we received only one response.

Expert Analysis

The team had access to the insights of several Afghan experts through their personal and professional networks. This included Government Ministers and senior officials as well as expatriates who have been involved in Afghanistan for many years. This proved particularly valuable in understanding the issues at provincial level and in getting a historical perspective. Team members themselves also bring substantial expert knowledge.

Case Study

We undertook a case study of Faryab province because considerable assistance is concentrated there in the form of the national programs NSP and EQUIP, UNDP programs ASGP and NABDP, and four NGO partners. In addition it was possible to interview provincial government officials and officials of the PRT, Norwegian Police and residents. The Afghan team members stayed in a local hotel and were able to interview opportunistically a range of ordinary people they met in the hotel and in restaurants. In one case they had a lengthy discussion with the Chair of a local Community Development Council.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a general principle underlying the methodology. Several strategies of 'triangulation' – aiming to consistently corroborate information from any person involved in a program with other sources - have been used to increase the reliability of our findings. Sources are other interviewees, documentary evidence on performance from progress reports, notes, minutes of meetings etc., performance monitoring systems in place, and observations by the evaluator. The internal consistency of responses in interviews in Afghanistan has been verified by the use of skilled Afghan interviewers who can formulate alternative proxies for questions to minimise differing interpretations of important concepts.

2.3 Organisation

ECORYS Nederland B.V. is responsible for the implementation of this evaluation. IDN, based in Trondheim is a partner in the implementation of this assignment. ECORYS provided quality assurance via the Project Director, Anneke Slob, an experienced evaluation expert.

Team Composition

The team consisted of seven international and three Afghan members. The Team Leader during the inception and field phase was Sue Emmott. The allocation of work between team members was based on international expertise in governance (David Jepson), education (Clemens Romijn), trust fund mechanisms (Ivo Gijsberts) and long term knowledge of development partners and programs in Afghanistan (Zlatko Hurtic). The Afghan team members were experienced in gender (Hangama Anwari), community development (Najib Murshed), and humanitarian issues (Shah Wali). In Norway the archives were investigated by an experienced researcher (Mattias Tagseth). One of the original Norwegian team members to do the policy and portfolio analysis was only available in the Inception Phase and was replaced by another expert (Mila du Pont).

According to planning some evaluation team members did visit Afghanistan, whilst others concentrated on document review and interviews in Oslo. This was especially the case for the policy and portfolio analysis, but also for the analysis of ARTF as a main funding mechanism to which Norway contributed.

As specified in the TOR, ECORYS submitted on January 27th 2012 a first preliminary draft final report authored by the project team for approval by the evaluation department. This report was returned to ECORYS with comments for revision. The second draft version of this report was submitted on April 11th 2012 and this version was distributed to the stakeholders for comments. Various Norwegian stakeholders provided extensive comments that have been taken into account in the final version of the report. The Project Director, who is responsible for the quality assurance of all deliverables, has been responsible for the final version of the report.

On the basis of the comments additional document review has been undertaken to further substantiate the findings. Furthermore, all factual errors have been corrected. Different interpretations of the findings have been carefully checked and led in various cases to reformulation of the conclusions. In some cases the comments went beyond the scope of the evaluation and these comments could not be completely addressed (see 2.5). In a separate note ECORYS has explained how the various comments have been addressed. The evaluation team has handled the stakeholder comments in line with the OECD DAC evaluation quality standards. The views expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of ECORYS.

Client relations

The evaluation team reported directly to the client EVAL. The team had regular contacts with the client who facilitated contacts with the main stakeholders. For logistical reasons a planned `work in progress` meeting with the main stakeholders at the end of the field study did not take place.

2.4 Phasing

The evaluation took place in three phases: an Inception Phase from October 3-31, 2011, a Main Phase from November 16 till mid-December 2011 focusing on collection of data and a Reporting and Analysis phase from mid- December 2011 till May 2012.

Inception Phase

The purpose of the Inception Phase was to develop an Evaluation Plan. This started with briefings with Norad EVAL and an introduction to the South Asia Desk. The evaluation team had to familiarise itself with other key actors and set up meetings for the main phase.

One week of Inception took place in Kabul. This included consultations with the Embassy, UNDP, the World Bank and NGOs with the purpose of informing them about the evaluation and discussing logistics for the Main Phase.

We also distilled the key evaluation questions from the TOR and undertook preliminary analysis of the portfolio. At that stage the Embassy also informed us that they worked under enormous constraints and that the evaluation team should take this into account while asking for access to files etc.

Main Phase

The Main Phase included fieldwork in Afghanistan for those team members that were planned for the team work and document review and interviews for others in Norway or their home base.

In Afghanistan, owing to a security lockdown for the Loya Jirga in Kabul the schedule fell behind by one week. It could not have been anticipated because such large events are a security risk and are arranged at short notice. In view of the importance to Norway, we had prioritised a case study of Faryab. Planning proved logistically formidable with several UN flight cancellations because of winter weather so, anticipating problems with the return journey, we reluctantly cancelled. However, when flights resumed we undertook a renewed effort and the team decided to go even though it reduced the time available in Kabul and put the rest of the schedule at risk. Once in Faryab, the return UN plane was cancelled which meant that the team had to separate with the Team Leader getting access to a military plane in order to make an international flight connection and the Afghan team members needing to travel by road which was a two day journey with significant risk in one area. In Mazar I Sharif the Team Leader was caught up on the edge of the suicide bomb attacks which killed four people and was delayed returning to Kabul. In Kabul another suicide bomb killed 58 people and led to a lockdown and the loss of the only day for follow up interviews before departing for Oslo.

The timing of the finalization of the main phase in Oslo, in December, was somewhat unfortunate and affected to some extent the availability of staff for interviews.

Reporting and analysis phase

At that stage it became clear that the field case study in Faryab had taken more time than expected and adherence to the original time schedule proved to be problematic. Therefore the team sought and received an extension to 27 January 2012 and submitted a first draft on that date. A second draft final report was produced after comments of EVAL (see 2.3) for circulation to the stakeholders. The final report has taken the comments of the stakeholders into account.

2.5 Challenges and Major Constraints

This evaluation had to address important challenges. The large size of the portfolio constituted the first challenge. In this case, the size of the evaluation object, with more than 800 agreements over the decade, and the difficulty to access the archives, especially at the Embassy in Kabul, was challenging within reasonable time and the resources available.

Another important constraint limited the rigour of the evaluation. These were security issues in Afghanistan. The considerable security constraints meant that all evaluation in Afghanistan has become exceptionally difficult because verification of results at project sites, even by implementing agencies has become largely impossible.³ This means that the quality of monitoring and evaluation data available to donors and evaluation teams is often of poor quality and often unreliable.

During the inception phase most of the challenges and constraints became clear. One specific constraint was the lack of detailed data on breakdown of costs that hindered the assessment of efficiency. Therefore, the evaluation team in view of the many challenges and constraints proposed some changes to the originally envisaged approach and not all evaluation questions related to efficiency would be addressed. The same applied to the intended benchmarking study where Norway would be compared with other donors. However, during the inception phase it became clear that this was impossible to do in a way which would give valid results.

In response to the constraints we adopted a flexible approach to the plans described in the Inception Report. We focused more on what we could achieve rather than what we could not. We based our project selection on the documentation of a portfolio for 2001-2009, rather than a full list for 2001-2011. For quantitative analysis and project documentation, a computer file from the Norwegian economy management system PTS/PTA and Norad Statistics has been used. Some project level documentation was supplied by the implementing partners, but poor access to the MFA archives in Kabul was a limitation that took time to overcome. The case study on efficiency was changed from the comparison of Equip with NSP to a more complete study of the ARTF.

Not all evaluations criteria and questions could be assessed in equal depth, which was to a large extent due to the limitations described above. Nevertheless, our approach allowed us to address the main evaluation questions in a logical order. Our selection of interventions and the field case study in Faryab gave the opportunity to further deepen the findings at sector, program and provincial level. In the following table we show which evaluation criteria and related evaluation questions are central in each of the chapters:

³ Dokument no. 1 (2011-2012) Utenriksdepartementet, p. 245, 249, 251.

Figure 2.1 Evaluation criteria addressed in the various chapters

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability
3. Policy analysis	XXX			
4. Portfolio analysis	XX		X	
5. ARTF	X	XXX	X	X
6. Development assistance	X	XXX	X	X
7. Faryab	X	XXX	X	X

This overview shows that relevance and effectiveness could be adequately addressed. Data limitations have hindered a proper assessment of efficiency as hardly any comparable cost data are available, as was already indicated above. The assessment of sustainability is a logical follow-up of the assessment of effectiveness and impact and is determined very much by the context in Afghanistan.

In the comments of the stakeholders on the draft report, some issues stood out. There was a repeated and consistent demand from various stakeholders to deepen the analysis of gender issues throughout the report as gender equality is an important objective of Norwegian development assistance. Therefore, additional document review has been carried out. In the various chapters including the final chapter with conclusions new sections on gender analysis have been added. Some of the comments asked for a specific comparative assessment of Norwegian partners such as UN Women or AIHCR, but this was beyond the scope of the evaluation. Another request that could not be fully realized was to make a complete analysis of Norway's comprehensive strategy for the province of Faryab. The focus of this evaluation was on Norwegian Development Cooperation in Afghanistan, 2001-2011 with due attention for the changing context in Afghanistan and the broader Norwegian foreign, defence and humanitarian policy. However, the focus was not to evaluate the entire Norwegian policy for Afghanistan.

3 Policy Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse the Norwegian policy on Afghanistan during the evaluation period in order to assess the relevance of this policy. Therefore, the evaluation questions which will be answered in this chapter are those mentioned under relevance in the TOR:

- What was the content and quality of the context analysis that determined the choice of channels, partners and interventions? Included herein is an analysis of MFA and its partners, with special attention to risk assessment and mitigation.
- What was the strategy for alignment of interventions with broader foreign policy objectives of Norway? How were the links between political, security, and development efforts addressed? What was MFA's and its partners strategy for mutual coordination of assistance and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as gender and good governance?
- To what extent were the interventions aligned with development policy objectives of Afghanistan? What was the extent of local ownership in the choice of supported interventions.

The evaluation is focused on Norwegian development assistance to Afghanistan. In order to do so, analysis of foreign and humanitarian policy is essential, but military policy is excluded. As various actors are involved in policy-making and in creating synergies, the role of these actors is described.

An assessment of the relevance can only take place against the background of Afghan development policy and international agreements on the assistance to Afghanistan.

This chapter is based on analysis of official government publications and archive sources from MFA Oslo and Norad as well as interviews. In addition to interviews with Norwegian civil servants and other experts, published studies have been used to inform the analysis.

3.2 The Context in Afghanistan

The state up to 2001

There has never been a strong state in Afghanistan. Although the Afghan state was very centralized for a long time, this centralization was limited to certain issues like taxes and conscription. From 1979-89 during the Russian occupation, all major offices were staffed by Soviet advisors and the state functioned relatively well, markets thrived, and people had access to jobs, education and health services.⁴ Thousands of Afghans were educated at higher levels in Soviet-bloc countries and returned to key administrative positions. The mujahideen insurgency during the 1980s was based to a large extent on different ideas about the nature and pace of change and resulted in the major cities becoming enclaves whilst the rural areas were held by insurgents.

After the Afghan communist government eventually fell in 1992, the state effectively ceased to function and the mujahideen factions became embroiled in a struggle for power and control of territory until the Taliban took over in 1996. As they focused on gaining central control to overcome the chaos and anarchy that had prevailed under the mujahideen, services declined for everyone

⁴ Johnson and Leslie, *Afghanistan: the Mirage of Peace*, ZED Books, London, 2004.

and almost totally for women. To some extent this resulted from policy change but, where the state apparatus was not deemed threatening, it was largely left alone and declined mainly through lack of resources. In 2001, at the time of the 11 September attacks on the United States, the Taliban had been in power for five years.

Political Economy

Long before 2001, the long Cold War conflict had supported a flourishing war economy that affected the entire region. Afghanistan was the world's largest opium producer, a centre for arms dealing, and a transit route in the multi-billion dollar smuggled goods trade between Dubai and Pakistan. Although many actors benefited, including those in the highest positions of Government, the effect on Afghanistan and other states throughout the region was to crucially weaken them and undermine legal economies.⁵ By the end of the decade the drug economy had continued to undermine governance and prevent the establishment of a legitimate economy by underwriting a parallel set of power structures.⁶

Society and Culture

Islam is integral to Afghan values but has become increasingly politicised and contested since the Jihad against the Soviet Union and especially since the rise of Taliban. In parallel ethnicity, which is a complex and fluid concept, has grown in significance. Gender has historically been one of the most politicised issues in Afghanistan because of Tribal Code of Conduct (Pashtonwali) and more recently Islamic reasons. Attempts at reform of power relations between men and women have been denounced as un-Islamic and a challenge to the sanctity of family and faith.

Concepts such as democracy and gender equity, which the OECD countries have transported, are therefore deeply contested issues in Afghanistan. In terms of justice, many Afghans believe that the informal form of justice based primarily on the Tribal Code of Conduct (Pashtonwali) and in addition on Sharia law is fairer than the formal legal system which is notoriously slow and mired in corruption. In education, the curriculum is a hotly contested issue with deep divisions related to Islamic content. Another key social issue is the return of more than five million refugees since 2002. This has increased the estimated population by more than 20 per cent and has drawn attention to the role of land disputes in driving and sustaining conflict. By 2011, internal displacement as a result of insecurity continued to be a major problem.

Challenges for the new government

The Government at the end of 2001 was new. A Cabinet consisting of warlords, returned refugees from Pakistan, and technocrats from the diaspora was formed. Many had no experience of a functioning government and there was no shared view of the kind of government they aspired to be. In the Ministry of Finance there was a preoccupation with attempts to control the UN agencies and NGOs who had provided services for so many years, in particular the largest ones who provided the bulk of education and health services.

One of the responses to the limited availability of qualified Afghans was to import large numbers of international consultants and it was they who produced early policy such as the 2002 *National Development Framework* and 2004 *Securing Afghanistan's Future*. At the same time, the desire to move quickly on governance and the availability of large numbers of Afghan refugees who had gained skills and experience in English and project management whilst working with the UN agencies and NGOs, led to massive recruitment of contract staff in government. These were

⁵ B. R. Rubin, *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan*, Afghanistan Support Group, 21 June 1999.

⁶ J. Goodhand, 'Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.15, No.3, June 2008, pp.405–423.

predominantly men, although already in 2001 it was agreed to set up a Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA).

Overview of the Decade

The decade covered by this evaluation has, after a period of high expectations, been one of immense turmoil in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had harboured elements of the terrorist network Al Qaeda which were linked to the 9/11 attacks and overthrow of the Taliban regime and the elimination of those it had sponsored was the reason for the US-led invasion under Operation Enduring Freedom.

In December 2001, after the ousting of Taliban, the Bonn Agreement set in place arrangements for a democratic transition. The general mood was one of optimism that the long conflict of more than thirty years was over and reconstruction of the country could begin. Elections were held for the President in 2004 and Parliament in 2005, both of which were deemed a success and claimed to represent a moral and psychological defeat for the Taliban. However, already by 2005, there was a growing body of evidence that the positive official interpretations of the state of conflict did not reflect the reality and, by 2006, the insurgency had clearly re-established strong roots.⁷ By 2011, areas of insecurity and warlordism continue to spread, hopes of peace remain elusive and regional relations, especially with Pakistan are a cause for deep concern.

3.3 International agreements and policy on Afghanistan

The decade covered by this evaluation begins in 2001 following the 11 September attacks on the United States and the subsequent US-led invasion under Operation Enduring Freedom which aimed to eliminate the safe havens that had harboured elements of the terrorist network Al Qaeda. A summary of main issues is presented in relation to Norwegian policy at the end of this section (Table 3.2).

Security

In 2002 the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was set up after the Bonn Agreement in December 2001. In 2003 ISAF comprised 4,700 troops from 28 countries. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were established in Afghanistan under US initiative and the responsibility was subsequently taken up by ISAF. By 2011 ISAF had increased to more than 130,000 troops from 49 contributing countries. Around 70% of current troops are from the US, operating both within and outside NATO.⁸ ISAF Implemented a strategy in several stages of expansion, to the North (completed October 2004), to the West (completed September 2005), to the South (completed July 2006), and the entire country (completed October 2006).

Despite this strategy, by 2005 security had again begun to deteriorate and, by 2006, the insurgency had re-established strong roots.⁹ Each year, however, has seen a rise in enemy-initiated attacks. Official US sources attribute this to a resurgence of the Taliban, limited capabilities of Afghan security forces, the thriving illicit drug trade, and threats emanating from insurgent safe havens in Pakistan.¹⁰ Other sources suggest that support for the insurgency has been primarily driven by

⁷ A. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: the neo Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007.

⁸ <http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php>.

⁹ A. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, & Laptop: the neo Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan*, Columbia University Press, 2007.

¹⁰ *Afghanistan's Security Environment*, US GAO-10-178R November 5, 2009.

poor governance, continued impunity and corruption.¹¹ The US and NATO have now committed to drawdown of forces by 2014.

The Bonn Agreement

In December 2001, after the ousting of Taliban, the Bonn Agreement defined arrangements for a democratic transition in Afghanistan after more than thirty years of war. This was a political accord put together rapidly to fill the vacuum caused by the precipitate departure of the Taliban. The Bonn Agreement authorised the establishment of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for oversight of security in Afghanistan. The Afghan Constitution Commission was also established in Bonn to draft a new constitution in consultation with the public. It was not a conventional peace agreement, in which all the details were painstakingly negotiated over a long period of time by all protagonists to the conflict, and therefore did not address the root causes of conflict.

International Development Policy 2001-04

From early 2002, following the Bonn Agreement, there was a great deal of activity and a flood of new agencies commencing humanitarian and reconstruction projects. The Tokyo Conference took place in January 2002 and donors started to pledge funds. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA) were established to channel funds to the Transitional Government and large new projects were designed. In the haste to get activities underway, this all took place in the absence of a development policy framework so there was little coherence in international assistance.

After the Bonn Agreement, donors and many development partners fell in line with the statebuilding agenda. The positivity about an end to conflict and suffering created a form of denial about humanitarian need which resulted in the closing of OCHA and the downgrading of the UN's humanitarian capacity. In the Afghan Government, the then Minister of Finance was highly critical of the dominance of UN agencies and NGOs that had long been the main provider of services in rural areas and sought to control their activities. Thus, whilst there was certainly an argument for moving to a reconstruction and development-oriented agenda, the speed at which it happened was based on assumptions which had the effect of marginalising humanitarian voice.

The process of dialogue with Donors

Following the Bonn Conference in December 2001, a series of annual conferences have provided the opportunity for dialogue between the Government and donor nations. The Berlin Conference in March 2004 prepared for the post-Bonn phase of reconstruction including the preparation of presidential elections in 2004 and parliamentary and provincial elections in 2005.

In January 2006 the London Conference marked the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement with the adoption of the *Afghanistan Compact*. This was a political agreement between the international community and the government of Afghanistan which confirmed commitment "to cooperate in creating conditions allowing the people of Afghanistan to live in peace and security under the rule of law, with a strong government which protects human rights and supports economic and social development in the country". The Compact served as a basis for the next stage of reconstruction with the intention of relying more strongly on the country's own institutions.

In 2008 the Paris Conference adopted the full *Afghan National Development Strategy* (ANDS). This defined three pillars – security, governance and socio-economic development – and set progress

¹¹ A. Suhrke, *Ekspérimentet Afghanistan. Det internasjonale engasjementet etter Taliban-regimets fall*. Spartakus, Oslo, 2011. Also various research and journalistic sources, as well as the private and public views of senior military personnel.

against benchmarks to be monitored by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) which is co-chaired by the Senior Economic Advisor to the President, and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) to Afghanistan. As with early development policy, ANDS was also written primarily by international consultants and, although there was a process of consultation, the timeframe was very tight. Few government personnel had the technical capacity to participate meaningfully. A further complication was that the ministries were already committed to a range of donor-funded sectoral programmes which were automatically included in ANDS but which could not easily be reconciled with the benchmarks of the Compact.

In 2009 the Hague Conference, partly in response to the US military surge, focused on expanding civilian capacity building and improving aid effectiveness. In 2010, the London and Kabul Conferences agreed a process of transition to full Afghan leadership and reinforced the importance of capacity building.

In January 2010 a conference in London was held with a follow-up in July 2010 when the Kabul Conference took place, the first international conference on Afghanistan soil. It was seen by the government of Afghanistan as a critical stepping stone to the Kabul Process of transition to full Afghan leadership and responsibility for the country's security, development and reconstruction in all spheres¹². At that conference donors committed to channelling 50% of their development funds through the Government budget (represented by the ARTF and LOTFA) and to align at least 80% of development funds with Afghan priorities within two years.

The most recent conference, in Bonn in December 2011, was intended as a landmark conference ten years after the Bonn Agreement. A positive development was that it was the first conference to be attended by civil society representatives. However, Pakistan was notably absent, confirming the seemingly insurmountable tensions between the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan over the year. The conference reaffirmed the commitment to aid effectiveness, specifying that international actors would evolve from direct service delivery to support and capacity-building for Afghan institutions to enable the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its sovereign authority in all its functions. This process would include the phasing out of all PRTs and the dissolution of any structures duplicating the functions and authority of the Government of Afghanistan at the national and sub-national levels.

Approaches to Statebuilding and Capacity Development

There has been general agreement among Afghan and international actors on the need to build a state, resulting in many interventions, but there has been no clarity among all parties about what sort of state is appropriate and how exactly to go about building it. The UN has officially been responsible for leading and coordinating international efforts at state-building although it had a deliberately 'light footprint' in the early years and was not well resourced.

In fact, the main development objective of all international donors reflected in the many conferences on Afghanistan is to build an effective and stable state that guarantees security and provides services to the population. After the initial reconstruction years and a short transition period, from 2006 with the Afghanistan Compact the focus turned formally towards state building and capacity development.

However, no joint strategies were developed and various strategies were put in place. It is the US, as by far the largest donor in every sector, which has tended to set the agenda and state-building

¹² Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Development Cooperation Report 2010, Final.

has been a second-tier priority in comparison with its overwhelming focus on counter-terrorism. Other donors developed also their own strategies.

It seems that despite all international agreements, the last years doubts on the realisation of the overall development objectives have increased, which is also influenced by the deteriorating security situation. Some donors are withdrawing troops and support and they are not always replaced by other donors.

Overview of donor contributions

Over the past decade Afghanistan has become one of the largest recipients of external aid. After the fall of the Taliban, external aid has year on year accounted for a substantial portion of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the aid dependency ratio¹³ currently standing at 71% during 2010-11¹⁴. Foreign assistance accounts for 85% of the national budget and the entire development budget and on average 45% of the operating budget is financed by external aid. Despite an increasing trend in domestic revenue, it still accounts for less than 10% of GDP in 2011. The 2010 Development Cooperation Report anticipates that *"aid dependency will remain a reality for Afghanistan for a number of coming years"*.

For the period 2002-2013 a total of USD 90 billion in aid – consisting of military, humanitarian and development aid has been pledged for Afghanistan through a series of pledging conferences, and supplementary means. Of this USD 90 billion, USD 69 billion has been formally committed to be disbursed from 2002 to 2011 and USD 57 billion is the actual amount of aid disbursed to finance a wide range of programs and projects. With a pledge of USD 938 million, commitments of USD 775 million and disbursements of 636 million Norway ranks no. 11 on the external assistance list to Afghanistan, behind countries such as USA, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada, but above Sweden, Denmark, Italy and France (see table 3.1). Of the more than 50 countries and international organisations that have provided external assistance to Afghanistan, the USA alone accounts for 65%.

¹³ Aid dependency rate is defined as net official aid divided by gross national income

¹⁴ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Development Cooperation Report 2010.

Table 3.1 External Assistance to Afghanistan, Top 15 (figures in USD millions)

Rank	Donor	2002-2013 Pledge	2002-2011 commitment	2002-2010 disbursement
1	United States of America	56,100	44,356	37,118
2	Japan	7,200	3,152	3,152
3	European Union	3,068	2,883	2,594
4	Asian Development Bank	2,200	2,269	1,005
5	United Kingdom	2,897	2,222	2,222
6	World Bank	2,800	2,137	1,700
7	Germany	5,029	2,130	762
8	India	1,200	1,516	759
9	Canada	1,769	1,256	1,256
10	Netherlands	864	1,015	1,015
11	Norway	938	775	636
12	Australia	369	744	656
13	Italy	753	645	540
14	Sweden	515	635	635
15	United Nations	305	446	182
	Total	89,982	69,248	56,803

Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Development Cooperation Report 2010.

51% of external assistance disbursed to date has been invested in security, with the USA being the largest provider of security assistance, whilst the remaining 49% supported development and humanitarian activities across different sectors. The majority of Norwegian aid to Afghanistan is classified as Official Development Assistance (ODA). When comparing countries on the Gross ODA list as compiled by the OECD, Norway moves up to 9th place, with commitments in 2009-2010 of USD 118 million, just above the Netherlands (USD 104 million).

3.4 Norwegian Policy on Afghanistan

3.4.1 Foreign Policy

General foreign policy

The primary objective of Norwegian foreign policy is to safeguard Norway's interests. Norway depends on alliances so NATO and the bilateral relationship with the US have been cornerstones of its security strategy since the Cold War. As a small country with an open economy Norway has a strong interest in an international legal order based on international law, and on regional and international organisations. These interests are implemented broadly with an interest in international legal order reflected in the emphasis on, and contributions to, the UN. Norway also has an image of self as a 'Peace-Nation,' having no colonial history and no strong agendas, as shown by interview data and confirmed in policy analysis documents.

Comprehensive foreign policy from 2009

'to alleviate the situation of the long-suffering Afghan people, control international drug-trafficking, fight terrorism and the motivation behind it, and strengthen cohesion within NATO':

Engagement policy includes "aid and the fight against poverty, efforts to promote human rights, peace and reconciliation efforts, and humanitarian policy and assistance. The policy is motivated by our values and is based on an altruistic desire to promote the common interests of mankind. At the same time globalisation implies that we must abandon a narrow interpretation of Norwegian interests and realpolitik.

Global developments mean that peacebuilding and efforts to promote an international order and human rights are increasingly becoming realpolitik.”

Quotations from Report no. 15 (2008-2009) to the Storting. *Interests, Responsibilities and Opportunities. The main features of Norwegian foreign policy.*

Specific foreign policy on Afghanistan

During the Taliban era through to the summer of 2001 Norway's engagement in Afghanistan, in accordance with global priorities in the period after the Cold War, was primarily a program of humanitarian support implemented through established UN and NGO partners, coordinated through the Afghanistan Support Group.¹⁵ With few strategic or trade interests Afghanistan was not considered a candidate for long term development assistance, and there was no sense of it becoming the most important security policy engagement for NATO and for Norway.¹⁶

In 2001/02 Norway engaged militarily through the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and NATO-led ISAF with the purpose of preventing terrorists maintaining a safe haven from which to plan and carry out extensive terrorist attacks.¹⁷ The basis of this engagement was Norway's commitments under the NATO treaty, the right to self-defence under the UN pact, and UN Security Council resolutions (1383, 1386).

The purpose of Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan since 2001, reiterated by the Foreign Minister in November 2011, is *"to help prevent the country once more becoming a safe haven from which terrorists can plan and conduct large-scale operations"*. A decade ago Norway, together with other development partners, envisaged that the outcome of the transitional process described in the Bonn Agreement of 2001 would be *"a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government which would protect human rights, provide services, and establish a modern justice system"*. In 2001, FM Jan Petersen¹⁸ emphasized that Norway participates actively in the struggle against international terrorism, which demands a long term perspective and involves a wide range of measures. The tasks of the international community were summarized as a) continue the military operations until the terrorists and those who back them are defeated, b) to prepare for a representative government, c) to stabilize the security situation, d) to step up humanitarian assistance, and, e) to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. The formulation of the overall objectives show that Norway's interests to prevent terrorist attacks and the interests of the population of Afghanistan go hand in hand.

After the downfall of the Taliban regime the aid modality continued to be humanitarian through 2002 until the new GAP funding was established by the Storting in 2003. This had the explicit purpose of bridging the gap between humanitarian and development funding with transitional funds. With Norway's new role in ISAF, aid was explicitly based on a combination of global humanitarian priority, concerns about regional stability, and the need to sustain an international coalition in the war on terror.¹⁹

¹⁵ This group of donor states, of which Norway was a member, was not formally part of the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan but was instrumental in architectural reform for policy coherence between 1997 and 2001.

¹⁶ *Interests, responsibilities and Opportunities. The main features of Norwegian foreign policy.* Report No. 15 to the Storting (2008-2009), p. 19. *Climate, Conflict and Capital. Norwegian Development Policy Adapting to change.* Report No. 15 (2008-2009) to the Storting, p. 11. MFA archive, political analysis, Doculive #200009274, 2001.

¹⁷ K. M. Bondevik (PM), 'Norge er i krig mot internasjonal terror', Vårt Land, October 2, 2002. K. M. Bondevik (PM) 'Redegjørelse om situasjonen etter terrorangrepene mot USA', Address to the Storting November 8, 2001. J. Petersen (FM), 'Mulige norske styrkebidrag,' Stortinget, December 5, 2001, J. G. Støre (FM), 'On the situation in Afghanistan', Address to the Storting, April 2011. J. G. Støre (FM), 'Svar på interpellasjon om Afghanistan', November 29, 2011.

¹⁸ J. Petersen (FM), 'Mulige norske styrkebidrag,' Stortinget, December 5, 2001 (no pagination).

¹⁹ GoN, St.Prp no. 8(s), (2001-2002). 'Om humanitær bistand i forbindelse med krisen i Afghanistan', Oct. 12, 2001.

In 2004, Norway agreed to establish the PRT in Faryab Province for ISAF. Initially ISAF was mainly centred around Kabul but, as it became clear that this was not enough to maintain security, Norway was part of the move to extend the UN mandate for ISAF across Afghanistan. The same year, long term development cooperation was formalised by promoting Afghanistan to a 'partner in development' making it the largest recipient of Norwegian ODA.

Also in 2004 Norway argued strongly that coordination of efforts in the three dimensions of development, political process and security was crucial.²⁰ (see text box). In supporting the Bonn process and the establishment of legitimate state institutions, Norway acknowledged the centrality of its political development objectives and statebuilding was adopted in the budgets for 2004-06. The 2004 budget describes developments in Afghanistan as insecure and states that there are risks associated with the development cooperation.

In 2005 Norway decided not to renew commitments to the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan²¹ and withdrew officers from Iraq, stating that international military engagements should be undertaken through the UN and NATO. This strengthened commitment to a comprehensive engagement in Afghanistan, where the (re)construction of the Afghan state had become a central objective. This also affected the strategy in Faryab province (see chapter 7). Some observers see this change of military intervention strategy as a major policy shift, while others consider it a natural development in line with international trends.

The 2008 address on a *Coordinated Plan for Norway's Contribution to Afghanistan* again emphasised political solutions. This was seen as a matter of building up Afghan institutions at the central, provincial, district and local level, of increasing the capacity of the Afghan Government to deliver services to its people and as a matter of strengthening the legitimacy of the Afghan state. The 'footprint' of the Afghan Government had to be perceived as clear and lasting by the people. Only this would make it possible for people to dare to rely on it to safeguard their interests and turn their backs on the insurgent groups.²² This was followed up with an aid commitment of 750mill. NOK (US\$125m) annually for 2008-12.

Political and socio-economic reforms needed to fight terrorism

'The fight against terrorism cannot be won by military means alone, although they are in some cases essential. We must in addition adopt a set of other measures, and we place great emphasis on political reforms, economic measures, law enforcement and the judicial sector, strengthening of the education sector and to the encouragement of cultural contact and inter-religious dialogue. (. . .) We must remove the underlying causes of the use of terrorism as an instrument, whether they are of economic or political nature, or because of misuse of religion.

Foreign Minister Jan Petersen, address to the Storting, June 14, 2004.

From 2009 the comprehensive foreign policy reaffirmed the UN as central to Norway's objectives to strengthen the global legal order and emphasised the importance of success in Afghanistan. From 2009-13 the platform is gradual 'de-escalation' of military engagement, and transfer of security responsibilities is supported by an internal MFA review in early 2010.²³

²⁰ GoN, *Fighting Poverty Together. A comprehensive development policy. Dignity for all!* Report to the Storting 35 (2003-04). The approach is also described in 'Strategisk rammeverk. Utviklingspolitikken bidrag til fredsbygging- Norges Rolle,' *Plan*, August 26, 2008. Relevant policy was defined in 'Statsbudsjettet 2005-Tildelingsskriv', letter dated Jan 31, 2005 from MFA Oslo to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul. MFA Archive # 2003/01357021/400.

²¹ The Labour Party, Socialists Left Party and Centre Party, 'Political platform as basis for the Government's work.' Stoltenberg II, Soria Moria, 2009.

²² J. G. Støre (FM), 'A coordinated plan for Norway's contribution to Afghanistan', address to the Storting 5 February 2008.

²³ 'Political platform as basis for the Government's work 2009 – 2013,' Stoltenberg II, Soria Moria, October 7, 2009. MFA, 'Gjennomgang av den norske innsatsen i Afghanistan.' MFA archive, #09-08877-1-0129, Jan. 26, 2010.

In November 2010 US President Obama announced his intentions to transfer security responsibilities by 2014. The Norwegian Foreign Minister then invited a more open reassessment²⁴ followed by international discussion in which a drawdown for 2014 was announced and agreed upon by Norway.

In 2010 Norway continued to promote a political solution which should include all ethnic groups and be anchored with neighbouring countries. With the decision to withdraw troops in coordination with allies, attention began to shift to the transition. In an address to the Storting on April 26th, 2011, almost ten years after the first Bonn Conference, the Foreign Minister mentioned both progress and setbacks. He mentioned *“that many have had too high expectations as to what could be achieved. Moreover, certain aspirations have been based more on wishful thinking than on realistic analyses and assessments of how quickly changes can be implemented, not least given the dire situation in Afghanistan ten years ago.”* In 2011, the Foreign Minister also signalled the intention to maintain a significant aid program to Afghanistan for several years.²⁵ During the last years the security situation deteriorated, and in consequence stabilisation and counterinsurgency became (again) more central objectives of Norwegian foreign policy and increased the burden of military engagement as mentioned in interviews²⁶.

The evaluation team concludes that Norway has closely followed the international trends. Decisions were made quickly during the ‘compacted’ phase in 2001/02. Thereafter, political consensus extended to 2005 and into a new government in keeping with the focus of the international community on peacekeeping, reconstruction and state building. The new Norwegian government decided in 2005 to undertake its military engagements in Afghanistan only through UN and NATO and to separate its civil and military interventions. Some stakeholders consider this as an important policy shift, while others see this as a logical change in line with decisions of other bilateral donors (but not the USA). Also in 2005, Norway decided to increase its development commitments to Afghanistan whilst paying due attention to Afghan leadership and political solutions of the problems. By the end of the evaluation period the policy intentions are still the same.

3.4.2 Humanitarian Policy

Norway has, by its own definition, a long tradition of compassion for and solidarity with repressed and impoverished people, and with refugees and internally displaced persons. At the start of the decade under evaluation, for example, Norway was one of the driving forces in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000. By 2006 this was given priority through an action plan in 2006.²⁷ Also in 2006, Norway contributed to the Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, which has been adopted by the UN, the Red Cross and NGOs in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Norway regularly reports on the implementation of the SCR 1325 and continues to emphasize the importance of the role of women in peacebuilding and security issues.

In 2007, in recognition of a fourfold increase in global humanitarian funding over the previous decade and in a context of changing need, a new *Policy on the Prevention of Humanitarian Crises*

²⁴ Rapport fra sikkerhetspolitisk konferanse 2011. *Ti år i Afghanistan – hva nå?* MFA/Refleks, Oslo, 2011.

²⁵ J.G. Støre (FM). Stortinget (2011). Møte tirsdag den 29. november 2011 kl. 10. Sak nr. 3 ” Interpellasjon fra representanten Bård Vegar Solhjell til utenriksministeren”.

²⁶ D. McCullen, ‘The revised US strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan’, in T. E. Sæveraas (ed), *8 år i Afghanistan, Quo vadis? Et seminar om maktanvendelse*, (Luftkrigsskolens Skriftserie v.23), Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim, 2011. Helge Lurås, *Norge i Afghanistan – bakgrunn, retorikk, fortsettelse*. NUPI notat 768. NUPI, Oslo, 2009.

²⁷ The Norwegian Government’s Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 2006.

was issued.²⁸ Particularly relevant for Afghanistan was acknowledgement of protracted crises affecting fragile states where governance and administrative capacity was weak. The policy also contained a clear statement that humanitarian efforts should be carried out by civilian aid agencies in order to safeguard humanitarian principles. It defined the main purpose of military operations as providing stability and security in order to protect and safeguard humanitarian space. Military resources would be drawn in only where civilian capacity was insufficient and only on the basis of international guidelines.

What these guidelines have in common is their statement of humanitarian principles, their recognition of the overarching coordinating role of the UN, and the fact that they regard the use of military contributions as a last resort when no corresponding civilian resources are available.²⁹ Other important aspects of policy for Afghanistan were support for a more integrated approach to peace operations under UN management and promotion of the use of multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs). MDTFs are identified as a means of focusing donor efforts on priority targets during post-conflict reconstruction; reducing donor exposure to risk; and simplifying the negotiation process for recipient countries.

In 2008, Norway's global humanitarian program was audited by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). The report highlighted Norway's prominence as a donor in the international community and states that "*Norway receives recognition both nationally and internationally for standing firmly on the humanitarian principles, for its work in connection with the UN reform, for its efforts against landmines and cluster munitions, for civil-military coordination and for integration of the gender perspective*". It also drew attention to weaknesses which threatened Norway's ability to contribute more effectively and efficiently, amongst them problems with quality assurance of processing grant applications, weak coordination between short and longer term efforts and poor follow up of a large number of individual one-year grants. Especially limited capacity in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the foreign missions is mentioned as a limiting factor.

The debate on the interface between politics, military and humanitarian action has been vigorous in Norway and is explored in some detail in the Humanitarian Policy as illustrated below:

Can the humanitarian imperative be combined with political considerations and priorities?

"Humanitarian assistance must be viewed in a broader political context.... As a political actor, Norway has no desire to be neutral, but we respect and understand the need of humanitarian organisations to maintain their independence and integrity."

"Humanitarian crises require political solutions. Our peace and reconciliation efforts, our political dialogue with the countries concerned, our contributions to international peace operations, our development cooperation".

Quotations from Report No. 40 (2008-2009) to the Storting. *Norway's Humanitarian Policy*.

This led to a new *Humanitarian Policy* in 2009³⁰, which had the underlying political objective of establishing Norway as a key financial and political partner in the humanitarian field.

In 2010, in the opening remarks at a Conference on Humanitarian Access³¹, the Foreign Minister emphasised the humanitarian principles as universal non-Western principles. He also stressed that

²⁸ Norwegian Policy on the Prevention of Humanitarian Crises. Report No. 9 (2007-2008) to the Storting.

²⁹ Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies; Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principles on Civil-military Coordination.

³⁰ This came into effect as Report No 40 (2008- 2009) to the Storting. *Norway's Humanitarian Policy*.

‘Norway’s humanitarian engagement is an integral part of our foreign policy’. Norwegian engagement is at two levels according to the Minister: politically, where foreign policy initiatives are key; and as a strategic and substantial donor. The main focus is to ensure rapid, flexible and effective response to changing humanitarian needs. In the same opening remarks the Minister points at a dilemma related to civilian-military cooperation in integrated missions, which is particularly relevant to Afghanistan. Blurring of the distinction between military and humanitarian action is a specific risk. The blurring of this line is one reason why only 40% of Afghanistan is defined as a permissive environment for humanitarian actors, according to the UN.

Specific humanitarian policy on Afghanistan

There is no separate humanitarian policy on Afghanistan, but in the Embassy Plans and the Faryab strategy the overall humanitarian policy is elaborated in more detail for the situation in Afghanistan. Reconfirmation of the commitment to maintain dividing lines between humanitarian actors, other civilian organisations and the military is reflected in the *‘Faryab Strategy’* from 2009.³² This presents a ‘Norwegian model’ which clearly distinguishes the roles of civilian and military actors ‘to avoid conflation between humanitarian and development assistance with military functions and political partiality (see chapter 7)’.³³

Norway’s humanitarian support to Afghanistan should be understood against the background of the developments in early 2002, when a circus³⁴ of agencies descended on Kabul eager to support reconstruction in ‘post-conflict’ Afghanistan, leading to neglect of the need for humanitarian assistance and closing of OCHA. OCHA re-opened in 2009. Although UNAMA had a humanitarian mandate throughout the evaluation period, during quite some time the attention for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan was quite limited.

According to the Feinstein Centre³⁵, Afghanistan is the only complex emergency where:

- most major donors are also belligerents, resulting in unprecedented militarization of aid;
- the political UN is fully aligned with one set of belligerents and does not act as a honest broker in “talking peace” to the other side;
- the humanitarian UN and the broader humanitarian community are not negotiating access with the other side nor openly advocating for respect of humanitarian principles with all parties to the conflict.

According to the literature and to interviews in Afghanistan, these factors might have created a degree of denial about, or at least a desire to downplay, the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict. Moreover, there are various studies that point at the specific politicisation of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. Despite the internationally accepted principles of humanitarian aid as being neutral, impartial and focused on the needs of deprived populations, in Afghanistan, the implementation of these principles seems to have become somewhat fluid.

³¹ Støre, J. G. (2010), Opening remarks at Conference on Humanitarian Access, The Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo 6 September 2010.

³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense & the Ministry of Justice, ‘A strategy for comprehensive Norwegian civilian and military efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan,’ MFA, MD, MJ, Oslo, May 2009.

³³ A. Strand, *Drawing the lines: The Norwegian debate on civilian-military relations in Afghanistan*. Noref Policy Brief no. 8, June 2010. Noref, Oslo, 2010.

³⁴ This term was commonly used at the time and referred to later by Hilde Johnson when Minister for International Development.

³⁵ A Donini *Afghanistan: Humanitarianism Unravelling?*, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2010.

The aid statistics also show that development assistance dominates over humanitarian assistance. From the interviews it became clear that there is the idea that quite some donors were reluctant to listen to the views of humanitarian actors or to acknowledge that a robust humanitarian response was necessary. Key partners observed that Norway was different in that its perceptions were not overly influenced by the need to maintain an upbeat public posture. Compared with other donors key partners observed that Norway was willing to maintain a positive and engaged dialogue with its partners and thereby become better informed about the reality (see text box).

'Norway regularly offered opportunities for visiting official delegations and politicians to meet with UNHCR and ICRC - agencies that had a dissenting view of the situation on the ground, too often spun positively by other donors'.

A senior UN official.

Norway's support to humanitarian partners in Afghanistan combines, in principle, powerfully with its global and country level focus on humanitarian reform. Through its support to NRC, Norway was one of the voices in favour of greater coordination around the cluster system. For UNHCR this created support for their leadership of the Protection cluster and, in particular, financing of a coordinator position which allowed it to give operational expression.

Whether and how Norway has implemented the principles of humanitarian assistance in practice has not been the explicit focus of this evaluation. Therefore, no in-depth assessment of Norwegian humanitarian assistance can be provided. Only in the case study on Faryab this issue has been addressed to some extent (see chapter 7), but only limited specific evidence could be found.

3.4.3 Development Policy

General Development Policy

Global development policy during this decade has been framed by the 2004 comprehensive development policy *Fighting Poverty Together*, until it was superseded in 2009 by *Climate, Conflict and Capital: Norwegian development policy adapting to change*. The 2008 gender policy *On Equal Terms* is also significant.

The development policy for Afghanistan was based on the 2004 comprehensive development policy *Fighting Poverty Together*, which takes the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as its starting point. Key aspects are the need for donor reform to make development assistance more effective and efficient and put recipient countries in the driver's seat; and governance reform to create a genuine willingness by developing countries to put their own house in order. For war-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Norway was to promote closer donor-coordination, among other things by allocating substantial amounts to multi-donor trust funds, as a means of establishing a credible government and as a contribution to nation-building and peace-building processes.

The need to coordinate efforts in all three dimensions: development, the political process and security was emphasized. From concentrating on humanitarian assistance and refugees after the war, it described or anticipated a gradual transition to longer term reconstruction and the establishment of public administration, as a part of a peace-building effort.³⁶

There was already a Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation for the period 1997-2005 after five years of preparation. This strategy was evaluated in 2006 and included

³⁶ GoN *Fighting poverty together*. Report No. 35 (2004-2005) to the Storting, p. 202.

Afghanistan as one of the three case studies (see the next section). In overall terms, the evaluation concluded that the main challenge was to move from policies and goals to translating Women and Gender Equality into country level dialogue, programming and operations. The evaluation focussed on strategy and processes as important preconditions for development outcomes, but gender development outcomes were not specifically assessed. In 2007 the centrality of gender was enshrined in the white paper *On Equal Terms*³⁷, supported by an Action Plan in 2008³⁸. These give priority to: women's political participation and influence; economic empowerment and working conditions; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and security, including gender-based violence.³⁹ It acknowledged that, although previous development policy had a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality, it had not been given sufficient priority over time through the pre-existing crosscutting priority.⁴⁰ It stated that failure to follow up gender equality issues was "one of the great sins of omission in both Norwegian and international development policy". The policy promotes gender issues not only as important in their own right but also as a prerequisite to achieve development objectives.⁴¹ On the basis that the crosscutting gender priority had not delivered sufficient results globally, gender-specific priorities were to be increased. Particularly relevant to Afghanistan is Norway's aim to be a fearless champion of women's rights and gender equality. Whilst Norway is to speak out boldly and clearly, even on the most sensitive issues, there is acknowledgement of powerful cultural and religious forces which sometimes means 'speaking softly and with humility' as part of a long term process.

The revised comprehensive development policy of 2009, *Climate, Conflict and Capital* reflected and confirmed Norway's higher priority on conflict as a development issue. This notes that fragile states lack legitimacy in the eyes of the population, have insufficient control over their territory, and weak systems for political accountability. Improved coordination of the efforts of the international community is identified as vital with strong support for the UN to coordinate aid efforts during and immediately after a conflict. It also acknowledges World Bank capacity in managing long-term reconstruction and state-building. The policy states that, in fragile states, Norway will work mainly through and in close cooperation with the UN system, the World Bank and NATO, and with regional organisations. Norwegian and international NGOs are also identified as key partners.

Specific Development Policy for Afghanistan

Specific development policy for Afghanistan is contained in the comprehensive policies *Fighting poverty together* (...) for 2004-2009 and *Climate, Conflict and Capital* for 2009-. The annual budget decisions in the Storting are also important in forming the mandate for the development cooperation. In addition regular speeches by the Foreign Minister in parliament on Afghanistan are informative. The *Strategic plan for development cooperation* from the Embassy in Kabul introduced for 2009-2011 specifies the strategy further.

The GAP-funds were introduced in 2003 to cover the 'gap' between short term humanitarian relief and long term development cooperation. The national budget for that year emphasised the need for considerable flexibility, while one had to be prepared to accept larger risks than in long term development cooperation. The Norwegian GAP Fund, which was administered by the MFA, was geared most towards post-conflict countries, with the result that Afghanistan became a big recipient in 2003. Further it specified: "*In Afghanistan, Norway seeks to contribute to the development of*

³⁷ *On Equal Terms: Women's Rights and Gender equality in Development Cooperation*, White Paper no. 11 (2007-2008).

³⁸ *Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2007-2009)*, GoN, Oslo, 2007.

³⁹ *Gender Review Report*. Royal Norwegian Embassy Afghanistan, Kabul, 2011.

⁴⁰ For an example of the reassessment, see B. Aasen and S. B. Hellevik, (2005) *Evaluation of the "strategy for women and gender equality in development cooperation (1997-2005)"*. NIBR with partners/NORAD, Oslo.

⁴¹ *On equal terms. Women's rights and gender equality in international development policy*, Report No. 11 (2008-2009) to the Storting.

stable governance based on democratic principles and respect for human rights. A considerable part of the transitional funds are channelled through multilateral funds in order to strengthen the national ownership to the reconstruction of Afghanistan".⁴² The development policy *Fighting poverty together (2003-2004)* praised the establishment of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), seen as one of the few channels that could contribute to practical harmonization. The use of UN and NGO channels were also mandated. With the benefit of hindsight, the statements on the Afghan ownership of the ARTF were quite optimistic at the time, as the role of the government of Afghanistan remained very weak for quite some time in relation to the ARTF.

The national budget (St.Prp. 1) for 2004, which initiated the long term development programme, stated: "*The objective of the cooperation is to contribute to combating poverty, in addition to state-building and the development of stable governance based on the respect of human rights and the principles of democracy. The developments in Afghanistan are insecure, and there are risks associated with the development cooperation*".⁴³ These risks were not specified. Since 2004, development planning for Afghanistan has emphasised the central priorities of governance or state-building, socioeconomic/rural development, and education especially for girls.⁴⁴ In interviews, it was suggested that the emphasis on education rather than other aspects such as health originated as the result of a discussion among donors in Kabul on an adequate division of labour. Nevertheless, neither the elements of that discussion nor specific selection criteria for Norwegian priority sectors in Afghanistan have been laid down on paper.

Priorities made in the annual national budgets in the Storting seem to confirm emphasis on these dimensions, in order to contribute to lasting and stable peace as the overall objective. Further priorities have been added across the years, including strengthening of the rights and participation of women (2007), equality and human rights, institutional cooperation, and oil for development (2010).

Regarding the issue of gender equality, the evaluation of the Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation in 2007 included a case study on Afghanistan with some interesting findings. It refers to the set-up of the Ministry of Women's Affairs that was agreed upon in the Bonn Conference of December 2001 with substantive donor support. In 2007, the evaluation concluded that the role of this Ministry was still not entirely clear. Key constraints were the lack of an adequate mechanism for gender mainstreaming, the lack of policy direction and the lack of a funding mechanism. The evaluation was very critical of the lack of tools for gender mainstreaming or any targeted support for women in ARTF (see chapter 5). In 2009, the Norwegian and Swedish Embassy have developed the Joint Nordic Gender Action Initiative for furthering women's rights and with the aim of taking the lead for gender equality in the donor community. This initiative was reported upon in the Joint Gender Review of February 2011 and recommended further operationalization of the Initiative and to develop a more concrete and measurable action plan and a joint reporting.

The Norwegian parliament had requested a coordinated plan for the comprehensive approach from the government in 2007, to include in the development programme. This was answered through an address to the Storting by Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre on Feb 5 2008:

⁴² Translated from the national budget St.Prp 1(s), MFA, 2002-2003.

⁴³ Translated from St.Prp 1(s) 2003-2004, MFA. P. 114. Priority areas were Governance, Reconstruction of public administration. Social and economic development: Integrated rural development in areas with high numbers of returning refugees and demobilisation of militia. Education: Basic education with an emphasis on the education of girls. Priority is given to ARTF, and risk in development cooperation is explicitly acknowledged.

⁴⁴ NORAD and MFA archives in Oslo: 'Virksomhetsplan (VP)' for the years 2002-2012. NORAD Archive #0302095-2 'Overgangsbistand til Afghanistan', May 26, 2003.

A coordinated plan for Norway's contribution to Afghanistan.⁴⁵

Here, success is seen as a matter of preventing Afghanistan from becoming a hotbed of international terrorism again, and as a matter of enabling Afghans to govern Afghanistan. It signals more emphasis on the 'civilian effort' within that approach. The intention to increase funding for Norway's civilian efforts by 50% to 750 M NOK was declared, which remained the commitment for 2008-2012. It emphasises Afghanisation and donor coordination, but adds that it is natural also to focus efforts in Faryab with up to 20%, because Norway is leading a PRT there and has built up local knowledge. More specific to the development cooperation as part of the strategy, it was stated: "(...) Third – and perhaps most importantly – the political dimension of our overall effort must be strengthened. This has been said before, but it needs to be repeated: Afghanistan's problems cannot be solved by military means alone. A political solution must be found. It is a matter of building up Afghan institutions at the central, provincial, district and local level. It is a matter of increasing the Afghan Government's capacity to deliver services to its people. It is a matter of strengthening the legitimacy of the Afghan state. The people must perceive that their own Government's "footprint" is clear and lasting. That the Government has a presence that is permanent. And that the people can trust it to provide security and basic services. (...) In the Government's view, it is essential to give more priority to efforts to promote Afghan governance and build Afghan institutions, based on the Afghans' own needs and with their active participation and, I might add, more closely in accordance with Afghan traditions. Only then will the people dare to rely on the Government to safeguard their interests and turn their backs on the insurgent groups."

Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in the Storting.

Commitments to ARTF for 2008-2012 were increased in support of the ANDS, based on this analysis.

The comprehensive *Climate, Conflict, Capital* strategy defines in 2009 stability in Afghanistan as the goal of Norwegian and international efforts because it is crucial for further development. A strong, democratic state that has the will and the capacity to fight poverty throughout the country is seen as the best means of ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists. Progress requires a broad process of political reconciliation that includes all the different population groups in the country and Afghan ownership of this process is seen as essential. The long-term development engagement in the country must seek to meet the people's basic needs, create a framework that enables people to live secure and decent lives, and strengthen democracy and the state's ability to provide the services people need. Education is identified as a pre-requisite for all other development, preventing war and reducing conflict, and creating economic growth.⁴⁶

Three year rolling strategic plans for long term development from the Embassy in Kabul were introduced in 2008. These cover the overall development assistance from Norway, but are focused on the long term cooperation managed by the Embassy. The strategic plan for 2009-2011 emphasises the support for the strengthening of state institutions and a strong and legitimate government, in order to support stability and sustainable development to the benefit of the Afghan people as the overall objective. Contributions on the priority areas, 'good governance including the fight against corruption', 'Education', 'Rural Development' and 'Women and Gender Equality' are

⁴⁵ MFA Jonas Gahr Støre. A coordinated plan for Norway's contribution to Afghanistan. Address to the Storting 5 February 2008. http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/speeches_foreign/2008/afghanistan_plan.html?id=499116.

⁴⁶ 'GoN, Different approaches to peace- and statebuilding' *Climate, Conflict and Capital (...)*, section 5.5.

further described and specified against Afghan benchmarks as 'specific goals – priority focus areas'.

The evaluation team concludes that the visions and principles for development cooperation in Afghanistan are clearly outlined in the policies and the strategic plan. They reflect international principles of aid effectiveness and coordination, including those for fragile states. The policy is also very much in line with international trends and agreements as indicated in table 3.2. However, the development policy does not appear to be sufficiently developed on the operational side. Specific objectives, targets and logframes are lacking. This is confirmed by findings of the OAG in 2010, when the audit ⁴⁷ showed weaknesses and deficiencies in the goal structure, indicators, timing and data in the project documentation. Risk mitigation strategies are another important element that has received limited attention. The 2009 strategic plan identifies a high level of corruption as '*a major roadblock to development and a huge risk for development programs funded by international donors*', and stated that '*lack of effective control systems makes the international community a major contributor to corruption.*' Also the risk that schools are burned down by the Taliban due to conflict over girl's education was identified. ⁴⁸ Nevertheless no clear risk mitigation strategies have been developed and this remains limited to ideas about programmes to fight corruption. Also according to OAG the follow-up of risks identified in decision documents as well as in external evaluations and consultancies is not satisfactory. ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ OAG, Utenriksdepartementets forvaltning og gjennomføring av budsjettet for 2010. Kapittel i dokument 1 (2011-2012).

⁴⁸ Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, Strategic Plan 2009-2011, 2009 (MFA Archive), Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, Virksomhetsplan for 2007 (MFA Archive). Virksomhetsplan for 2008 (MFA Archive).

⁴⁹ Dokument 1 (2011-2012) Utenriksdepartementet, 245. MFA archive 1/00012-2 Revisjon av tilskudd til Afghanistan. April 8, 2011.

Table 3.2 Foreign, Development Policy and Strategy points over time

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
International trends	Bonn Agreement- December.	ARTF and LOFTA set up. Mainly humanitarian and reconstruction aid. ISAF start.	Tokyo Conference on security sector reform 4,700 ISAF troops from 28 countries.	Berlin Conference: preparation of elections, more attention to donor coordination and nation building. Continuation of ISAF and expansion of PRTs.	Rome Conference Justice and rule of law.	London Conference: Afghanistan Compact.		Paris Conference: ANDS endorsed.	The Hague Conference: Expand civilian capacity building programs. Improve aid effectiveness.	Kabul Conference: further transition to full Afghan leadership (80% of development aid to be aligned with Afghan priorities and at least 50% to be channelled through Afghan gvt).	Bonn Conference: focus on harmonization and alignment, but issues with Pakistan.
Norwegian Foreign Policy	War on terror Norway joins US-led OEF and NATO ISAF.	Norway works to increase the mandate of ISAF.	More focus on development cooperation.	Norway establishes ISAF PRT in Faryab Province.	Norway decides: Military operations to be undertaken through the UN and NATO.	Quits OEF, emphasis on ISAF Lack of civilian progress a critical issue.	Increased coordination between ministries through interdepartmental forum.	'Coordinated plan' presented in parliament.	Afghanistan, as NATO's most important mission, important for national security. Faryab Strategy paper on CIV/MIL.	Coordinated withdrawal of forces. Focus on transition. Reassess comprehensive engagement.	Broad consensus in the Storting on engagement in Afghanistan. Continuation of engagement in the areas of development and humanitarian assistance beyond military withdrawal in 2014.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Development policy & strategy		Supports State-building /Bonn process.	GAP funding through ARTF Reintegration of refugees.	Afghanistan becomes partner in development and biggest aid recipient. Commitment to ARTF for 2004-2008. Central priorities: governance or state-building, socioeconomic/rural development and education especially for girls.	Expansion of the aid programme.			Strengthens political dimension. Steps up aid priority ARTF. 3 year plans introduced.	Faryab strategy on coordination /separation of civilian/ military Coordination through UN and WB for ANDS Stability as main goal in Afghanistan, and crucial for development.	Increased emphasis on political solution next to development and security. Increased proportion of support through ARTF. Capacity building.	
Humanitarian policy	Steps up humanitarian aid Coordination of humanitarian aid.	Continuation of increased humanitarian assistance.				Action plan on Security Council Resolution 1325 - gender in conflict.	Humanitarian efforts to be carried out by civilian agencies, policy on humanitarian crisis.	OAG report: strengths and weaknesses	New humanitarian policy calls for humanitarian /military separation and coordination.		Confirmation of emphasis on women's inclusion in peace and security issues in relation to implementation of SCR 1325.

Source: Ecorys (compiled from official documents).

3.5 Main actors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of formulating and implementing the foreign policy, the development policy and the humanitarian policy. A reform in the aid system (St.Prp.nr.1 Tillegg nr 7 (2003-2004)) transferred authority over development cooperation from Norad to MFA in 2004, and the responsibility for state to state cooperation was subsequently delegated to the embassies. Norad is a directorate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the aid reform in 2004 Norad is still responsible for administration of a small proportion of aid funds, but its main tasks are advisory.

Humanitarian assistance is managed from both Oslo and Kabul. The Humanitarian Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo provides around NOK130m a year through various organisations in an established program. The Embassy in Kabul also provides humanitarian funding which is managed by the small team alongside, and not necessarily distinguishable from, development funding.

The Embassy in Kabul

When the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul was established in 2002 it was instructed to take as its starting point the fact that it was established to help Norway in its tasks as the chairman of the Afghanistan Support Group.⁵⁰ It has contributed in the management of humanitarian aid, and has been delegated the responsibility for long term development cooperation since 2005. A reform in the aid system (St.Prp.nr.1 Tillegg nr 7 (2003-2004)) transferred authority over development cooperation from Norad to MFA in 2004, and the responsibility for state to state cooperation was subsequently delegated to the embassies. This had effect in Kabul from 2005, as shown by the Kabul Embassy plan for 2006. The embassy controls the long term development funds, with 2/3 of the budget in 2011.

The annual reports and plans of the embassy in Kabul describe an organisation with chronically inadequate staffing levels. In 2006 much of staff time was taken trying to improve internal systems, documentation and the quality of follow up on agreements. Just as the situation began to get better, Norway doubled its funding for Afghanistan, delegating much of it to the Embassy without any increase in staff.

In 2007, the evaluation of the Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation signalled that – prior to the expansion- the person with primary responsibility for long-term development cooperation was also in charge of gender. Therefore, gender was only allocated limited time and resources. With the expansion of the programme, this situation did not improve. The joint Norad and SIDA gender review of the Embassies in Afghanistan in February 2011 reported that the gender focal point at that time was the development advisor based in Faryab. This complicated access to the fast-rolling donor community in Kabul⁵¹.

The expansion of the aid program was reported as motivating but challenging in terms of capacity by the embassy in the annual reports for 2006 and 2007. Working conditions were reported as more difficult due to security issues, and insufficient staff to manage development was reported. Following the increase in aid in 2008, the 'efficiency project' found that project management for a

⁵⁰ MFA, 'Virksomhetsplan og budsjett for 2002' MFA# 2002/01533.

⁵¹ Norad, Gender review Afghanistan, February 2011, p. 9

large number of agreements was demanding in terms of resources, which could have consequences for the quality and results.⁵²

The OAG's investigation into the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance⁵³ highlighted that, in a global perspective, Norway has one of the smallest administrations in relation to the country's humanitarian efforts. It noted that, whilst Norway is commended for predictability and flexibility, case processing times are sometimes long which leads to delayed implementation and consequences for beneficiaries. In Afghanistan, this situation is exacerbated and the Embassy readily acknowledged to the team that they were not resourced to follow up or engage in quality control to any significant degree.

In 2009 the embassy was involved in an administrative review and was included in the efficiency-project in the same year. By 2009-2010, cramped working and living conditions, restrictions on movement, a high workload and frequent absence of already low levels of staff for R&R meant that managing development assistance at the expected level of quality was almost impossible. An additional and frustrating obstacle was a three year period when there was no-one with the capability to manage the archive.

The report for 2010 comments that the ambitions for what the embassy was to deliver on had been too high given the available resources, the significant numbers of visitors and the limitations of security policy. The OAG audit of the MFA in 2010 showed weaknesses and inadequacies in management, follow-up and control of aid funds to Afghanistan and assessed that the follow-up mechanisms that have been established were not sufficient to ensure that Norwegian funds are used as intended.⁵⁴

Other Ministries

Some other ministries have also been involved in aid activities in Afghanistan (see chapter 4).

The coordination of aid, and its integration in a comprehensive approach aligning it with other foreign and security policy objectives, is important to Norway and an area where its contribution is visible in Afghanistan and in the UN system. From the funding structure described above, it is reasonable to infer that there are challenges of coordination in Norwegian aid. Defining aid to Afghanistan as the responsibility of the foreign minister from an early date may have improved the possibilities for resolving these within the MFA as the central institutional actor. Analysts have identified the lack of an explicit strategy for the "whole of government approach" as a limitation in the comprehensive approach, which includes efforts through the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An inter-departmental *Afghanistan Forum* was established at state secretary level with participation from the Prime Ministers Office, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Oslo and Kabul), in order to improve the coordination of a Norwegian comprehensive approach.⁵⁵

⁵² Brantzæg, M et al. 'Effektiviseringsprosjektet – fase 2 Afghanistan. Rapport fra besøk til Kabul 15-16. Juni 2009 (MFA Archive).

⁵³ Office of the Auditor General's Investigation into Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance. Doc 3:2 (2008-09).

⁵⁴ Dokument no. 1 (2011-2012) Utenriksdepartementet, pp 244-255. 'Virksomhetsplan' for the Norwegian embassy, 2002-2012.

⁵⁵ C de Coning, H. Lurås, N Nagelhus and S. Ulriksen, *Norway's whole of government approach and its engagement with Afghanistan*. Security in Practice 8- 2009, The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, 2009.

Norwegian NGOs

Norwegian NGOs were already active in Afghanistan prior to 2001 and their role has increased since that time. Since the early days the MFA, including the Embassy in Kabul, has had both formal as well as informal contacts with the NGOs, as shown by MFA records and reported in interviews, especially in the Embassy and in Faryab. The aid activities of the NGOs since the 1980s have strengthened the available analysis and competence on Afghanistan considerably. The NGOs and their networks were also important sources of information for lobbying.

“Norway’s long association with Afghanistan prior to 2001 made it less prone to the more visionary (some would say delusional) expectations of other donors as to what could be achieved.”

Interview with a senior UN official.

Role of researchers

The MFA has commissioned research to some extent throughout the period, from the Norwegian institute sector, and also internationally for instance from the Feinstein International Centre at Tufts University, and NYU’s Center on International Cooperation. Some research funded by MFA has been initiated by researchers in Norway and the US. According to Norad’s evaluation of development research in general, MFA staff generally report some reliance on directly commissioned research in their work but limited use of independent research. Issues of timeliness, relevance, and accessibility are known to be general limitations for the development of links between research and policy in development. Some research-based context analysis is made available, for instance through the CMI (and NOREF) policy-briefs. Formal and informal contacts between a subset of researchers and policy-makers play an important role in discussions about Norwegian aid to Afghanistan as a key country.⁵⁶

3.6 Towards a theory of change

The TOR for the evaluation require reconstruction of the intervention logic (or theory of change). Development cooperation is an integral part of a comprehensive approach to foreign policy, which complicates the reconstruction of the intervention logic. Neither development nor humanitarian assistance can therefore be understood in isolation from broad foreign policy, nor can a development theory of change be meaningfully extracted. In principle, one could wonder whether humanitarian policy can be seen as part of foreign policy, given the principles of impartiality and neutrality. As shown above, Norway respects the humanitarian principles, but acknowledges that in the case of Afghanistan it is difficult to draw a clear line.

Key events in the development strategy, its relation to the wider Norwegian foreign policy context and to the developments in Afghanistan are shown in table 3.2. This overview clearly shows the overall consistency and coherence in Norwegian foreign, development and humanitarian policy towards Afghanistan that closely follows the international trends.

Context analysis has been available to policy-makers in many forms, but it does not come in a neat package. Formal context analysis at the highest level is evidenced in the situation analysis in the annual national budgets and across several policy papers. The MFA has updated its internal political analysis frequently through the decade, and is informed by dispatches from the Embassy in Kabul as well as meetings. The Embassy’s annual reports (Virksomhetsplan) reflect contextual issues, for instance changes in the security situation, while the semi-annual reports add to the detail

⁵⁶ SIPU international, *Evaluation of research on Norwegian Development Assistance*. Report 2/2011 – Evaluation, p. 32, 34.

and frequency. Advisory resources from Norad are called for when single allocations exceed NOK 50 mill.

The adequacy of context analysis underpinning development decisions is difficult to judge because it does not only come in in so many forms, but much of the analysis is also in the heads of the individuals concerned and never committed to paper so that it can support institutional learning and memory. Though formal analysis has been somewhat limited it has certainly increased in scope and quality over the decade. There is emphasis on alignment within a complex and changing policy context in Afghanistan and with the international community, where the standard is high. Developing and maintaining an adequate understanding of Afghan society remains a central and critical challenge and has been particularly challenging in an Embassy which is notably under-resourced and characterised by frequent turnover of staff.

In this section we try to reconstruct the main elements of the Theory of Change for the Norwegian development cooperation with Afghanistan, within the broader rapid changing context. As explained above the development policy for Afghanistan consists of overall objectives and principles, but is not elaborated in detail and misses operationalisation. Furthermore, different forms of engagement (civilian or military) build on different theories of change.

The central underlying assumption behind the Norwegian development policy is that the viability of a peace-building process in Afghanistan is dependent on the establishment of a strong central state that can resist threats from regional armed groups within the country as well as pressure from international actors.

Whilst the policy context is far too complex to be represented in the kind of causal diagram normally associated with a theory of change, the following table draws out some of the causal mechanisms found in official documents, in approximate chronological order:

Context analysis	->	Action	=	Expected outcome
Poverty / marginalisation leads to militia recruitment	->	support rural development & reintegration	=	less violence
The state is fragile and lacks legitimacy	->	constitution & elections, more service delivery	=	acceptance and peace
Conflict and terrorism are caused by poverty	->	poverty reduction support	=	peace and stability
Donor control is a problem	->	increase ARTF budget support to increase Afghan ownership	=	sustainability, govt. credibility
The situation is post-conflict	->	move through phases of humanitarian, transition to development	=	sustainable development
Weak state creates an arena for militia and vigilante justice	->	provide justice and security in the regions	=	stability
Space for humanitarian & development is shrinking	->	move from security provision to separation Civ/Mil	=	more development
Illiteracy, especially among women	->	education	=	prevent conflict, development, economic growth
GoA lacks capacity, multinationals poorly rooted in context	->	Channel through NGOs	=	more effective & visible
Safe havens create a threat of terrorism	->	extend local state and its capacity (services, police)	=	increased legitimacy/security
Sustainable development is challenging	->	build institutional capacity	=	better able to take responsibility and lead development

Of course, this does not constitute a comprehensive and complete theory of change or intervention logic for Norwegian development cooperation with Afghanistan. Rather in different documents and

in different periods of time different arguments are being presented. In 2007, a specific comprehensive strategy for Faryab was presented that is discussed in chapter 7.

Already in an early stage in research commissioned by the MFA, the underlying logic behind the interventions was criticised. The Bonn agreement stressed the importance of long-term development cooperation and the emphasis on building Afghan capacity, but in practice there was no time to wait and international aid flooded the country.⁵⁷ As indicated above, Norway tried to combine different objectives, but the theoretical underpinning was not always clear. Given Norway's particular interest in peace, it is significant that analysts in Norway have criticised the lack of reflection on the relationship between 'state-building' and 'peace-building' in official policy papers.⁵⁸ Furthermore, already in 2004 when Norway decided to designate Afghanistan as a partner country and to increase its development assistance, the spreading of Norwegian assistance over a large number of sectors and issues raised questions related to effectiveness and impact. A focus on specific issues related to the peace agenda was suggested.⁵⁹

Recently, the Feinstein International Center examined the relationship between aid and security in Afghanistan.⁶⁰ This research sheds some more light - ten years after the start of the massive aid to Afghanistan - on the underlying theories of change of various donors including Norway by asking the fundamental question whether development assistance is effective in promoting stabilisation and security objectives. They argue that the drivers of insecurity and conflict in Afghanistan are varied and complex, but the root causes are often political in nature, especially in relation to competition for power and resources among ethnic and tribal groups. International aid projects tend to emphasize socio-economic rather than political drivers of conflict. Therefore, projects often do not address the root causes of conflict and may even contribute to conflict. The research found more evidence of the destabilizing rather than the stabilizing effects of aid. Pressure to spend money too quickly was not only found to be wasteful, but also to undermine security and development outcomes. The outcomes of this retrospective research are rather helpful to rethink donor strategies.

3.7 Conclusion

Good alignment of development objectives and foreign policy objectives

During the entire evaluation period Norway has focused on the important links between political, security and development objectives in its policy towards Afghanistan. Norway has closely followed the international trends as set out in international conferences. From that perspective, Norway's development strategy has been remarkably consistent over time.

In line with allied policy it adopted the aim of the Bonn Process in 2001 to support the development of the Afghan state and continues to support statebuilding ten years later. Strong adherence to the principles of alignment and harmonisation and a longstanding policy to support multi donor trust funds meant that Norway was one of the first contributors to the ARTF and LOTFA.

⁵⁷ See A. Suhrke, K. B. Harpviken and A. Strand, *Peace-building strategies for Afghanistan. Prepared for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. January 14, 2002. Bergen, CMI., p. 50.

⁵⁸ A. Suhrke, 'The limits to statebuilding', the International Studies Association annual meeting, San Diego, March 21-24, 2006.

⁵⁹ Astri Suhrke, Kristan Harpviken, Arne Strand (2004), *Conflictual Peacebuilding: Afghanistan Two Years after Bonn*, International Peace Research Institute Oslo and Christian Michelsen Institute Bergen

⁶⁰ Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder (2012), *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between aid and Security in Afghanistan*, Feinstein International Center.

Norway has also succeeded in integrating humanitarian policy in its overall program as well as in Faryab province. Civil military relations have been highly contentious across Afghanistan, but Norway has managed to navigate a position which reflects at first sight its policy to clearly separate military and humanitarian/development strategy, which on the humanitarian side is in line with international guidelines that regard military contributions as a last resort when civilian resources are not available.

....and good alignment with Afghan priorities

Norway's priorities were also aligned with emerging Afghan Development Policy and, when the Afghan National Development Strategy came into being in 2008, priorities were already in alignment with the three pillars. It is certainly the case that Afghan priorities reflected those of the international community rather than being home-grown so, to some extent, Norway's alignment could be viewed as tautological.

....based on a relatively good understanding of the Afghan context

Norway's context analysis is good in terms of feeding the overall policy debate and taking major decisions on global objectives, addressing the links between political, development and security issues and in developing a vision and outlining the principles for support. However, there is no evidence that context analysis has served the choice of channels, partners and interventions.

....but it is weak on the operational side and lacks risk mitigation

It is remarkable that no specific objectives have been set for the development interventions in Afghanistan. Sector priorities have been defined in 2004 and have not been changed since that time, but it is not entirely clear how these choices have been made. Also the choice of aid channels is not clear with the exception of the support to ARTF which can be explained through Norway's explicit intention to align development interventions as much as possible.

Furthermore, although some risks have been defined no clear risk mitigation strategies have been developed.

...whilst retrospectively questions can be raised on the underlying theory of change and the capacity to implement

Limited administrative capacity is one very clear reason why policies are weak on the operational side. This has been reported also by the OAG in several reports. There is also evidence, including more credible findings from the OAG, that follow-up on identified risks is not always satisfactory. Reasons are not clear but pressure to disburse large amounts of funds is a contributor, given the limited staff and effects of the security situation on working conditions.

Furthermore, over time serious questions can be raised on the number of priorities –various sectors, various cross-cutting themes, different channels- especially in relation to the capacity to manage such a broad portfolio in a very complex environment. This becomes clear when looking at the issue of women's rights and gender equality as a cross-cutting priority that is indeed an integral part of Norwegian foreign, development and humanitarian policy. However, in practice there is limited capacity to really put this issue consequently on the international, national, local and partner's agenda's despite innovative division of labour.

The assumption that through massive support to development projects the causes of insecurity and conflict can be addressed has become questionable. Of course, this does not only apply to Norway, but to a wide variety of donors.

4 Portfolio Analysis

4.1 Introduction

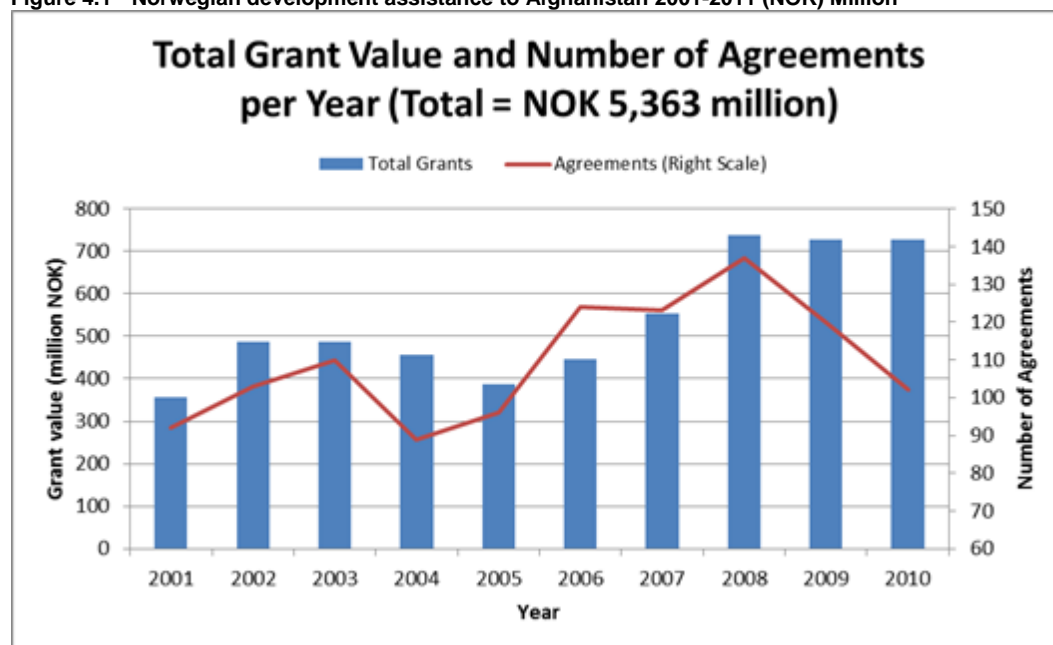
This section provides an overview of the portfolio of assistance to Afghanistan. Following from the preceding policy analysis it seeks to answer the following evaluation questions related to the criteria of relevance and efficiency:

- How did policy and context analysis affect the choice of channels, partners and interventions over time?
- Were the activities of the portfolio consistent with the overall goals?
- What has been the break-up of the portfolio between actors, channels and sectors?

Figure 4.1 depicts 10 years of development cooperation assistance between Norway and Afghanistan. The source is the Norwegian government's management information system (PTA). The total volume of aid over this ten-year period is NOK 5.363 billion. During the first 6 years, annual aid hovered between NOK 350 and 500 million. From 2008 onward, the volume of annual aid increased substantially to more than NOK 700 million annually. The ambition level since 2008 is to reach an aid volume of 750 million annually⁶¹.

The number of agreements with implementing partners varies considerably per year: from a minimum of 90 agreements per year in 2004 to almost 140 agreements per year in 2008. The average annual grant value varies from NOK 2.5 to 4 million. In order to calculate a meaningful average size of the grant, we have excluded the ARTF contributions from this calculation. In the last three years (2008-2010) there is a definite trend to scale back the number of agreements with the concomitant result of increasing the average grant value to over NOK 4 million.

Figure 4.1 Norwegian development assistance to Afghanistan 2001-2011 (NOK) Million



Source: PTA.

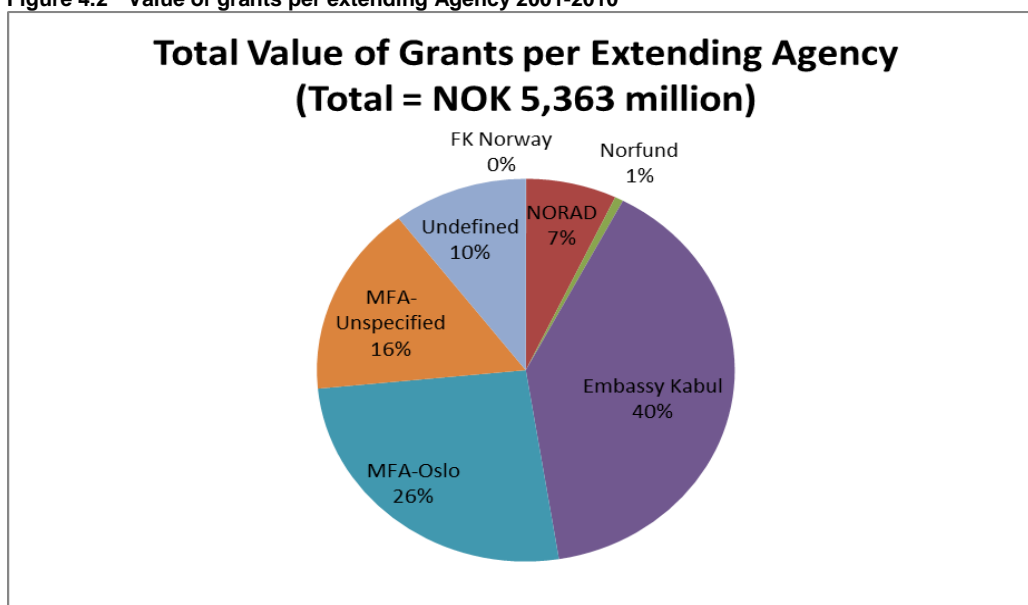
⁶¹ Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation 2009-2011, The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul.

4.2 Role of Norwegian Actors

The development portfolio has been managed by a range of actors and has been allocated through a large number of agreements. The relevant national budget chapters include under MFA's administration (140), Norad (141), FK Norway (144), Regional Aid to Asia (151), Civil society and democracy (160), GAP (162), emergency assistance, humanitarian aid and human rights (163), peace, reconciliation and democracy (164), and women and gender equality (168). Humanitarian funding, as well as peace and reconciliation, civil society, UN/ multilateral, gender and human rights are more flexible.

Total aid to Afghanistan has been disbursed through a variety of extending agencies. Figure 4.2 shows that the MFA with its combined portfolio of 42% (MFA Oslo + MFA Unspecified) is the most prominent. Second comes the Embassy in Kabul that is responsible for 40% of all aid delivered to Afghanistan in the past decade. Norad, NORFUND and FK Norway are smaller partners in extending aid to Afghanistan. About 10% of the aid is coming from undefined government sources.

Figure 4.2 Value of grants per extending Agency 2001-2010

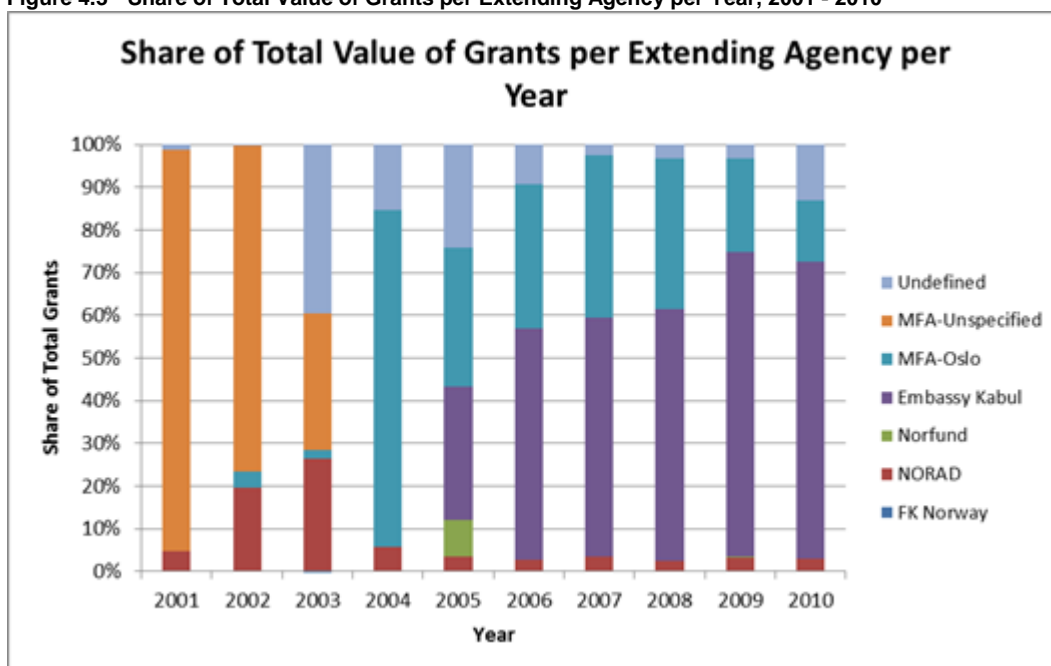


Source: PTA.

Figure 4. 3 on the page overleaf shows how the proportional distribution of aid has shifted during the past decade. During 2001/02, before transitional and long term funding was introduced, the MFA section on Humanitarian Affairs managed the majority of aid to Afghanistan. A smaller proportion was managed by NORAD, but NORAD's more extensive managerial role ended in 2004 after the introduction of administrative reforms⁶². NORAD then became an adviser to the MFA but remained involved with the provision of grant funding to NGOs through its Civil Society Department. From 2004 onwards, the MFA section for South Asia managed long term development funding. In 2005 responsibilities were gradually delegated to the Embassy in Kabul in line with a global policy of decentralisation. In the last three years the Embassy has managed 2/3 of the budget, and it has now become responsible for 40% of all aid delivered to Afghanistan in the past decade, which creates a heavy management burden. The MFA sections for peace and reconciliation, the UN section and the Section for Global Initiatives and Gender Equality continue to manage smaller agreements.

⁶² St.prp. nr. 1, tillegg nr. 7, Om modernisering, forenkling og effektivisering av bistandsforvaltningen, (2003-2004).

Figure 4.3 Share of Total Value of Grants per Extending Agency per Year, 2001 - 2010



Source: PTA.

Other Ministries

The National Police Directorate under the Ministry of Justice has managed ODA funds for government to government twinning projects to support Afghan police and prisons since 2003, with funding disbursed through MFA. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development channelled funding for Afghan refugees in Norway in 2001-2005. The latter appears to be included in the 10% shown as 'undefined' government sources in figure 3.2. Smaller independent actors include the government owned investment fund Norfund and FK Norway (Fredskorpset).

Management and Organisation

Sector support is managed primarily by the small team in the Embassy in Kabul within the context of annual plans. The choice of channels aims to reduce the burden. For ARTF and the multilateral channel, harmonisation with other donors and the use of common design, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes are meant to increase effectiveness. Norway is active in general donor coordination in ARTF and in the steering/guidance committee arrangements of specific projects and programs implemented by the UN agencies. Personnel have also participated in several joint review missions including ARTF.

With the posting of a Counsellor with education experience the Embassy is currently well placed to participate in the technical aspects of EQUIP. Otherwise Norway faces the same challenges of other donors that do not have specialist advisers, which reduces the effectiveness of the donor role overall, especially in the large programs. Norway places strong emphasis on collaboration with other donors (especially Nordic countries, EU, UK, and Germany), using both formal and informal means to maintain an overview. Given frequent absence from post and high turnover among all donors the informal mechanism has been an important factor in efficiency. Harmonisation has been used to good effect in decisions relating to corruption at Kabul Bank, discontinuation of funding of ASGP and access to polling stations for women, examples which are discussed below.

The team were unable to assess which aspects of the portfolio require the most management although, if each agreement requires a similar amount of basic administration to meet the rules and regulations, control payments and follow up on results reporting, the NGO portfolio must demand

excessive time. The international NGOs (DACAAR, ACTED, AKF) are managed solely by the Embassy whereas the Norwegian NGOs (NCA, NAC) also have projects funded by MFA Civil Society section and, for NRC, by the humanitarian section. In addition to frequent meetings with NGOs for the purpose of information sharing, the Embassy conducts substantive annual reviews with each NGO.

Whatever the reason, there is an opportunity cost in terms of quality of relationship with key partners. Interviews with staff indicate that they prioritised all formal meetings with the Government, multilateral partners and the NGOs as well as reporting back to Oslo. But even these were compromised by the amount of time needed to deal with visiting delegations which were almost every week. Things which did not get done included commissioning reviews and evaluations and following up on reviews and evaluations received as part of wider partnerships.

In line with the findings and conclusions on the Norwegian actors presented in chapter 3 it is clear that the management of such a complex portfolio in a very complex context has received very limited attention. This has created risks for portfolio management.

4.3 Partners, Channels and Priorities

4.3.1 Partners

Multilateral Partners – the World Bank and UN agencies

- **World Bank** is the administrator of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). It received 29% of overall Norwegian funding;
- **UNDP** is the main partner of the UN agencies and has received 10.5% of total funds over all years to 2010, peaking at 20.8% in 2009;
- **UNHCR** is discussed below as a humanitarian partner;
- **UNICEF** is both a humanitarian and development partner but much smaller, accounting for 3.2% of funds overall;
- **Other UN agencies** The World Food Program (WFP), UNIFEM/UN Women, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are also recipients of funds in Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Partners

- **UNHCR** is the main multilateral humanitarian partner, accounting for 15% of total funds in 2001 and 4.6% across all years with peaks at times of major refugee return;
- **The Norwegian Red Cross** is an agreement partner and via this agreement the International Red Cross (ICRC) also receives money. This is Norway's main humanitarian partner and accounting for around 85% of total funds disbursed from the MFA Humanitarian section. The Norwegian Red Cross received a total amount over the evaluation period of 336,6 million NOK which is 6.7% of the total aid;
- **Norwegian NGOs** The three main NGOs operational in Afghanistan are Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC), all of which receive humanitarian funding as well as development funding. All were established partners in the 1980s and 90s in Pakistan when all funding was humanitarian. NCA, which works through local partners, received 11% of total funds in 2001, which were humanitarian, and thereafter 8.5% combined humanitarian and development. Only NRC identifies itself as a purely humanitarian agency. It has received 4.7% of all funding across all years, peaking at 11% in 2007. NAC is a smaller player and identifies itself as a development NGO.

NGO Partners

Norwegian NGOs As mentioned under humanitarian partners, the three Norwegian NGOs are also key development partners. **NAC**, having started as a solidarity agency with the *mujahideen* during the Soviet occupation, now identifies as a development agency which also addresses humanitarian needs in its areas of operation. **NRC** receives development funding although with some reluctance on the grounds that development funding is for political objectives and contra to its non-political humanitarian identity. **NCA** identifies as an agency involved in long term development, emergency preparedness and response, and advocacy. Another large Norwegian NGO that received substantial development funding is **Save the Children Norway** (which it passes on to SC Sweden).

International NGOs To support its work in Faryab, Norway has worked through two other international NGOs since 2008. **DACAAR** (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees), like NAC, started as a solidarity organisation and, whilst defining itself as a humanitarian organisation, works in long term development and receives only development funds from Norway. **ACTED** (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) is a French NGO, founded in Kabul in 1993 and identifying as a humanitarian relief organisation. Norway also supports other NGOs such as the **Agha Khan Development Network** (AKDN) and several small NGOs which are not included in the evaluation.

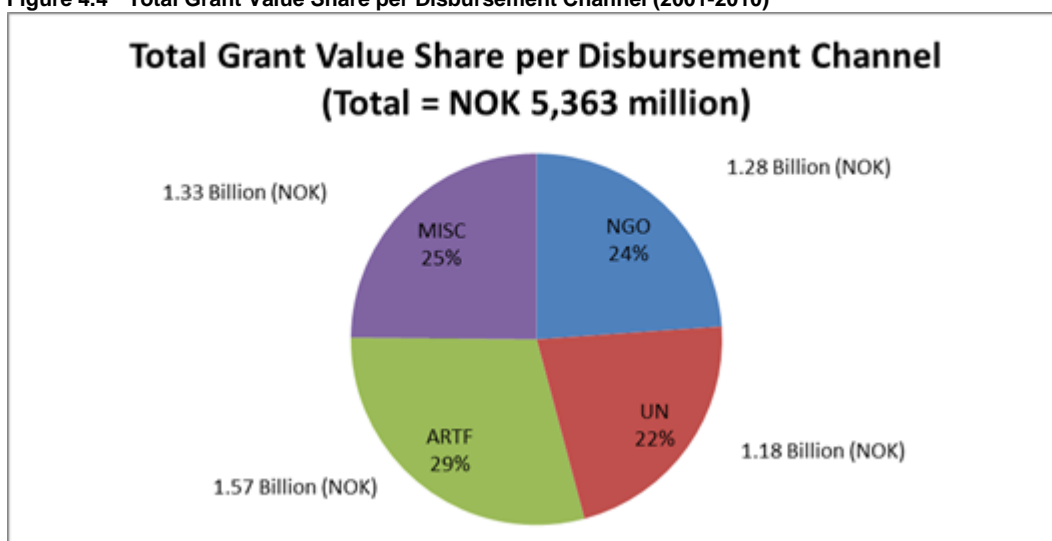
Norway did not formulate a specific and detailed strategy regarding partners for its activities in Afghanistan. This broad scope of partners fits well in the overall policy priorities and the focus on adequate links between political, security and development objectives. Also the fact that humanitarian and development assistance is provided often through the same NGOs fits into this pattern.

4.3.2 Channels

Three channels are used by Norway and their overall use is depicted in Figure 4.4:

- **ARTF** administered by the World Bank;
- **Multilateral** - UN agencies;
- **Bilateral** – NGOs and other government departments.

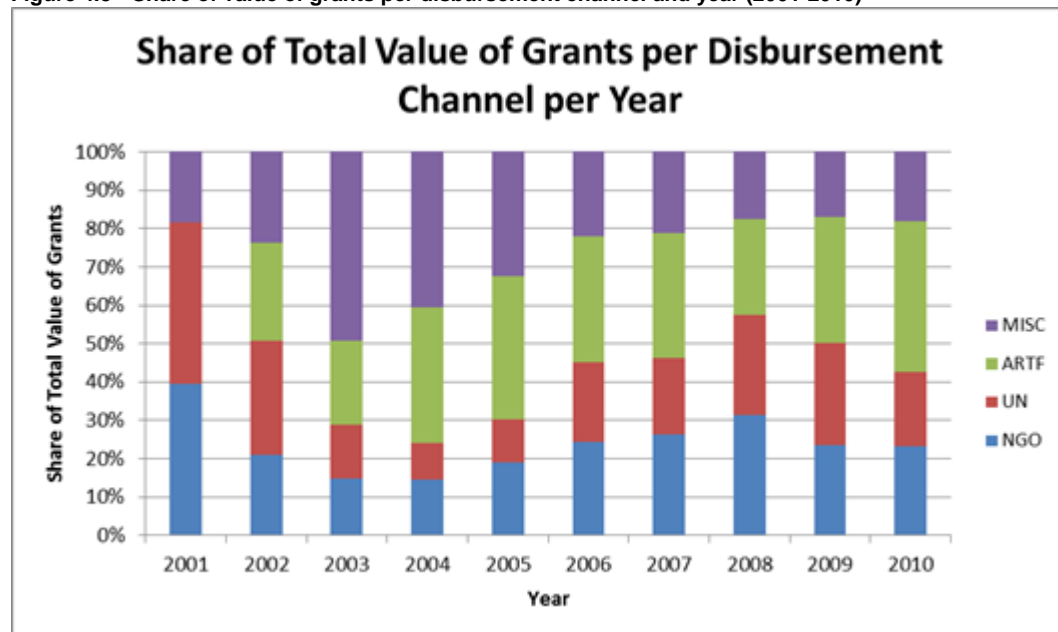
Figure 4.4 Total Grant Value Share per Disbursement Channel (2001-2010)



Source: PTA.

Changes in the use of channels by year are shown in figure 4.5. Miscellaneous partners include national organisations, research organisations, consultants as well as smaller NGO partners.

Figure 4.5 Share of value of grants per disbursement channel and year (2001-2010)



Source: PTA.

Data for 2001 reflect allocations before and during the fall of Taliban, when all programming was humanitarian and delivered by NGOs and the UN agencies. 2002/03 were transitional years, reflected in the miscellaneous category but thereafter allocations through the three channels have been fairly consistent. The share through the ARTF channel increased from 24% in 2001-2005 to 34% in 2006-2010. The increase in 2010 to 40% through ARTF reflects the intention to channel at least 60% of development funds through joint donor mechanisms.⁶³ Embassy calculations against commitments to 'align' 80% of support to the Afghan Government (ARTF + LOTFA + NABDP) show that Norway has achieved 73% in 2010.⁶⁴ The tendency of increased priority for funding through ARTF comes in addition to an increase in the overall volume.

Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)

The ARTF is central to Norway's past and current strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan, connecting with all focus areas of Norwegian development cooperation and supporting the building of a public administration to deliver services to citizens.⁶⁵ Norway was an early contributor to the running budget from 2002, and, when GAP funds directed to Afghanistan were first used in 2003, most of these were channelled through the ARTF. Norway has paid in contributions of \$289.3m, which is 29% of Norwegian aid and 6% of the total funding to ARTF which places it in the top ten donors that account for 92% of the funding. ARTF is discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

⁶³ Norway's *Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation, 2009-2011*, and commitments of London/Kabul Conferences 2010.

⁶⁴ Includes UNDP-administered Law and Order Trust Fund for security service salaries and the National Area based Development Program which is a National Priority Program like NSP and EQUIP but UNDP rather than ARTF-supported.

⁶⁵ 'Norsk sivil innsats i Afghanistan – Status og muligheter.' Attachment to 'Gjennomgang av den norske innsatsen i Afghanistan', Oslo, MFA, January 26, 2010. MFA#09-08877-1.

UN administered Programs

The share allocated through the UN institutions over the decade was 22% with the majority going to UNDP. The priority has been maintained at a stable level, and increases in funding reflect the overall expansion of the aid programme. Funding for one UNDP program – the Afghanistan Subnational Governance Program (ASGP) was discontinued (discussed in the Governance section).

Bilateral support through NGOs

Some 24% of funds were channelled through five large Norwegian NGOs (Save the Children Norway, Norwegian Red Cross, NRC, NCA, and NAC). Norway considers the NGO channel important to improve effectiveness and to maintain domestic expertise and interest. It can be used flexibly and to scale up assistance quickly. NGOs have been important as channels of aid to Faryab Province since 2007 (see chapter 7), and this has been the main and most visible channel to Faryab Province since the decision to cease earmarking in the ARTF.

4.4 Priorities

The annual budget decisions of the Storting define overall priorities to be implemented by the Norwegian government. There have broadly been three phases of support which have affected priorities:

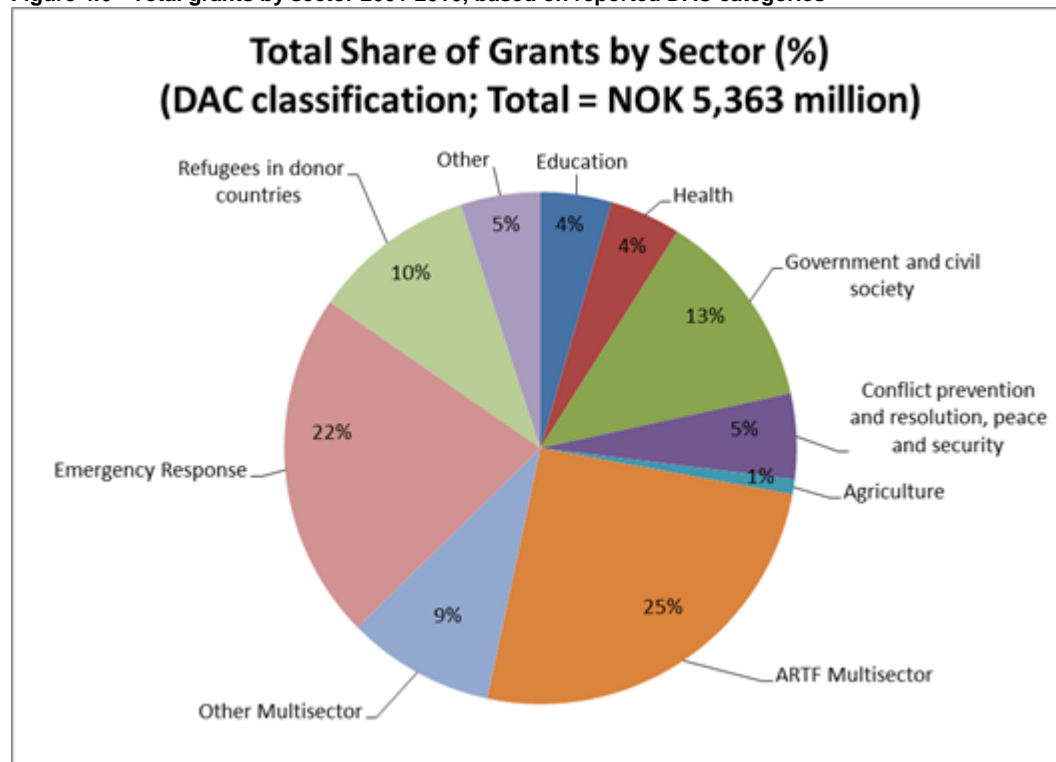
- **Early humanitarian phase** from 2001 which continued funding through the NGOs and the UNDP PEACE program which had been active during the Taliban era. This phase continued into 2003 when all agencies were developing new programs and projects;
- **Transitional phase** in 2003 introduced GAP as a new budget line to close the gap between humanitarian relief assistance and long-term development aid. 86% of GAP funding directed to Afghanistan was initially channelled through the ARTF, with preference for priorities of 'public administration', education and 'sector for livelihood and social protection';
- **Development phase.** When long term development funding through the "regional" budget allocation started in 2004, the detailed annual budgets for long term development⁶⁶ confirmed the three priorities as:
 - *Governance* - in some instances described as state-building and public administration;
 - *Community development* - variously described as rural development, social and economic development, poverty reduction and livelihoods;
 - *Education* - with an emphasis on girls.

Gender and good governance are cross cutting issues with the gender priority strengthened from 2006. Global priorities on oil for development and pure energy are reflected in later years. Throughout the phases, humanitarian aid and peace and reconciliation remain important priorities supported by separate budget decisions. The formalisation of long term development cooperation from 2004, stepping up aid from 2006, and the commitment to an aid level of NOK 750m for 2008-2012 are important decisions reflected in the portfolio. Figure 4.6 on the page overleaf shows the total grants according to reported OECD DAC sector. Almost one-third of the total grants are classified as category 430 multisector. Three-fourth of this is going to the ARTF, which indeed should be considered as multisector aid. However, a number of grant agreements with ARTF have been earmarked to the EQUIP programme, and these have been categorised under the education sub-sector. Only 4 % of total grant agreements have been classified as education, with education being a top priority for the Norwegian government, while a similar %age received the classification

⁶⁶ 'Overgangsbiand til Afghanistan', Letter from NORAD to MFA May 26, 2003 (NORAD Archive). 'Virksomhetsplan' (annual plan and report), MFA Kabul Embassy for the period 2002-2012 (NORAD and MFA archives).

health. The category 'other multisector' includes funding other than through ARTF and are primarily allocations to NGOs for activities classified as rural development.

Figure 4.6 Total grants by sector 2001-2010, based on reported DAC categories

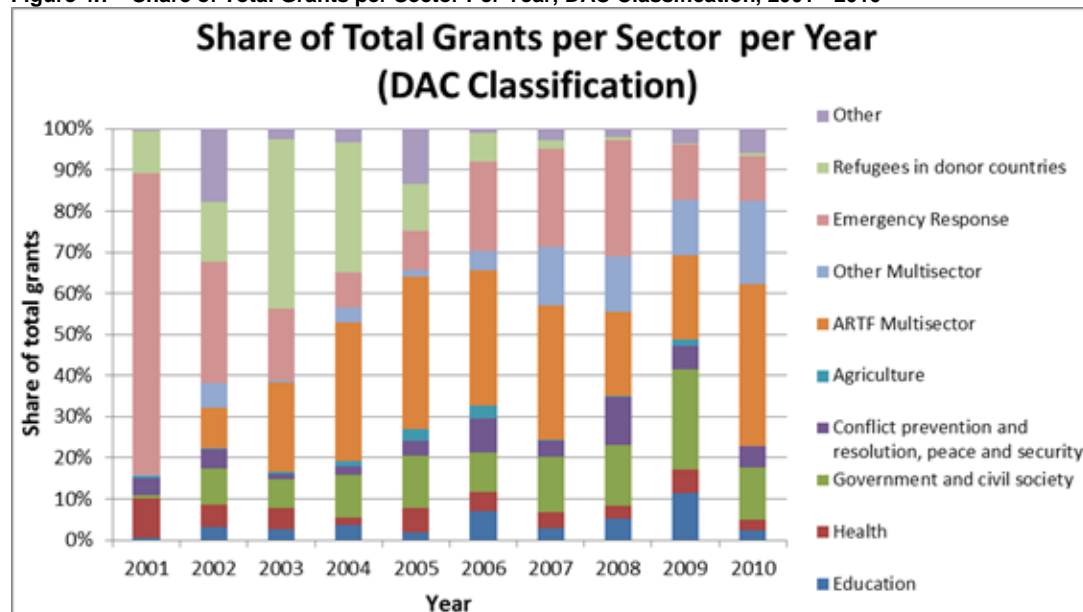


Source: PTA.

Allocations by Priority

The annual allocations for 2001-2010 by reported target area are shown in figure 4.7.⁶⁷

Figure 4.7 Share of Total Grants per Sector Per Year, DAC Classification, 2001 - 2010



Source: PTA.

⁶⁷ Priority areas classified by the source (PTA/NORAD Statistics 2001-2010).

Analysing priorities is complicated as indicated, because ARTF is such a dominant channel and largely classified as multi-sector. Based on an inclusive definition of community development, the figures analysed in Figure 4.6 show 57% of funding in alignment with the three priorities for 2001-2010.⁶⁸ Refugees in Norway accounted for 10% of the aid, and humanitarian emergency response for 22% (Figure 4.6). Overall, taking into account a portfolio of this size and complexity, this can be considered a strong alignment of activities with priorities.

4.5 Conclusions

Norway's choice of channels is consistent with policy intentions, especially in relation to commitment to the ARTF, which is a multi-donor mechanism. The choice of partners reflects policy intention and established partnerships, especially with UNDP and the Norwegian NGOs. This has not changed significantly over time. The overall policy, which is not elaborated into detailed strategies, fits the choice for a wide variety of partners, use of all main aid channels and a varied pattern of sectors. Apart from increased funding to ARTF there is remarkably little change over the past decade. Whether this is a good indicator for relevance is a question that cannot be answered on the basis of the available information. Norwegian scholarship, for example, criticises Norway for pursuing 'more of the same' even when there is evidence that it is not working.⁶⁹

The activities of the aid portfolio are relatively well aligned with the broad priorities, and thus consistent with the overall goals. They are coordinated with wider foreign policy objectives and a strategy emphasising statebuilding as a route to stability. Norway has emphasised three development priorities on good governance, education and rural/socioeconomic development consistently since 2002 and more than half of the funding has been allocated to these priorities. The increased emphasis on coordination through MDTFs, and the move away from preferencing are also reflected in the portfolio. This may make it more difficult to maintain specific priorities as well as to show visible specific outputs and outcomes that can be attributed to Norwegian aid. The policy to continue with humanitarian assistance is also clearly reflected in the portfolio.

However, the portfolio has not been, and could not have been, administered in the most efficient way because there have been too few staff for a portfolio of that size and value. This situation has been reported annually since 2006 and has been ameliorated slightly with a decrease in the number of agreements to administer. The fundamental problem, however, is that no more personnel can be deployed to Kabul because of space limitations and security restrictions on diplomats. This problem is compounded by the fact that the stresses of the job require frequent R&R absences so staff numbers are even lower than they appear.

⁶⁸ This is verified through analysis of a dataset received from the NORAD Evaluation Department for 2001-2009 with priority sectors coded by Ecorys team, showing a 55% alignment with the three priorities, when 27% through ARTF are included.

⁶⁹ Astri Suhrke.

5 Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund

5.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), which is central to Norway's policy of development cooperation with Afghanistan. In chapter 4, the portfolio analysis we saw that 29% of the total Norwegian development assistance during the evaluation period was spent through ARTF. The assessment of relevance, which started in chapter 3 on policy analysis is deepened in this chapter. The main focus of this chapter is on the effectiveness questions including issues of coordination and coherence, but also of course of goal delivery.

After a brief introduction of what the ARTF is about, the analysis focuses on the extent and manner in which Norway has played its donor role in the mechanism to coordinate this important multilateral effort. It then continues on some selected interventions in key sectors of Norwegian assistance i.e. education and community development. Norway has provided preferred funding to important programmes in these sectors.

5.2 Overview of ARTF

At the request of the interim Afghan government and international donors, the ARTF was formally established in March 2002 as a multi-donor mechanism to support the Afghan government following the fall of the Taliban regime. ARTF's four main objectives, that were set in 2002 and have not changed since then, are to:

- position the Afghan government budget as the key vehicle to align international reconstruction assistance with Afghan development objectives;
- promote transparency and accountability of reconstruction assistance;
- reduce the burden on an Afghan government with limited capacity while simultaneously promoting Afghan capacity building over time; and
- enhance donor coordination.

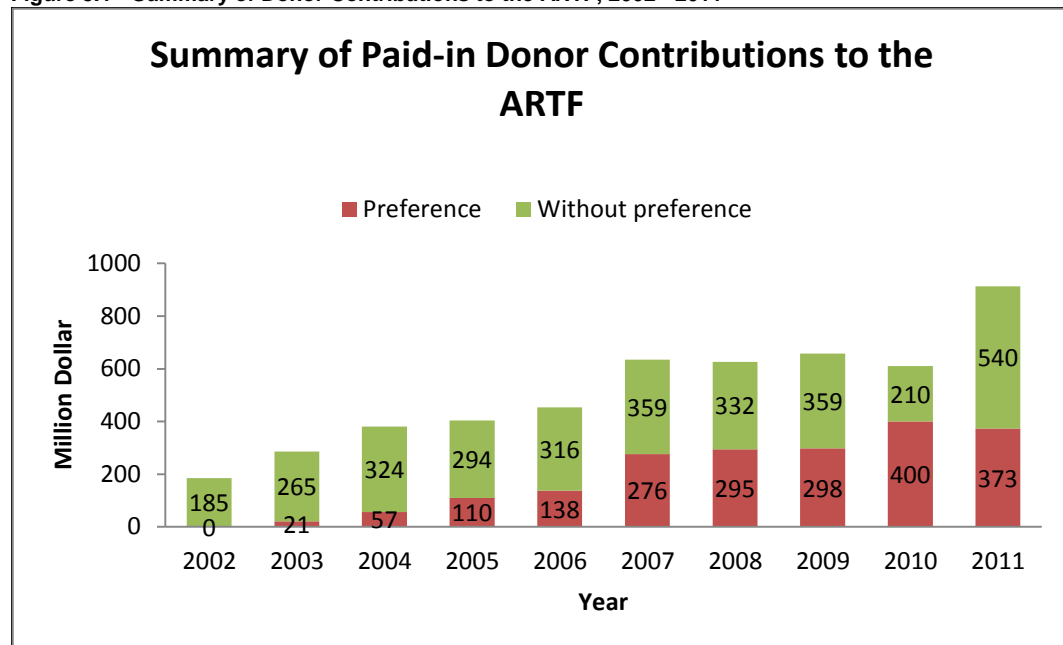
The World Bank was appointed as the administrator of the ARTF. With an initial closing date of June 30, 2006, the fund was originally intended to serve as the major, short-term source of direct assistance for financing Afghanistan's non-security related operating budget until the Afghan government could raise revenues to cover its own operating costs. However, since its inception ARTF has also been used to finance development projects aligned with national reconstruction priorities. As a result, donors have agreed to extend the operation of the ARTF, first to June 30, 2010, and later to June 30, 2020.

Since early 2002, 32 donors have contributed approximately \$5.15 billion to ARTF. Of these donors, around 15 contribute regularly to the fund and Norway belongs to the Top 10 ARTF donors.

Donor contributions have increased year on year between 2002 and 2011, as shown in Figure 4.1. Donor contributions are apportioned over two Windows: the Recurrent Cost Window and the Investment Window. The Investment Window provides grant financing for national development programs in the development budget. The Recurrent Cost Window pays for civil service salaries and operation and maintenance expenditures.

Donors have the possibility to indicate a preference to their contribution. Over the last few years, the preferenced portion of donor contribution has been the main factor driving growth. A preference is not an earmark, but a formal recognition by the Administrator of the donor's preference to allocate a certain portion of a contribution to a certain project. The agreed ARTF rules are that donors may not 'preference' more than half of their annual contribution. This rule is to ensure that ARTF has sufficient funding to finance the priority Recurrent Cost Window.

Figure 5.1 Summary of Donor Contributions to the ARTF, 2002 - 2011



Source: ARTF, Administrator's Report on Financial Status, January 20, 2012.

It is clear from the table that donor contributions to ARTF have continued to increase between 2002 – 2011. While there existed a tendency among donors to increase the preferenced portion of their paid-in contributions, this trend has been reversed in 2011. This was a clear result of the new ARTF Financing Strategy Process agreed at the London Conference in January 2012. Overall, almost two-thirds of all donor contributions to the ARTF in the past decade was without a preference.

5.3 Norwegian Contribution to ARTF

Since its inception in 2002 Norway has been a staunch supporter of the ARTF as a mechanism for providing coordinated funding for reconstruction activities in line with agreed priorities of the Government while promoting transparency and accountability. Norway has expressed its intention to channel at least 60 % of development funds for Afghanistan through joint donor mechanisms, while considering future opportunities for providing direct budget support⁷⁰. The ARTF supports Norway's efforts to meet these objectives by funding development projects in key sectors that are aligned with the National Priority Programs (NPP) of the Afghan government. The first Norwegian contributions were paid in during 2003. Table 5.1 provides the overview indicating that during the past decade Norway preferenced about only one fourth of its contribution to the ARTF with the large majority being unpreferenced aid.

⁷⁰ Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation, 2009-2011, The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul.

Table 5.1 Norwegian Contribution to the ARTF from March 2002 to March 2012, as of January 20, 2012

Type of Funding	Contributions, paid-in, in US \$										Total	Proportion
	March 2002- March 2003	March 2003- March 2004	March 2004- March 2005	March 2005- March 2006	March 2006- March 2007	March 2007- March 2008	March 2008- March 2009	March 2009- March 2010	March 2010- March 2011	March 2011- March 2012		
Unpreferenced	6,82	29,63	1,46	14,01	4,20	15,12	22,31	18,98	47,80	48,57	218,90	76%
Preferred			8,45	8,53	9,02	15,86	9,16	19,38	-	-	70,40	24%
- Civil Service capacity building			2,92	3,10							6,02	9%
- Education – EQUIP			4,61			5,13		8,45			18,19	26%
- Justice Sector Reform project							2,10	2,32			4,42	6%
- National Solidarity Program				3,10	9,02	10,73	4,26	4,74			31,85	45%
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation			0,92	2,33							3,25	5%
- Skills Development (NIMA)							2,80	3,87			6,67	9%
Total ARTF Contribution	6,82	29,63	9,91	22,54	23,22	30,98	31,47	38,36	47,80	48,57	289,30	

Source: ARTF, Administrator's Report on Financial Status January 20, 2012.

through the ARTF mechanism than the majority of donors. Of the preferred allocations, about half went to the National Solidarity Program (NSP) and another quarter to the national education program, EQUIP. Smaller allocations were earmarked for civil service capacity building, justice sector reform, rural water supply and sanitation and skills development through strengthening the National Institute of Management and Administration. Norway's choice for funding these programmes is clearly linked to the overall policy objectives, already stated in 2004, for Afghanistan. The priority areas for Norway are⁷¹:

- Governance: reconstruction of public administration;
- Social and economic development: integrated rural development in areas with high number of refugees;
- Education: basic education with an emphasis on the education of girls.

5.4 ARTF Governance

ARTF has a three-tier governance structure. The Steering Committee, which consists of all ARTF donors, the World Bank, and the Afghan Ministry of Finance (MoF), is the main decision-making body for the fund. It meets quarterly to set ARTF policy and financing strategy, provide guidance to the Management Committee on fund allocation strategies, and review progress on activities.

The Management Committee consists of representatives from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, United Nations Development Program, and the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance only became a full member of the Management Committee in 2011; before that it had observer status. Since then, in close partnership with the World Bank, the MoF also co-chairs most of the ARTF meetings. The Management Committee meets monthly and is responsible for reviewing and approving funding allocations in line with the ARTF financing strategy, and reporting to donors on operations and activities financed by ARTF, as well as on decisions made by the committee.

Last but not least, the World Bank is appointed trustee and administrator of the ARTF and is responsible for day-to-day fiduciary oversight and management of the fund, and for the supervision of development projects. Like other ARTF donors, Norway relies on the World Bank, as the fund's administrator, to oversee the use of funds.

The ARTF was externally reviewed by an independent evaluation team during 2005 and 2008 and was independently audited by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction in 2011 with a specific focus on monitoring and accounting for donor funds contributed to the ARTF⁷². The reviews were generally very positive about the ARTF as a multi-donor initiative to channel donor resources in support of Afghanistan's reconstruction effort in line with government plans and strategies. They provide specific recommendations to strengthen the governance and management structure of the ARTF as well as enhancing specific monitoring and evaluation arrangements. The Administrator, working closely with Government and donor partners, has put into practice some of the evaluation's key recommendations. The core objective of these refinements has been to position ARTF more strategically in the Afghan development context and to further engage the Ministry of Finance and the donors in the strategic management of the ARTF.

⁷¹ St.Prp. 1(s). Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003-2004.

⁷² Scanteam (2005). Assessment of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Final Report, Scanteam (2008). Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund: External Evaluation. August 2008 and SIGAR (2011) Audit 11-14. The World Bank and the Afghan Government Have Established Mechanisms to Monitor and Account for Funds Contributed to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, but Some Limitations and Challenges Should Be Addressed. July 22, 2011.

ARTF has been criticised at various occasions for its lack of gender strategy and appropriate reporting. Already in 2007 in the evaluation of the Strategy of for women's rights and gender equality the lack of gender strategy in ARTF was criticised. In 2010 Norway was one of the active donors behind the joint statement to the World Bank expressing concern related to their work on gender equality in ARTF in particular.

5.5 ARTF Financing Strategy

The first governance innovation, following the 2008 ARTF evaluation, was to develop a three year Framework and Strategy for the ARTF, to be agreed between all ARTF donors and the Government. Before 2008, donors generally made annual pledges which were paid in during the Afghan Financial Year (March 21 – March 20). This did not provide for predictable multi-year funding.

The Financing Strategy puts the ARTF on a more strategic path based on donors' collective estimate of available funds over a three year period. It then sets out the broad allocation of ARTF funds to both the recurrent cost window and the investment window, and organizes financing into five priority clusters: Agriculture, Rural Development, Infrastructure, Human Development and Governance/Capacity Building, all based on Government priorities spelled out in the ANDS.

It is important to stress that the MoF participates in preparation and approval process of the ARTF Financing Strategy, which gives to it opportunity to influence the ARTF prioritization. This approach and three year framework was endorsed by the Steering Committee meeting held in London in January 2010 and has been under implementation through allocations made by the Management Committee since March 2010.

In order for the Steering Committee to have a greater role in the ARTF's strategic direction and in ensuring that the Strategy is implemented in accordance with the realities on the ground, a Strategy Working Group has been created to help advice the Steering Committee. The Strategy Group is composed of: (i) key donors with permanent representation in Kabul, (ii) the Ministry of Finance and (iii) the Administrator, acting as secretariat and facilitator. Norway is an active member of the Strategy Group and has lived up to its promise to provide more predictable multi-year funding.

In November 2010 the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul agreed on a 3-year framework agreement with the ARTF Administrator and pledged contributions of NOK 900 million as core support to the ARTF to be paid in during 2010-2013. Norway also discontinued with preferencing a portion of their ARTF contribution, as did the UK government. The 2010 agreement makes Norway the only donor that has entered into a longer-term agreement to provide more predictable funding to the ARTF. This was a clear policy objective laid down in the ARTF Financing Strategy and agreed between the ARTF donors and the Government of Afghanistan at the 2010 London conference.

While the first tranche of NOK 285 million was paid-in in December 2010, the release of the second tranche of NOK 285 million (\$48 million), scheduled to be paid in June 2011, was delayed on account of the Kabulbank crisis⁷³, and additional safeguard measures to be agreed between the IMF and the Government of Afghanistan.

⁷³ The Kabulbank crisis materialised in the fall of 2010, when the government seized control of the bank because its assets were being looted by top individuals linked to the Karzai government. As a result many donors stopped authorizing payments into the ARTF after the International Monetary Fund closed its program because of the scandal.

Norway was not alone in withholding contributions. ARTF donors have taken concerted action and have linked continuation of ARTF contributions with the reaching of an agreement for a new IMF program to support the country's economic reform programme. For 2011, this has led to uncertainty around funding levels. New pledges were made dependent on IMF and the Afghanistan authorities reaching a new agreement for an Extended Credit Facility Arrangement in order for donors to feel comfortable with the steps taken to strengthen and develop Afghan's financial sector. A new IMF arrangement, worth US\$133.6 million and covering the period 2012-2014, was approved in November 2011. As a consequence, donor pledges to the ARTF for the Afghan Financial Year 2011-12 went ahead again and amounted to US\$912.99 million, of which 96 % was paid-in as of January 20, 2012.⁷⁴

5.6 The Recurrent Cost Window

The Recurrent Cost Window finances the Afghan government's non-security related operating budget, which largely consists of payroll costs for Afghan civil servants, as well as some operations and maintenance expenditures. It funds these costs on a reimbursable basis up to a pre-determined funding cap. For the Afghan government to receive reimbursement for its operating expenditures, the expenditures must meet eligibility criteria defined in the ARTF grant agreement between the World Bank and the Afghan government. As of April 20, 2011, the Recurrent Cost Window had disbursed a total of about \$2.22 billion (52% of ARTF funds), of which approximately \$1.7 billion funded Afghanistan's payroll and \$532 million funded operations and maintenance expenditures. While the ARTF mechanism was extended till 2020, it dawned on donors that they could not go on indefinitely paying for Afghan civil service salaries and that a program was needed to gradually decrease baseline funding for Afghanistan's operating budget. In December 2008, the World Bank, the Afghan government, and ARTF donors agreed to the establishment of the Incentive Program within the Recurrent Cost Window. This was the second governance innovation that appeared after the 2008 evaluation.

Incentive Program

The Incentive Program provides the Afghan government with funding if it meets pre-defined benchmarks in such areas as revenue generation, public sector governance, and private sector development. The objective of the Incentive Program is to support Afghan government-led reforms and the government's progress toward achieving fiscal sustainability. With the implementation of the program, baseline funding for Afghanistan's operating budget provided through the Recurrent Cost Window began to decrease by \$25 million per year beginning in March 2009 (see table 5.2). At this rate, the Recurrent Cost Window will ultimately reach zero in 2019.

Table 5.2 ARTF Incentive Programme

ARTF Baseline and Incentive Program Recurrent Cost funding					
	Program Year (US \$ Million)				
	March 2008- March 2009	March 2009- March 2010	March 2010- March 2011	March 2011- March 2012	March 2012- March 2013
Baseline Recurrent Cost Financing	276	250	225	200	175
Incentive programme	0	40	63,8	70	70
Total Recurrent Cost Window Funding	276	290	288,8	270	245

⁷⁴ ARTF - Administrator's Report on Financial Status, as of January 20, 2012.

The Incentive Program helps to offset this decrease by providing the Afghan government with additional funds for meeting pre-defined benchmarks in such areas as revenue generation, public sector governance, and private sector development. Thus, the program places conditionality on ARTF funding. While the World Bank disburses Incentive Program funds from the Recurrent Cost Window, the Afghan government uses these funds to finance programs under its development budget.

Since 2009, the Incentive Program has become the formal framework agreed with the donors and the Government of Afghanistan for setting annual ceilings for recurrent cost support. The task to agree on the ceilings and the corresponding policy benchmarks has been delegated to the Incentive Program Working Group. The IPWG is also the body responsible for recommending the level of ARTF recurrent cost support every year. Membership of the IPWG has remained the same since donors “self-selected” the membership at inception.

The Incentive Program has been positively received by the World Bank, many ARTF donors, and the Afghan government. Officials noted that the program provides a platform for discussing reforms within the Afghan government. The World Bank and donors are currently examining ways to reform and strengthen the program, including increasing the length of program rounds from one to three years with multi-year, rather than single-year, benchmarks.

Norway does not participate in the IPWG. While it would meet most of the membership criteria (regular contributor, un-preferenced funding, local support base in Kabul), it does not have the technical expertise in public sector governance and financial management so as to be able to participate meaningfully in technical discussions at Kabul level. Nonetheless, Norway is the only country that has agreed on a three-year Framework Agreement with the Administrator.

5.7 The Investment Window

The ARTF Investment Window provides grant funding for development projects that meet the priorities as set by the National Priority Programs (NPPs) defined in the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and development budget. To date, the Investment Window has disbursed a total of about \$1.31 billion (30% of ARTF funds) to fund 34 development projects, 19 of which are on-going. The largest on-going projects are the National Solidarity Program (NSP) III (\$449.50 million), the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) II (\$85.00 million), the National Emergency Rural Access Project (NERAP) III (\$40.00 million), the Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Program (\$36.04 million) and the Kabul-Aybak/Mazar-e-Sharif Power Project (\$35.70 million).

The following sections discuss results from three projects that Norway has preferenced against: NSP, EQUIP and NIMA. We have opted to review these three projects in more detail for two reasons. First, all three projects are clearly linked to Norway’s overall policy objectives to reconstruct the public administration, support education and improve the population’s living conditions. And secondly, two of these projects received the highest funding allocations. At the same time, Norway’s general contribution provides funds to all development projects listed above and therefore contributes to a wider range of results than covered in this evaluation.

Before these three projects are discussed in more detail, a general remark how ARTF has dealt with gender issues needs to be made. While gender was definitely taken into account during the

design of ARTF projects, the ARTF Administrator, during many years, has chosen not to report on gender achievements in an all-encompassing manner, and as a result there have been limited opportunities for policy discussions between the ARTF donors and the Government of Afghanistan. At the request of many donors, including Norway, this resistance was finally overcome and the first ARTF gender report was delivered to donors in December 2010. Since then work on ARTF gender indicators has continued and gender briefings will be provided regularly during quarterly ARTF donor meetings.

5.7.1 Results from the National Solidarity Program (NSP)

The National Solidarity Program (NSP) is the largest development program in Afghanistan and a flagship program of the Afghan government. NSP is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) to support local good governance and rural infrastructure development. It operates at village level, creating elected Community Development Councils (CDCs) through which grants of up to \$60,000 are disbursed for projects selected, designed, and managed by the CDC in consultation with the village community. As well as a community development objective NSP has the political objective of creating of a structure for village level governance centred on democratic processes and the participation of women.

NSP has been externally reviewed at midterm in 2006 and as part of the ARTF evaluation in 2008, both of which were positive. The 2006 midterm review⁷⁵ stated that NSP was a rational and far-sighted response to the need for rapid signs of state building in rural communities and that the achievements, in a very challenging context, outweighed the initial design and operation weaknesses and the high overhead costs of the first two years. Whilst favourable regarding results, there was no baseline to measure against and, in the introduction to the subsequent Impact Evaluation, it was noted that the 2006 evaluation lacked the more rigorous quantitative conclusions that a large-scale program should be capable of yielding.

In 2008 NSP was assessed as part of the ARTF external evaluation.⁷⁶ It found that NSP had already achieved the original numerical targets: 22,300 communities had contracts with FPs; 20,500 had elected CDCs; 37,500 sub-project proposals had been received with 96% approved and half are already completed; total block grant disbursements to community bank accounts as of April 2008 were over USD 455 million. Projects funded were in Water and Sanitation (24%) Transport (22.3%), Irrigation (16%), Power (15.2%), Education (13.4%) and Livelihoods (6.6%).

Current disbursement is more than \$900m.⁷⁷ To mobilize capacity for program implementation, NSP has engaged 27 international/ national NGOs and one UN agency as Facilitating Partners (FPs).

The main problem experienced was with disbursement in the early phase. Half the communities in five provinces experienced one-year delays in the second tranche payment, which was 40% of the grant, which led to half-finished projects degrading. Frustration and distrust grew in communities towards external actors – whether the MRRD, NSP or FPs. It was highly problematic for the NGOs as only the larger ones were able to fund their operating costs from own resources till the situation was resolved and several of the smaller FPs had to suspend operations. The main reason for the financial problems was that the ARTF gave priority to funding the recurrent costs of the government, using funds earmarked by donors for NSP to cover a cash flow gap to the budget.

⁷⁵ *Mid-term Evaluation Report of the National Solidarity Program(NSP)*, University of York, 2006.

⁷⁶ *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund: External Evaluation* Scanteam, 2008.

⁷⁷ Verbal figure from the responsible official in MRRD.

Donors were also slow in transferring funds to the ARTF and Ministry of Finance procedures slowed disbursements to the MRRD.

The ARTF evaluation also had difficulty tracking NSP performance according to efficiency and effectiveness criteria in the absence of a solid baseline in place and agreed-upon indicators for monitoring. This was a particular weakness for the governance dimension. It also noted concern that, while NSP was an impressive program, it was also a very costly undertaking in a country with enormous un-met needs.

NSP Impact Evaluation

With the commissioning of a multiyear randomized control trial in 2010, there is now a process in place to assess the impact of NSP across a broad range of economic, political, and social indicators. This is the first large sample quantitative assessment capable of providing rigorous, statistically unbiased estimates of the economic, institutional, and social impacts of the program.

In 2010, the first stage of the Impact Evaluation concluded the following:⁷⁸

- NSP induces changes in village governance by creating functional village councils and transferring some authority from tribal elders to these councils. Strong evidence of impact was found in governance functions but weak impact in terms of identification of village leaders by villagers and continuity of leaders;
- NSP improves access to services but with only weak impact on school attendance or access to medical care. There was no evidence that it affects objective measures of economic welfare, such as household income or consumption;
- NSP has weak or no effect on measures of social cohesion such as dispute resolution, perceptions of security or villager's happiness with their lives;
- NSP increases the engagement of women across a number of dimensions of community life, while also increasing respect for senior women in the village and making men more open to female participation in local governance. However, their participation in governance and leader selection is weak. Where women earn income or own assets as a result of NSP, there is no impact on their ability to exercise control over it.

This is a considerable improvement in understanding outcomes and impacts. However, the findings need to be appreciated with caution because they reflect research undertaken in ten sample districts, all of which are in the northern half of the country and were considered safe enough for the research team to visit. During sample selection 34 out of 74 new NSP districts had to be eliminated because of insecurity. Therefore, although NSP is said to have CDCs in all 361 districts of the country, in the severely conflict affected provinces and districts the limitation on monitoring (discussed in section 5.5) mean that there is no independent verification. Given that conflict is the most crucial issue affecting Afghanistan, it is safe to say that the Impact Evaluation findings somewhat obscures a potentially less impressive overall picture.

Gender Aspects of NSP

In addition to the information obtained from document review our assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality is that it was undervalued in the design and implementation of the first two phases. Until April 2011 there was no gender unit or focal point in the NSP structure and there is no official link established between the policy and technical work on improving gender equality in MoWA and NSP in MRRD. This is a missed opportunity in leading approaches towards women's empowerment and gender equality and bringing new dimensions at grassroots level.

⁷⁸ *Estimates of the Interim Program Impact from the First Follow up Survey Randomized Impact Evaluation of Phase-II of the National Solidarity Program(NSP) 2010.*

The Cost of NSP

As the most highly financed NPP funded through ARTF, NSP is a very costly undertaking. As of September 2010, the ARTF had disbursed US\$940m to NSP and bilateral donors provided an additional US\$100m. Overheads are high, with 25% of the budget going to NGO Facilitating Partners. Whilst their role is crucial in start-up, it is sometimes argued, including by DRRD during our fieldwork in Faryab, that NGOs do not want to do themselves out of a job. Donors and Government have been willing to finance in this way in the absence of a functioning government at local level. The World Bank also has a vested interest in the promotion of their own model of Community Driven Development. NSP was designed with an initial IDA grant for US\$27m and, by September 2010, IDA support to the NSP had reached US\$436 million.⁷⁹

It is a relevant question whether investment to this level in NSP is the most efficient or sustainable way of delivering community development. According to the World Bank's own evaluation of Community Driven Development programs in other countries, sustainability is a problem because of the creation of parallel institutional structures.⁸⁰

Efficiency in NSP

At the higher level, the 2008 review of ARTF drew attention to the 'efficiency for what?' question. There has been on-going debate in Government about whether NSP is a community development or a governance program and the governance objective of NSP is contested by many in government who argue that governance is not the business of MRRD. Since the establishment of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) in 2007 this debate has continued and, in the absence of approved subnational governance policy, the status of CDCs in the formal governance structure remains uncertain. This matters because it affects the timeframe for achievement of objectives which, in the case of building capacity in CDCs as a local contracting party for infrastructure investments, is much shorter than if the objective is local democratic governance. Other ARTF investment window projects, such as EQUIP, have much more tangible objectives and therefore efficiency is easier (but not easy) to ascertain.

5.7.2 Results from the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP)

The EQUIP program aims to improve the quality of educational inputs and processes as the foundation for a long-term strategy to enhance the quality of educational outcomes. This is to be achieved through: (a) a focus on schools and communities to strengthen their capacity to better manage teaching-learning activities; (b) investment in human resources (teachers, principals and educational administration personnel) and physical facilities; and (c) institutional development of schools, District Education Departments, Provincial Education Departments and the Ministry of Education. The program also aims to promote education for girls by putting a priority for female teachers and students within each component activity.

EQUIP was expected to have installed 1659 child friendly schools with boundary wall, latrines and electricity and up to date learning materials by the end of 2012. Furthermore, the program was expected to 'deliver' competent and qualified teachers and principals. Successful implementation of these elements was meant to enhance the quality of educational outcomes such as adequate literacy, numeracy levels and basic life skills.

⁷⁹ Figures from the ARTF website.

⁸⁰ *The Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community Driven Development*, World Bank OED, 2005.

There have been two phases to the EQUIP project. EQUIP I and EQUIP II. EQUIP I started in July 2004 and ended on January 2008 and disbursed \$44 million of ARTF contributions. EQUIP II started in March 2009 and is supposed to end in September 2012 and has an ARTF budget allocation of \$85 million. The two projects have been fully aligned with the Afghanistan National Education Strategic Plan and support the institutional development of the program staff of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The project is managed through a Project Coordination Unit established in the MOE.

Norway's role in the **management of EQUIP** has been realised by:

- Involving personnel of the Embassy in a guidance committee. This committee has been tasked with overseeing the EQUIP projects. Other embassies have participated in this committee as well.
- Involving Norway in the monitoring and evaluation of the program, in the planned three annual supervision missions of the EQUIP program. In doing so a condition was fulfilled as put forward by Norway for its support to the program.

An education advisor attached to the Embassy has been tasked with these activities.

Outputs of the World Bank EQUIP projects

According to the latest Implementation Status & Results Report, as of December 2011, the two EQUIP projects have achieved the following:

- It is estimated that to date, under EQUIP I and II, boys enrolment totals 701,043 students and girls enrolment totals 469,130 students (40%).
- Under EQUIP I and II, Social mobilization activities have been conducted in 11,087 communities which have resulted in setting up of 11,087 school shuras and the preparation of 10,939 school improvement plans nationwide. So far, 9,935 schools have received Quality Enhancement Grants for purchase of school supplies, laboratory equipment etc.
- Training of 92,831 teachers in In-Service Training INSET I and 63,852 in INSET II (grade one to six) has been completed. The School Management Training (SMT I) has been provided to 7,006 principals and headmasters/mistresses. SMT II training has been conducted for 4,689 principals/school managers. 3,351 scholarships have been awarded to female recipients in Teacher Training Colleges.
- In terms of the number of schools built the EQUIP projects have performed reasonably well. MOE data indicates that 3,425 classrooms were built under EQUIP I. 120 schools consisting of 681 class rooms originating under EQUIP I are still under construction but have not been completed due to various reasons including security. Under EQUIP II 1804 classrooms have been completed. New construction has been halted until clarification of schools requiring rehabilitation has been established.

However, within the framework of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTR) of July 2011⁸¹ as conducted by the World Bank a total of 1424 schools were inspected for critical missing building components, deteriorated components needing repairs or rehabilitation and components missed from original bids. Also a cost estimate for this was made. The findings of this inspection were quite disappointing: approximately, 82 % of the schools appeared to be without boundary walls, 20 % without electricity and 50 % without latrines. The authors of the MTR report conclude that they suspect that most of the schools constructed under the project are of unacceptable standard. The main reasons for poor school construction are a combination of limited capacity and, corruption.

⁸¹ Second Education Quality Improvement Program(EQUIP II) Grant H354-AF and ARTF 93962 Mid-term Review July 17 – 31, 2011 AIDE MEMOIRE. This review incorporates data on EQUIP1 as well.

The fact that both these factors play a significant role has been corroborated by the World Bank informant interviewed with respect to the EQUIP projects.

The same MTR is also critical as to the quality of some other outputs:

- The duration for principals training. For principals to undertake the role of academic leadership their training needs to be strengthened, if the principals are to be sufficiently capacitated to take on the academic leadership role and able to offer ongoing support to teachers at the classroom level.
- The quality of the plans underlying the Quality Enhancements Grants as received within the framework of EQUIP was also poor as noted in the MTR. Many school shuras appeared to receive their purchased materials, lab equipment, computers etc. before the schools were built. These materials were then stored in houses/temporary shelters for long periods of time.

On the basis of the disappointing MTR findings, the funding for the EQUIP project had been temporarily suspended by the World Bank until adequate measures were taken to address these issues. With the help of a series of Bank-supervision missions the Ministry of Education has taken actions taken to improve and strengthen project management, including the appointment of a new Director. The latest Status & Results Report stresses that “nearly all of the issues that were identified in the previous missions including school construction, completing schools with missing components, restructuring the social mobilization program, as well as placing more emphasis on gender and environmental and social safeguards and aligning monitoring framework with the project development objectives were addressed”⁸². As a result, project funding has been resumed.

Gender Aspects of EQUIP

As to the gender aspects of EQUIP, the design of the program is inherently gender sensitive in that it aims to mainstream and encourage girls enrolment in the education system by prioritizing girls' schools; motivating local communities to send girls to school; female representation in committees; and recruitment and training of female teachers. However, results are mixed:^{83,84,85} In terms of closing the access gap, 30% of schools completed through infrastructure grants did not comply with the gender equity criteria necessary for girls' attendance. Norway was among donors who picked up the issue of boundary walls for girls schools and agreed to cover additional costs. In predominantly addressing the supply factors of infrastructure and accessibility, EQUIP does little to address demand side issues such as community attitudes and economic constraints which are major barriers to girls participation. Security, whilst affecting boys and girls, is a more pervasive reason why parents do not want their girl children to go to school. Where schools were built by, or had a significant relationship with a PRT, communities believed schools were more likely to be attacked.

The use of figures showing national level data can be misleading. In particular, perhaps because girls' education is an emotive and compelling issue for donors, there is excessive focus on increases in overall enrolment which obscures the reality that it has decreased in some provinces and districts. If discussed, insecurity and insurgency are usually cited as the main reason alongside absence of female teachers.⁸⁶ Drop out is also a serious concern to many educationalists but it is not well reflected in EQUIP reports. Overall, EQUIP has performed poorly on monitoring and reporting, a point Norway and other donors have raised regularly and which is crucial to get a more

⁸² Afghanistan - Second Education Quality Improvement Program: P106259 - Implementation Status Results Report: Sequence 09, 1 March 2012.

⁸³ *Education Quality Improvement Program: Mid Term Review Mission Aide Memoire*, NORAD, Oslo, 2007.

⁸⁴ *High Stakes: Girls education in Afghanistan*. Oxfam 2011.

⁸⁵ World Bank/ARTF sources, UNICEF.

⁸⁶ Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2009.

nuanced picture of gender. A more recent concern among women activists relates to peace talks with Taliban and the fear that girls' access to education and women's rights more generally, may be sacrificed in the urgency of reaching political settlement.

Outcomes of the EQUIP projects

Most evaluations contain only data on outputs and, therefore it has been difficult to evaluate outcomes. There is insufficient credible and integrated information to monitor and evaluate quality of education and teacher training activities. In general, there is limited data on the quality aspects of all outputs.

The exception appears to come from an evaluation study done at the close of EQUIP 1 that found that teachers having received teacher training indeed scored higher on pedagogy and content related issues after they had received the training.

Regarding EQUIP no specific studies have been found detailing possible outcomes such as children's numeracy and literacy levels. We include a further assessment of education outcomes including EQUIP in the separate analysis of Norwegian support to education that is presented in the next chapter (see 6.3).

Effective management of the large scale MOE implemented projects as EQUIP has been virtually absent, thus affecting performance. This has been acknowledged belatedly by the World Bank. Donors, including Norway have been very frustrated by poor progress and weak monitoring information.

5.7.3 Results from the National Institute of Management and Administration (NIMA)

NIMA is a component of the National Skills Development Project which has the objective of increasing the number of immediately-employable graduates and producing a high quality TVET system that is equitable, market responsive, and cost-effective. The objective of NIMA, which Norway contributed to the design of, is to increase access to high quality vocational education and training in the areas of Management, Administration and ICT in a manner that is equitable, efficient and sustainable. The overall size of the project is \$38 million, of which \$9 million is provided through the ARTF.

Progress to date has been mixed with challenges in management and establishment of the NIMA with tensions between the consultants responsible for implementation and the Deputy Ministry TVET as the formal coordinator of the project. The establishment of the Qualifications Authority has also been delayed. This meant that the first cohort of 1,058 students only graduated in November 2011 against a target of 1500 per year. The Mid Term Review in 2011 downgraded the rating for the project to Moderately Unsatisfactory and plans are underway to restructure, including strengthening NIMA management by recruiting a new implementing partner.

Norway's role in the oversight of this project is identical to the one as established for EQUIP and has been performed by the education advisor attached to the Embassy.

5.8 ARTF Implementation Mechanisms

ARTF projects are implemented by Ministries. The capacity of the Ministry is thus a crucial determinant of overall effectiveness as well as efficiency. All ministries were weak in 2001 but the approach to capacity development was variable. NSP had the benefit of an Oversight Consultant

(GIZ) in its first few years which appears to have been a critical success factor in ensuring accountability whilst MRRD was building its own capacity as new ministry. EQUIP did not offer significant support to capacity development of the MOE even though it was known to be a weak ministry up to 2006. As a result it had a much looser system of checks and balances.

Where NSP transfers funds directly to CDC bank accounts, EQUIP used the Government financing mechanism (Mustofiats) for transfers to the province and onwards to communities. Not only was this slow and cumbersome, it also paved the way for corruption in a Ministry which has long had a reputation for corruption and politicisation.

Although both NSP and EQUIP have substantial infrastructure components, NSP lets and manages contracts locally as part of the capacity development process. In EQUIP a lot of contracts are let centrally and are subject to all the well-known corruption associated risks with the construction sector. During our fieldwork in Faryab the Department of Education were very vocal about poor results from letting contracts centrally compared with them managing them locally.

Another difference is the structure within the Ministry. In MRRD there are several NPPs (NSP, NABDP, ENRAP, RWSSP) and each operates as a silo with all its own systems. This creates a certain set of problems of its own. But, in MOE, each component of EQUIP is implemented through a separate directorate. This has resulted in weak coordination and fragmented implementation which has significantly diluted its overall impact.

In order to overcome weak capacity in Ministries, the usual strategy is to set up Project Coordination Units (PCU) staffed with international and local consultants and make the PCU responsible for project implementation and at the same time build Ministry capacity.

Staff costs under all ARTF projects, but especially NSP and EQUIP because of their size, are high because most staff are on contract at enhanced levels of pay rather than being tashkeel (establishment) civil servants. Inequality in salaries has anyway been a sore point among tashkeel civil servants who work for a fraction of the money often doing the same job. In the provinces the performance of DRRD usually stands head and shoulders above other departments because most staff there are on contract which acts as a strong incentive to work in hardship areas. In the absence of enhanced salaries it is certain that staff would not relocate because there are many vacant tashkeel positions in the southern provinces which cannot be filled on government pay scales even though they have increased under Pay and Grading reform.

So while on the one hand ARTF supports national implementation by making Ministries responsible for project implementation and accounting for results, the weak administrative capacity is by-passed by hiring a plethora of international and national advisers and staff, at enhanced pay scales, to do the job that the Ministry should be doing. In fact, the projects are creating a parallel structure within the structure. This is an inherently unsustainable situation, especially when overall donor funding is expected to decline.

5.9 ARTF Oversight and Monitoring

Oversight of ARTF funds consists of a combination of standard World Bank procedures for supervising ARTF-funded projects, a contracted monitoring agent for funds covering Afghanistan's non-security operating costs (payroll and O&M), and mandatory audits by Afghanistan's Control and Audit Office (CAO).

PwC Monitoring of Recurrent Cost Window

The grant agreement between the World Bank and the Afghan government requires the World Bank to obtain an independent monitoring agent to monitor all operating expenditures financed by ARTF funds. In June 2002, the World Bank contracted with PricewaterhouseCoopers-Netherlands (PwC) to serve as the monitoring agent for the Recurrent Cost Window. The contract was later extended in 2005 and again in 2008. Monitoring of non-security operating costs is limited to financial reviews and audits, and PwC deploys a risk-based approach in verifying the eligibility of operating cost expenditures for reimbursement by ARTF. Due to security risks, there is limited independent validation of ARTF spending outside of Kabul and, since March 2009, the monitoring agent has not conducted any site visits to the provinces. Despite a modification in the contract with PwC to meet increased security-related costs, PwC has told the World Bank that it does not intend to renew its contract because of concerns with security.

Afghanistan's Control and Audit Office (CAO)

CAO conducted some site visits outside of Kabul while performing audits of ARTF Recurrent Cost and Investment Window expenditures. Given CAO's role as Afghanistan's supreme audit institution, increasing provincial site visits conducted during annual ARTF-related audits may provide donors with additional assurance that ARTF funds are being expended for their intended purpose. However, capacity in the CAO is also weak and it requires an international firm to provide technical assistance on ARTF-related audits.

World Bank monitoring

To provide oversight of ARTF Investment Window-funded development projects, the World Bank assigns World Bank staff to task teams for each project. Each investment operation requires separate World Bank teams for design, appraisal and supervision. These teams consist of a team leader, financial management and procurement specialists, technical experts, and other personnel, depending on the project's needs. Task teams are responsible for overseeing the implementing Afghan ministry's use of ARTF funds and ensuring that these funds are used in accordance with project grant agreements signed between the World Bank.

The SIGAR audit found that with respect to the ARTF Investment Window, the World Bank task teams conducted limited visits outside of Kabul during supervision missions with security concerns stated as the main reason for not visiting the provinces. Up to 2009, task teams travelled more frequently to the provinces to independently monitor projects but, since then, the same constraints of insecurity have reduced their ability to conduct visits to most provinces. The same risk affects the opportunity of Norwegian Embassy staff to follow up on specific Investment Window projects.

The 2008 Evaluation Report recommended that the World Bank provide more regular and coordinated information on the results and outcomes of ARTF-funded development projects to donors. ARTF agreements between the World Bank and donors require the World Bank to report quarterly to donors on the status of funds. In addition, World Bank policies require the World Bank to report on whether a project's development objectives are being achieved and whether funds are being used in conformity with donor agreements. Whilst the World Bank fulfils its quarterly reporting obligations the emphasis is on the financial status of active ARTF-funded projects rather than project results and outcomes.

As a result of more donor pressure to provide information on project results and outcomes, the World Bank have created a revamped ARTF website, with a separate results section that provides easy access to reporting on project progress and results. For each project basic information is provided as well as core project documents, including the Project Paper and Implementation Status and Results reports. However, reports for closed projects are not consistently available.

Another recent development, at the request of donors and based on recommendations from the 2008 independent evaluation, is to appoint a special Monitoring Agent for Investment Window projects. International Relief & Development (IRD) has won an open and competitive tender process based on relevant experience & track record in Afghanistan, their capacity to roll-out almost immediately and major synergies with the USAID infrastructure programme. The aim is to do a first-year pilot and monitor infrastructure development under 3 major programmes: NSP, NERAP and EQUIP. IRD will conduct field visits and verify asset construction, check quality of buildings and map data. The IRD field engineers have been equipped with smart phones and data collection applications. All data, including photos and GIS coordinates, have been transferred and uploaded into the AISCS (Afghanistan Infrastructure and Security Cartography System).

With hindsight it is quite remarkable that it took 10 years to set up a robust monitoring and reporting system for Investment Window projects. Despite the existence of mitigating circumstances, mainly to do with security, it is testimony to the continuing weakness of some line ministries to manage national programs and produce reliable information on what has been achieved. This reflects badly on the Ministries but also on the World Bank and donors who allowed it to happen for so long. The outsourcing of monitoring infrastructure development and verification of asset construction to an independent monitor can be considered as a defensive strategy to make up for shortcomings that happened elsewhere.

Already in 2008 the ARTF evaluation concluded that “donors need to engage more by providing more intellectual and technical inputs to the ARTF. The lack of donor involvement is troubling, especially given the decision to extend the ARTF to the year 2020”⁸⁷. With the donors pushing the oversight function to the World Bank, and the World Bank pushing it to the National Ministries, and the national Ministries having to deal with a plethora of issues, including low administrative capacity, a system was created with major gaps in accountability. The SIGAR audit report was also highly critical about the Afghan government’s continued reliance on non-civil service personnel to provide support in implementing ARTF-funded projects, which hampers the development of long-term civil service capacity⁸⁸.

Capacity Building for Results Project

The Government has been made responsible to deliver results as the implementation of the ARTF programs/projects goes through the line ministries. However, the introduction of an effective system of managing for results will require more concerted action, since the line ministries and the MoF lack capacity for monitoring and oversight. With respect to this, the Administrator has supported the design of the Capacity Building for Results Project. This project is aimed at improving the capacity of the key line ministries and the MoF for more efficient and result oriented project preparation, implementation and monitoring.

5.10 ARTF Administration costs

The World Bank receives an administrator’s fee of 1.5 % of ARTF contributions to fund its oversight of the fund. From the creation of ARTF in March 2002 through March 20, 2011, the World Bank had received a total of \$64.4 million in fees (SIGAR Audit 11-14), or approximately \$6.44 million per

⁸⁷ Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund: External Evaluation Scanteam, 2008.

⁸⁸ SIGAR (2011) Audit 11-14. The World Bank and the Afghan Government Have Established Mechanisms to Monitor and Account for Funds Contributed to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, but Some Limitations and Challenges Should Be Addressed. July 22, 2011.

year The fee is meant to cover all costs related to the delivery of the ARTF program including the mobilization of World Bank technical experts (both in country and visiting missions), housing, security and in-country logistics for supervision as well as those costs incurred through Headquarter-based functions including treasury (management of the ARTF fund balances), accounting and audit, disbursements, legal services and HR.

The 2008 Evaluation made the following point on the 1.5 % administration fee: *“The donors have so far received an extremely good deal with the ARTF. For only 1.5% of their contributions, they are getting management and external quality assurance, a distributed risk sharing arrangement, access to senior government officials and policy papers that otherwise most would have difficulties arranging. The need for increased quality assurance activities may require additional funding, either by providing higher overhead to the Administrator, or making direct contributions in the form of staff or services, or a combination of both. But it is not likely that it will be possible to both deliver quality in a high-risk situation and continue maintaining the very low management fees.”*

Due to higher security costs and an increase in the investment portfolio (the ARTF now finances 19 separate investment operations across a wide range of sectors), the World Bank have requested donors to increase the fee to 2 %. In late 2010, donors endorsed increasing the fee to 2 %, and in February 2011, the World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved the increase.

The total cost paid to the Recurrent Cost monitoring agent between 2002 – 2011 comes to \$26.79 million⁸⁹, or on average \$2.5 million per year. The tender for selecting a new Recurrent Cost Window Monitoring Agent is on-going. Out of total disbursements of \$2.22 billion (till April 20, 2011), this reflects only 1.2% of total spending, which is a relatively low amount. However, it is difficult to benchmark this because the size of the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan is probably not comparable with other countries.

Total cost involved for the newly appointed Investment Window Monitoring Agent is currently \$8 million annually, for the first-year pilot⁹⁰.

All these costs add up and donors need to be wary whether they continue to receive value for money. Again, benchmarking is difficult due to the size of the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan that is quite unique. A longer-term solution would be to strengthen the capacity of Afghan's COA so that they can independently verify eligibility and audit expenditures under the Recurrent Cost Window. This would then save the costs of an outside Monitoring Agent.

5.11 Conclusions

Improved harmonization and aid coordination

The ARTF mechanism has improved harmonization and aid coordination. The regular donor meetings have contributed to improved aid coordination and reduced transaction costs (in comparison with dealing with 30 donors bilaterally). Both, the World Bank and the Government believe that the three years Financing Strategy will be an adequate instrument to further improve harmonization and aid coordination.

The new ARTF Financing Strategy introduced in London in January 2010 has called for more predictable 3-year and less preferenced funding from donor countries. This call was necessary

⁸⁹ Administrator's Report on Financial Status, September 22, 2011.

⁹⁰ ARTF's Administrator Report: Presentation to the Steering Committee, 16 September 2011.

because in the period 2006-2010 the preferenced portion of donor contributions has been the driving force of ARTF growth. This trend was reversed in 2011, and Norway has shown creditable behaviour by being the first country to enter into a three-year agreement with the ARTF administrator.

Enhanced local ownership

The Afghan government ownership of the ARTF is high and increasing. Resources are channelled in line with Afghan priorities – thereby potentially strengthening the ownership and accountability of the Afghan government for the resources deployed. Resources are also channelled through the Afghan core budget – thereby strengthening the budget as the main policy tool for directing and allocating resources for priority needs. The experience gained with the ARTF Investment Projects paves the way for future direct budget support, once government systems have been strengthened and the chronically poor budget execution has been adequately addressed.

Nevertheless, given the still limited Afghan ownership of development priorities, the weak governance, the limited capacity in Ministries and the fact that corruption is still endemic, these positive results should be interpreted with caution. It is not clear to what extent capacity of the Afghan government has actually improved. The World Bank 2010 Public Expenditure Review cited “concerns about poor governance and accountability relating to public expenditures as one of the main reasons for the large share of donor assistance channelled through the external budget, as donors seek to bypass weak government systems and deliver resources to projects and programs directly and outside the core budget”.

Management for Results is still deficient

Mutual accountability has also been improved but managing for results is yet to be enhanced. The Administrator provides regular reports to the Management Committee and the Steering Committee and regular donor-government meetings within the ARTF take place which improves not only coordination but also mutual accountability. In short, the ARTF provides for a collective platform for donor/government dialogue – thereby creating leverage on the government to implement critical reform points.

There are reports on substantial positive outputs and thousands of schools have been built and community projects have been realised. There are also reports on poor quality of outputs such as inferior constructions. The limited indications on positive outcomes and impact are even more serious especially because in many districts no outputs or outcomes can be assessed anymore because of security reasons. Furthermore, gender specific reporting on outputs and outcomes is even more problematic, although since December 2010 some improvements on gender reporting have taken place.

Long-term sustainability is at danger

Long-term sustainability does not look good. The World Bank 2010 Public Expenditure Review clearly indicates that in the long run Afghanistan will continue to have a funding gap. Despite strong growth of the domestic revenues (9% of GDP in 2010), these are still well below the average level in developing countries (13% of GDP). The latest WB and the IMF projections show that due to the expected high security cost and increased operation and maintenance costs the financing gap for Afghanistan by 2022 will remain large (estimated to be around 25% of GDP), even under assumption that the domestic revenue mobilization will reach around 17% of GDP.

Any future ARTF Financing Strategy will need to make a careful balance between the funding of new investment projects and investing in operation and maintenance costs in order to prevent major setbacks in aid effectiveness of already closed investment projects. Both, the Government

and the World Bank agree that the ARTF as the channel for aid delivery will need to stay in place for the next 10 years. The Government capacity to absorb higher levels of direct aid appears to be low. The line ministries lack capacity to design and implement projects and programs, and once funding is obtained, budget execution remains a perennial problem. At the same time the country's public financial management and audit capacity needs to strengthen significantly to provide minimum assurance to donors that their bilateral funds will be used in a transparent and cost-effective way.

Efficiency is not (yet) a major concern

ARTF so far has been a relatively efficient undertaking where donors for a mere 1.5-2.0 % administration fee receive good value for money in the area of fund management and administration and project design and implementation. However, not all costs are factored into this equation. Since the implementation of projects and programmes goes through line ministries, and these line ministries have been generally weak, this has resulted in two developments:

1. Line ministries were forced to hire expensive expatriates and national consultants to staff PMUs and boost the implementation of programs, thereby driving up the management costs.
2. The capacity for monitoring and oversight was virtually absent in line ministries, forcing the Administrator to come up with remedial measures in the form of an independent monitoring agent.

It is possible that the measures needed to rectify poor construction and other deficiencies turn out to be quite costly. In this light, it is impossible to make a proper assessment of efficiency and this is a major dilemma for all donors.

Norway's Influence

Norway has been a staunch supporter of the ARTF mechanism and has provided substantial funding to the tune of \$289 million over the past decade. It has used ARTF in the early years to advance its own policy objectives, namely promotion of education, reconstruction of the public administration and integrated rural development, by indicating a preference for its contribution. It closely monitored progress in the education field by adding an education adviser to Embassy staff, who liaised closely with World Bank and Ministry of Education staff and participated in several review missions. Since 2010, in line with OECD-DAC aid principles, Norway discontinued with preferencing and entered into a three-year Framework Agreement to provide core support to the ARTF.

With the core support to ARTF being non-preferenced, there is a danger that Norway's influence on certain programmes/projects might wane, while it still provides massive support for state building in Afghanistan. This is partly due to capacity problems in the Embassy, that does not have the resources to participate in each and every working group. Up to now Norway was not actively represented in the Incentive Program Working Group, where major issues around state building, strengthening the public administration, enhancing public financial management and improving audit functions are discussed between ARTF donors and the Ministry of Finance.

In a future strategy for aid to Afghanistan Norway might want to re-think its position. In case Norway will continue to put central emphasis on ARTF to support state building in Afghanistan, it stands to win in influence if it becomes a member of the IPWG and at the same time strengthens the Embassy staff with skills in public financial management and administration reform. This expertise could equally pave the way for Norway providing more direct budget support through the Afghan Authorities' budget, another strategy of Norway.

6 Development Assistance

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we address key evaluation questions related to the main evaluation criteria i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability for the main sectors and/or themes that together form the core of Norwegian development assistance to Afghanistan. We present separate analyses of governance, education, community development and gender⁹¹ including a more detailed portfolio analysis per sector and a link to the overall policy. On that basis we assess the selected projects for relevance and effectiveness. Given the limitations of the context and the approach (see Chapter 2) we present a combined analysis for all sectors of efficiency and sustainability.

The sectors covered in this chapter all make use of the three channels as shown in the Table below.

Table 6.1 Overview of development assistance per channel and per sector

CHANNEL	Governance	Education	Community Development	Gender
ARTF	Security Sector Reform, Justice & cross cutting	EQUIP NIMA	NSP	Cross cutting
Multilateral	ELECT ASGP	UNICEF UNESCO	NABDP	UN Women (UNIFEM)
Bilateral	AIHRC, AREU, Afghanistan Global Rights, Integrity Watch Afghanistan et al	NAC, NCA, NRC, AKF, FOKUS	NCA, NAC, ACTED, DACAAR, AKF	NGOs via UN Women and MOWA

6.2 Governance

6.2.1 Governance portfolio analysis

Policy priorities

Governance has been a major feature of Norwegian development co-operation with Afghanistan since 2001 and is embedded within the framework for Norwegian foreign, security and development policies. Norwegian co-operation assistance in the governance sector in Afghanistan also reflects on going assessments of the crucial role of institution building and governance and the dangers that development co-operation can undermine fragile state structures further. The Norwegian approach to governance in the context of development co-operation concerns effective administration and implementation of policies adopted by democratic institutions, based on fundamental human rights reflecting conventions and treaties that are the basis for Norwegian and international development assistance. It encompasses sub sectors including; elections; policing, justice and the rule of law: sub national governance and institution building; human rights and anti-corruption. The mainstreaming of gender equality within areas of governance (such as for example policing or elections) is an area outlined for attention. The choices of the sub sectors within the governance

⁹¹ Gender is primarily a cross-cutting theme that is important in all sectors. Next to gender as a cross-cutting theme, Norway has also funded some specific gender projects that will be analysed in this chapter.

sphere reflected both policy discussions within the Norwegian government and parliament and also the overall emphasis of the broader international community (for example the relatively early emphasis on elections and policing and more recent emphasis on sub national governance). Implementation being foreseen primarily through multi national bodies (such as UNDP) but also engaging Norwegian NGOs in relation to specific tasks^{92, 93}.

The total value of development assistance provided under the governance sector portfolio was approximately NOK 729million⁹⁴, representing some 16% of the total allocation during 2001-10 in our interpretation. The overall portfolio analysis in chapter 4 (above) shows that there has been a stable level of allocation to governance with a significant increase only in 2009. This reflects the more targeted approach to electoral support (as well as the cyclical nature of this funding) as well as concerns about ASGP leading to a decision not to allocate further funding in the last years of the evaluation period. For the purposes of analysis, the portfolio can be assessed as groupings of sub sectors encompassing: democratic participation and elections; policing, justice and the rule of law: government administration including sub national governance and human rights and anti-corruption. The most significant partner for Norway was UNDP although a range of other organisations have also been involved, especially in the human rights sub-sector. An overview of the governance portfolio is outlined in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Overview of the Governance Portfolio

	Human rights & anti-corruption	Policing & rule of law	Democratic participation & Elections	Government Administration incl. Sub National governance
No of projects	25	12	15	11
Partners	AIHRC, AREU, NGOs, UNDP,	UNDP, EUPOL	UNDP, OECD, NGOs	UNDP, IARCSC
% of total	10	37	28	25
Types of project	DIM	NIM (LOTFA) DIM (EUPOL)	DIM	DIM (ASGP), NIM (NABDP)
Regional Priorities	National	National	National	National and Faryab

DIM = Direct Implementation by UNDP; NIM = National Implementation by the Afghan Government.

In terms of wider relevance, the overall portfolio for Norwegian co-operation assistance under the governance sector directly reflects Afghan national development priorities as set out in Interim ANDS through pillar 2⁹⁵ "Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights" as well as the cross cutting theme of anti-corruption and also the subsequent full ANDS with the underpinning sectors of; Justice and the Rule of Law and Governance, Public Administrative Reform and Human Rights⁹⁶ and in this respect means a close alignment with Afghan national development priorities as agreed with the international community following the Bonn process as outlined above.

Democratic participation and elections

Norway has provided consistent and reliable support for democratic participation and elections in Afghanistan since the initial meeting of the Loya Jirga following the demise of the Taliban in 2002. It

⁹² "Legitimacy of the State in Fragile Situations" Norway / France, 2009.

⁹³ Norwegian Aid works but not well enough. NORAD 2007.

⁹⁴ Figures are indicative and tables draw on interpretation of data. Total is expenditure classified as governance plus NABDP. Norad statistics show NOK 964.712 mill as tagged with target area governance.

⁹⁵ Interim Afghan National Development Strategy, 2005, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

⁹⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 2008, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

has contributed a total of 206m NOK or around 28% of the total allocation for governance. The flow of this support over time has reflected the election cycles since 2001 with concentrations of support leading up to the 2004/5 and 2009/10 elections. In addition to financial support, Norway has actively engaged in policy debates concerning aspects of elections through regular meetings and briefings with the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) and other partner bodies, for example concerning access to voting for women and related security issues. Norway has supported election observation activities through UiO and also through the OSCE. However, the major project support has been via UNDP in which Norway has been one of a number of donors in the ELECT (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow) program.

Policing and the rule of law

Activities in this area have been an on-going and consistent focus commencing in 2004 has been maintained. Total allocations were 265.5m NOK, increasing considerably in recent years, and representing the largest allocation for a sub sector at some 37% of the total. Norway began funding the ARTF Justice National Priority Program from 2008. Allocations for justice and prisons comprised 24% of the total, police training 43%, and LOTFA 27%.

Support for policing has been via EUPOL for police training and via the UNDP administered LOTFA (Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan) as well as through UNAMA and bi lateral activities. Norway has been one of five non-EU member states to support EUPOL (alongside Canada, Australia, Croatia and New Zealand). In addition to financial support, Norway has actively engaged through regular briefings and meetings with project partners and with counterparts in the Ministry of Interior in qualitative aspects of policy development, for example engaging in the key issue of the financial sustainability of the Afghan National Police.

Government administration

Norway has also supported the development of government administration including sub national governance and institution building on a consistent basis since 2006 with an allocation of 188 M NOK Table 6.3. This represents 25% of the total for governance.

Table 6.3 Overview of the sub national governance and institution building sub sector

	% of total
Afghanistan Subnational Governance Program(ASGP)	31
National Area Based Development Program(NABDP)	36
Support for Civil Service Institute	15
Other	18

Under this sub sector, public administration reform (PAR) at provincial and district levels and specific capacity development at national level have been the main activities. The principal partner has been UNDP including through the Afghanistan Sub National Governance Program(ASGP) and the National Area Based Development Program(NABDP). In addition there has been direct support to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC).

Human rights and anti-corruption

Human rights and anti-corruption and related matters have been consistent and significant themes of Norwegian development co-operation since 2001, representing approximately 70 m NOK or 10% of the total funding provided for governance. Norway has actively engaged through meetings, briefings and communications concerning human rights through contact with the Afghan authorities over human rights issues such as handing over of prisoners to ISAF forces and the rights of

religious converts.⁹⁷ There have been a number of partners including Afghan, Norwegian and international NGOs and research bodies including; Norwegian Church Aid, Children's Rights Afghanistan, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), AREU, CMI/PRIO, Afghanistan Global Rights and Integrity Watch Afghanistan. In relation to anti-corruption, this has mainly been an embedded feature in a number of the major interventions such as LOTFA and ELECT although there have been some specific activities such as anti-corruption workshops and support for Integrity Watch.⁹⁸ The focus on corruption has been a feature not only of these specific interventions but in relation as a cross cutting issue through for example LOTFA (for example through enhancing systems for police pay and ELECT reducing voting fraud) but at the same time trying to reflect cultural sensitivities and differences. Support was also allocated to UNDP for ACT (Accountability and Transparency).

Gender Equality and Pro Poor Development

Gender equality is a theme for all sub sectors supported by Norway and thereby reflecting policies in this context and is a cross cutting theme for specific projects (see below). Training has been a specific element here for example, training of trainers for police concerning gender equality through LOTFA, where 300 police trainers have been trained in gender and human rights issues and the linked recruitment of 1000 new female police officers, or training of female civil servants via ASGP. Support for human rights and anti corruption also includes activities relating to gender equality, such as the activities of AIHRC Women's Unit through building an understanding of women's rights covering topics such as violence against women, the importance of marriage registration and women's participation in elections. In addition, processes are elaborated that reflect women's needs such as shaping electoral registration and voting procedures. In relation to pro poor development and anti poverty, only elements of sub national governance via NABDP have activities concerning livelihoods. In other cases, support provided by Norway aims to improve public service delivery through training and institution building, for example through the policing, elections operations or the capacity of district and provincial administrations. Whilst immediate results and outputs have been generated through projects within these sub sectors, attaining wider objectives and benefiting poor people in the challenging environment of Afghanistan is difficult and indeed activities may benefit more affluent and secure areas and groups most.

6.2.2 Analysis of selected governance projects

Characteristics of selected governance projects

Projects were selected on the basis of criteria including overall size and scale of the project, size of the Norwegian contribution, and strategic importance in the context of international and Afghan development priorities. These are shown in Table 6.4. They cover the four sub sectors and the evaluation period. The availability of information was also taken into account considering time, security and availability of individuals and documents. Projects have been defined as coherent development interventions rather than as specific funding allocations, so some projects assessed received a number of funding allocations over a series of years⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ Strengthening Nordic Development Co-operation with and in Afghanistan, NORAD, Oslo, 2009.

⁹⁸ Afghanistan (information sheet), NORAD, 2008.

⁹⁹ The assessment of the projects was undertaken by analysis of materials and on line sources including publicity materials, reports, project documents, evaluations and other matter prepared on behalf of the Norwegian Government, the project partner (for example UNDP) as well as selected material from third party organisations, including the Afghanistan Evaluation and Research Unit, who have widely acknowledged expertise. This material was augmented by face to face interviews and follow up telephone and e mail contact. Constraints included the rapid turnover of international experts and staff members working in Afghanistan and the lack of availability due to frequent rest and recreation away from the country and due to security issues.

Table 6.4 Selected governance projects

Project	Sub Sector	Main activity	Partner
ELECT (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow)	Elections	Support for the electoral process; for example voter registration, capacity development of IEC.	UNDP
LOTFA (Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan)	Policing and Rule of Law	Support for policing, especially payment of police salaries, financial and management training also equipment provision, training for women police officers, community police pilots.	UNDP / Ministry of Interior
ASGP (Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme)	Sub National Governance	Training and capacity building for sub national governance; including policy development, training, pilot actions.	UNDP
NABDP (National Area Based Development Programme)	Sub National Governance	Rural livelihoods.	UNDP /MRRD
AIHRC (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission)	Human rights and anti-corruption	Human rights information, monitoring advocacy, development.	AIHRC

Relevance

The projects outlined above are relevant in that they closely relate to Afghan policy, initially through Interim ANDS¹⁰⁰ pillar 2 “Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights” as well as the cross cutting theme of anti-corruption and, later, the full ANDS with the underpinning sectors: Justice and the Rule of Law; and Governance, Public Administrative Reform and Human Rights.¹⁰¹ This portfolio also reflects international donor priorities from the Bonn process onward. Policy is interpreted in Afghanistan initially in annual plans and later in the Embassy *Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation 2009-11* which broadly follow the ANDS. Furthermore, for governance, the report *Legitimacy of the State in Fragile Situations*¹⁰² outlines the risk that development co-operation can further undermine already fragile state structures and stresses the crucial role of institution building. More recently, confidence in the long term impact and sustainability of interventions has been in question for a number of reasons. This has included the problems of alleged mal practise in the election cycle of 2009 / 2010 despite a more targeted approach by UNDP / ELECT; concerns about the implementation of ASGP and also the overall security situation including the role and function of the Afghan National Police. With the withdrawal of international forces from 2014, there is a dilemma concerning on the one hand the need to strengthen further Afghan institutions in this context but on the other hand concerns about the high risk nature (including physical risks) of this potential support.

Effectiveness

Norwegian support for governance has mostly taken the form of non-earmarked assistance for multilateral projects (as outlined below) which draw upon funding from a wide range of international donors. Outlined below is a summary of the selected projects with indicative overall outputs / results attained during the period. As can be seen, the majority of results relate to training (for example of civil servants), institution building (setting up District Development Assemblies) and development of

¹⁰⁰ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Interim Afghan National Development Strategy*, [GoA], Kabul, 2005.

¹⁰¹ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*, GoA, Kabul, 2008.

¹⁰² *The Legitimacy of the state in fragile situations*, NORAD and French Foreign Ministry, 2009.

systems and processes (voter registration, payment systems for police). Core funding has also been provided (AIHRC) but only in limited cases for physical infrastructure. An overview of outputs is presented in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Overview of outputs from selected governance projects

Output	ELECT ^{103 104 105}	LOFTA ¹⁰⁶	ASGP ¹⁰⁷	NABDP ¹⁰⁸	AIHRC ¹⁰⁹
Voters registered	2004 – 9.4 m 2009 - 12.7 m				
District Development Assemblies /plans				Set up in 382 out of 402 districts in every province	
Police payment		99% on electronic payroll system 80% paid by individual electronic transfer			
Staff trained/ information provided		1250 financial management) 350 (gender Community policing pilot actions in 8 districts of Kabul equality)	5052 civil servants trained (11% women	Training provided for 227 DDAs	167 workshops and 192 awareness events attended by 10 900 people
Revenue improvement action planning			12 provincial & 6 district municipalities Revenue increases from 18% to 46%		
Core funding					Core funding, publications, operations, activities

The picture in relation to the attainment of wider outcomes and impact is mixed, reflecting the complex and challenging political and security context within which projects are designed and implemented.

ELECT. Assessments concluded that the first phase of elections (2004 and 2005) were widely held to be well organised and the results accepted¹¹⁰ whereas the second phase (2009 and 2010) were

¹⁰³ Election Evaluation Mission, Finn and Cook, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ IDEA, Stockholm, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ The ELECT Annual Reports 2009 and 2010, UNDP.

¹⁰⁶ Evaluation of LOTFA Phase 4, Atos Consulting, 2009¹⁰⁶ LOTFA Annual Progress Report, UNDP, 2010 (and annually).

¹⁰⁷ ASGP 2009 annual report, UNDP 2010 and Mid Term Review 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Executive Summary, NABDP, UNDP annual report 2010.

¹⁰⁹ AIHRC Annual Report 2009.

highly contentious.¹¹¹ However, Afghanistan's most recent elections (Wolesi Jirga/ Parliamentary, 2010), were seen as an improvement over 2009 in relation to operational aspects¹¹². The successful elections of 2004 and 2005 did not lead to lessons learned and the capacity developed was not sustained during the following years, leading to serious problems in following elections.¹¹³ This in part reflected the policy of donors regarding elections as one-off politically driven events rather than as an on-going and long term process and so reflecting some lack of alignment between donor priorities and needs on the ground.

LOTFA. Public perception surveys concerning attitudes to the police give a mixed picture with over 90% of people in Kabul saying they trust the police with this figure falling to less than 50% in Southern and Eastern provinces with only 60% across the country saying that they would report crimes and incidents to the police¹¹⁴, and around 50% nationally say they welcome more female police officers¹¹⁵. The limitations of this tool as a means of assessment has been recognized and a police performance benchmarking plan is now being elaborated in order to assess performance more effectively.¹¹⁶

LOTFA sits within the broader context of Security Sector Reform (SSR) which has been seen as critical by the international community since the Bonn Conference in 2001. A review in 2010 stated that, although security is the fundamental public good that Afghan citizens expect their government to provide, the security and institutional capacity necessary for successful SSR were absent.¹¹⁷ This has been a contested and fragmented arena during the whole decade with fundamental divisions over what SSR was supposed to achieve and how that should happen. The case of the police is particularly complicated as it has progressed from leadership by Germany from 2002-07 to the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) thereafter. These were civilian-based approaches but, in parallel the US has been the dominant training provider using a militarised approach with the US Department of Defence taking responsibility for supporting the ANP from the State Department in 2005. Indeed US militarized police training is usually delivered via their armed forces and so cannot be defined as development aid. More recently the US has supported the creation of the Afghan National Police Auxiliary, the Afghan Local Police (which has been defined by NATO as a military not a police force) and the Afghan Public Protection Force as a response to poor progress with the Afghan National Police (ANP). Document review shows that, in some cases the approach has reinforced the power of warlords and their militia.¹¹⁸ In the team's combined experience this is a serious concern to ordinary Afghans and exacerbates ethnic tensions.

AIHRC undertakes advocacy and development work relating to human rights issues reflecting international donor priorities but in a challenging security and political environment within which the states often lack capacity or commitment to respond to specific situations¹¹⁹. AIHRC has had to negotiate the tensions between the political and the legal on the one hand and the pressures of the local and the international on the other, creating an especially challenging environment to deliver

¹¹⁰ Election Observation Report Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections Sept 2005, AREU. *Democratization and civil society empowerment programme*, UNDP Afghanistan country office 2008.

¹¹¹ *Elections in 2009 and 2010; technical and contextual challenges to building democracy in Afghanistan*, AREU Briefing Paper and *Practicing Democracy in Afghanistan: Key findings on perceptions, parliament and elections*, Policy note series 2011. The *ELECT 2009 Annual Report*, UNDP, 2010.

¹¹² Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: *Final Report, European Union Election Assessment Team*, 18 September 2011.

¹¹³ Election Evaluation Mission, Finn and Cook, 2006.

¹¹⁴ Police Perception Survey, UNDP 2010.

¹¹⁵ Police Perception Survey, UNDP 2010.

¹¹⁶ Police Perception Survey, UNDP 2010.

¹¹⁷ J. Ward, *Can security sector reform alleviate poverty?*, *POLIS Journal*, Vol.3, Winter 2010, pp 1-20.

¹¹⁸ *Militarised v Civilian Policing: Problems of Reforming the Afghan National Police*, Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt, 2011.

¹¹⁹ UN Support to AIHRC, Final Evaluation, 2008.

sustainable change.¹²⁰ The mandate and outreach of AIHRC makes it an important partner for the international community and yet demands from that community and the receipt of technical assistance from diverse international sources has not always provided the best approach to sound organisational management.¹²¹ Other obstacles identified by AIHRC itself included a weak presence of the rule of law, a persistent culture of impunity, high level of corruption, and the abuse of power by government officials as well as a weak judicial system¹²²

ASGP and NABDP. In relation to sub national government, programs have been implemented in the absence of a policy or vision for sub national governance. In part the programs have sought to influence policy development and the policy framework has been in development for a long time. However, it is a highly contentious arena within government, striking at the heart of where power is held so there have been long delays at every step. There has also been disagreement between the Afghan Government and international bodies.¹²³ This has seriously affected attainment of desired outcomes although it can be considered a normal part of the policy development process and reflective of limited donor awareness of the issues. In order to meet donor pressure for rapid implementation, and in the absence of representative structures at district level, NABDP evolved as a series of individual, disconnected projects in the early years of its operation. After 2007, when IDLG came into being, donors put funds into the establishment of District Councils which created confusion about the role of the District Development Assemblies created through NABDP and how they relate to the wider institutional framework for elections and district governance.

In terms of sub national governance, implementation of NABDP and ASGP have developed in the absence of a clear vision about sub national governance and relevant institutions so these programs have had a weak policy and legal framework within which to operate.^{124 125}

Efficiency

In relation to the management and efficiency of the selected projects, the approach taken by Norway to the monitoring and evaluation and reporting requirements of the projects selected has been to avoid the imposition of separate and specific requirements. However, Norway has undertaken ongoing engagement with the management structures for the projects concerned. In relation to ASGP, reporting processes put in place by other donors indicated problems with overall management, internal monitoring and benchmarking which led to Norway deciding not to fund the next phase of ASGP.¹²⁶ In other cases, there have been examples of overreach in which projects have engaged in a wide range of disparate activities undermining the efficient delivery of key actions. In the case of ELECT, it was agreed to reduce peripheral functions (such as election-related police training and media relations) in order to improve focus on key priorities such as electoral registration and the capacity development of the Independent Elections Commission. Norway also reacted firmly in relation to issues concerning management of aspects of LOTFA, including the securing of funds when Kabul Bank collapsed in 2009 (the main conduit for police pay) and the sustainability of police salary funding (where the Afghan contribution is rising from 3 to 7% by 2011). In the case of AIHRC, it has been acknowledged that the plethora of funding sources have been a challenge for the organisation which has also identified a need for enhanced focus on strategic planning, audit, monitoring of activities and liaison with stakeholders.

¹²⁰ The Spaces in between; The AIHRC and its role in transitional justice, Tazreena Sijjad, October 2009.

¹²¹ T Upreti and L Griffiths, UN Support to AIHRC, Final Evaluation, 2007.

¹²² Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission Report to APF 15th Annual Meeting, August 2010.

¹²³ *Provincial Governance Structures in Afghanistan, from confusion to vision*, AREU, Kabul, 2006. *Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme: Mid Term Review*, UNDP, 2009.

¹²⁴ *Provincial Governance Structures in Afghanistan, from confusion to vision*, AREU 2006.

¹²⁵ *Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme: Mid Term Review*, UNDP, 2009.

¹²⁶ ASGP, Final Evaluation Report, UNDP, 2011.

Sustainability

In relation to overall impact of the selected projects, the overwhelming consequences of the wider security and political environments within which they are implemented means that the results generated and outcomes (if attained) can only ever be necessary but not sufficient conditions to ensure stability, development and good governance. The focus of interventions has adapted and changed to reflect the realities of the environment, including the security situation, most notably in relation to ELECT with the reduced role for UNDP field staff following the murder of workers in the 2009 election and has also impacted on the scope and effectiveness of sub national governance activities¹²⁷. In relation to AIHRC, the organisation has had to advocate and promote human rights issues in the context of governmental structures that often lack the capacity or the commitment to respond effectively.¹²⁸

Further to the points made above, sustainability can be determined largely to factors outside the control of the Norwegian government or partners at international and sometimes national level. For example, in relation to elections *“Widespread fraud and allegations of irregularity had significantly undermined the 2009 Presidential and Provincial Council elections; and raised serious doubts among stakeholders as to the viability of 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections”* and *“Despite an array of procedures, guidelines and regulations for the smooth running of the 2009 election, overwhelming evidence emerged that nearly one third of the votes cast on 20 August were fraudulent. IEC staff was heavily implicated in direct involvement of complicity with electoral fraud”*¹²⁹. In relation to sub national governance, political factors outside the influence of donors and other bodies were a major inhibitor *“Sub-national governance suffered from a weak policy and legal enabling environment and extremely limited sub-national governance core public administration and participatory governance capacities”*.¹³⁰

Projects are also affected by specific crises. The collapse of Kabul Bank affected LOTFA because police and security force salaries are paid through it. The attack on a guest house where UN staff were staying during the 2009 election, in which 9 people died, not only resulted in a different than planned role for UN staff but also had a serious and long-lasting effect on UN security restrictions. For ASGP, the inability to post UN staff to the provinces was an important reason why ASGP failed.

The problems of putting into place the elements of good governance in crisis and transition counties have long been recognized in both conceptual and operational terms. A significant aspect of the discussion has been the problematic nature of transferring experiences and the application of evidence from one context to another in complex and challenging environments with an understanding that there is no universal approach. There is an understanding of a need for both quick entry points on the one hand and on the other hand a long term and flexible approach (For example UNDP which is the main partner for implementation of governance activities in Afghanistan).¹³¹

The complex interactions between different aspects of governance, relations between the wider society and the state in fragile situations and consequences for security have been set out and underline the non linear nature of the development process in this respect and the need to evolve responses which are specific to individual contexts.¹³² Definitions of good governance vary

¹²⁷ For example see *Afghanistan Sub National Governance Programme: Mid Term Review*, UNDP. 2009.

¹²⁷ ASGP, Final Evaluation Report, UNDP, 2011 and ELECT project document, UNDP 2010.

¹²⁸ IAHRRC Annual Reports and Action Plan and UN Support to AIHRC, Final Evaluation, 2008.

¹²⁹ ELECT 2009 Annual Report, UNDP 2010.

¹³⁰ ASGP, Mid Term report, UNDP, 2009.

¹³¹ UNDP priorities in support of good governance; World Summit for Social Development, 1995.

¹³² The legitimacy of the state in fragile situations, NORAD and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009.

between donors and other bodies with activities to enhance governance on the one hand essential for reducing conflict and enhancing security but also seeing the long term impact of developing capacity concerning governance reduced and even undermined by security issues. The balance and inter relationship between these factors varying considerably between situations.¹³³

In developing the scope and priorities within the sector for support in Afghanistan we can see a reflection of this understanding in relation to specific programmes and the need for flexibility, a long term approach and the need to relate to the specificities of the country, for example, an evaluation of ELECT concluded that on the basis of experience in the first election cycles that. *“The difficulties of the Afghan context cannot be overstated in their impact upon electoral preparations and operations and the wider outcomes”*.¹³⁴ It has also been recognized that the activities undertaken are necessary but not sufficient condition to achieve the desired objective of free, fair and widely accepted election results: *“if the security conditions of a given election are considerably more arduous than the last, then it is entirely possible that even better planned and implemented elections could conceivably realise greater levels of violence, increased fraud and results that are not accepted by voters”* (due to factors beyond the influence of ELECT or UNDP)¹³⁵ This analysis did lead to a refocusing of the work of ELECT.

In relation to specific experience elsewhere there are many examples to examine and these have been drawn upon by experts and international bodies to arrive at general conclusions (for example as discussed above) although there is limited evidence of such examples being directly used in preparation of programs or projects in Afghanistan.

Kosovo, for example, saw a significant emphasis on building of good governance, initially led by UN agencies (for example including human rights, policing, civil society, elections and other areas), undertaken under a set of principles including non-interference in internal conflicts and in a largely post conflict environment. Kosovo experienced nevertheless a wide range of challenges and a significant timescale.¹³⁶ In Bosnia, EU led approaches to state building have been seen as a relative success compared with US led efforts, for example in Iraq and Afghanistan. However the challenges have been on a different scale and the security environment largely calm and that the EUs use of an imported “good governance agenda” has been widely accepted in this environment whereas elsewhere this approach may not be appropriate¹³⁷ In Rwanda, a vision for the future was elaborated after 6 years of post-conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance, which would be based on the putting in place of a “capable state” which would be a pre requisite for other pillars of development¹³⁸ In Georgia, the important issue of establishing appropriate relationships between the concept of security (and role of security forces) and other elements of democratic governance in a post conflict situation are issues were identified as having constrained progress in terms of long term establishment of functioning institutions and processes¹³⁹.

6.2.3 Conclusions on Governance

The selected governance projects funded through Norwegian assistance are closely aligned with Afghan, Norwegian and international development priorities. Norway has been a consistent,

¹³³ Good governance and national security, General Shahedul Khan, 2010.

¹³⁴ Evaluation of ELECT, UNDP, 2010.

¹³⁵ *Practicing Democracy in Afghanistan: Key findings on perceptions, parliament and elections*, Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit, Policy note series, May 2011.

¹³⁶ OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 6 years on; OSCE, 2006.

¹³⁷ Good governance and the limits to statebuilding in Bosnia, David Chandler, 2009, World Politics Review.

¹³⁸ Rwanda Vision 2020, Republic of Rwanda, 2000.

¹³⁹ Georgia: an emerging governance, problems and prospects; Dov Lynch, Austrian Federal Government, 2006.

reliable, engaged, and long term contributor to these projects which have generated significant outputs (in terms of people trained, systems put in place and institutions established) in some or most areas of activity. However, whether these outputs will lead to the outcome of better governance and have a sustainable and long term impact in some or any of the sub sectors is very questionable. In all of the sub sectors, external factors beyond the control or influence of Norway or its international partners will have a major bearing on this. This includes the deteriorating security situation which has many consequences for the attainment of impact in all sub sectors and also makes assessment and evaluation ever more challenging. In addition corruption and political dynamics and disfunctionalities within the Afghan national administration and its agencies are a further major constraint. Lack of coherence in relation to the overall vision / objectives of key elements of governance between the views of international and Afghan stakeholders is a further factor (for example in relation to the role of the ANP).

Where outputs have been generated and some progress towards defined outcomes have been attained, factors in success have included close and specific alignment of projects with wider objectives and good relationships and shared vision with Afghan counterparts. This happened with LOTFA / Ministry of Interior a significant focus of which is the systemization of police pay (as well as in relation to other pillars including democratic policing and capacity building and institutional reform) and during the recent phase of ELECT working with the Independent Elections Commission where the role of UNDP has been focussed on three specific areas of support, such as oversight of electoral registration procedures. Projects have been less successful when there are many disparate activities as this dilutes purpose and hence effectiveness. This was the case during the early phase of ELECT, until refocused by the midterm review,¹⁴⁰ and by ASGP throughout. This demonstrates the important point that no project succeeds or fails overall but rather has components of both. Norway has shown with ASGP that it works hard to get improved performance from partners but is prepared to withdraw funds when this is proven ineffective. It also reflects the potential to generate specific results which may well have benefits in the short term but which are not sufficient to ensure the attainment of long term impact and sustainability in relation to sub sectors such as elections, policing, human rights or sub national governance.

In relation to gender equality and women's rights, Norwegian intervention within governance was aligned to activities with an explicit focus on this matter with significant results in a number of cases (women taking part in elections, female police officers recruited, civil servants trained, awareness events concerning women's rights held). Beyond funding, Norway also intervened in several cases to reinforce this priority (for example protection of women's polling stations). The challenging security and political context of Afghanistan makes the long term impact and sustainability of these activities less certain.

In the governance portfolio Norway is mainly a contributor to very large, multi donor projects. In the case of ELECT, the political objective of holding elections was important enough to donors to dilute the fact that the process was severely flawed and highly politicised. In other words, the process was the desired outcome rather than an outcome related to a legitimate result. This reflects the broader political and security context which create uncertainty and confusion. LOTFA, whilst successful in terms of outputs, cannot bring about the desired outcome of an effective and accepted police force for a number of reasons including a lack of agreement between international donors (for example Germany and the EU civilian policing approach contrasting with the US led militarized approach) and lack of a clear view from the Afghan authorities about whether the orientation of the ANP should be on community policing or counter insurgency.

¹⁴⁰ Mid Term Evaluation of ELECT, UNDP, 2008.

6.3 Education

6.3.1 Education Portfolio Analysis

Basic education and the right for girls to achieve education has been Norway's main policy priority for the education sector since 2003 and in 2005 a specific education strategy on the basis of a needs analysis was elaborated at the request of NORAD.¹⁴¹ This led to support for TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) and to the higher education sector in relation to teacher training. The latter has been taken forward from 2010 onward as one of the ARTF programs.

The education sector has received 365 million NOK, with an emphasis on education facilities and basic education as shown in Table 6.6. Furthermore 50 million NOK have been allocated for the construction of schools in 2009, and 45 million NOK for advanced technical and managerial training (NIMA) in 2008-2009. In the following table details of the Norwegian funding of the education sector are presented.

Table 6.6 Funding of assistance in the Afghan Education sector by partner and type of project

Partner		Type of project	Number of projects	Funding NOK m	% of total funding by Norway
Multilateral	World Bank	Vocational Education and Training	1	45	12
		Basic Education	1	137,6	38
	UNICEF	Basic Education and Literacy/Numeracy Training	1	53,1	15
		Humanitarian assistance	4	1	
	UNESCO	Educational planning	1	9	2
Norwegian NGOs	NAC	Basic Education	8	32,2	8
		Vocational Education and Training	3	2,2	1
	NRC	Basic Education	7	46,6	12
	NCA	Basic Education	5	16,5	5
		Vocational education and Training	3	0,5	
	FOKUS	Vocational Education and Training in health sector	6	9,1	3
Others	Red Cross, WFP, AKF Norwegian Peace Corp	Humanitarian assistance	8	12,4	4
Total			48	365,2	100

¹⁴¹ *Afghanistan Norwegian Education Team Report*, Wirak, et al. Oslo/ Kabul 2005.

Support has been channelled primarily through the ARTF project Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) as the government owned program aligned with national priorities. Norway's particular goal is to eventually achieve full school coverage of primary schools in Faryab province and throughout Afghanistan. Norway has also funded UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality program which aims at providing literacy training to women throughout the country. The second objective concerns support to the TVET sector and the training of public administrators. The quality of the policies as defined is somewhat flawed as in two cases targets have not been defined. These objectives and expected outputs are shown in Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7 Education objectives, inputs and expected outputs

OBJECTIVE 1 Support to basic education and the right for girls to achieve education		
INPUTS	Norwegian support for the EQUIP and UNICEF programs to realize school building, teacher training and other means in primary and secondary level through the ARTF, both at national level and in Faryab province. Continued support for the International Institute for Educational Planning's efforts to strengthen capacity in the MoE.	70% of the support should be designated for this.
OUTPUTS	Number of Enrolments in primary education for girls and boys; Number of Female Teachers; A new curriculum will be operational in all schools; Introduction of a competency test. Increased leadership and management capacity in Ministry of Education.	60% for girls and 75% for boys Increase by 50%; By 2010 Teachers should have passed a competency test. No exact target given. No target set.
OBJECTIVE 2 Support to the TVET sector		
INPUTS	Support for the establishment of the National Institute for Management and Administration (NIMA).	No target mentioned.
OUTPUTS	Number of public administrators trained.	15 000 men and women will acquire skill in public services through essential training. Training of minimum 1500 students annually - through ARTF- NIMA.

Funding has been clearly in line with policy priorities as 70% of education funding was to go through the multi-lateral partners and 67% has been achieved overall, with a smaller proportion going to individual NGOs. Furthermore, it can be seen that basic education (and gender equality) has been a priority area throughout, while TVET has gained in importance since 2008. From 2008 predominantly more funding has gone through ARTF (EQUIP and NIMA) and less through bilateral channels which is consistent with policies formulated for the immediate future.

6.3.2 Analysis of selected education projects

Characteristics

Projects selected were representative of all types of education (Planning, Basic Education, TVET and Literacy) and all channels.¹⁴² Humanitarian assistance and other projects receiving small amounts of funding (less than 1 per cent) were excluded. The selected projects (table 6.8) cover around 75% of the total funding and 11 projects out of the total of 48.

Table 6.8 Overview of Selected Education Projects

Partner	Type of project	Expenditures in millions of NOK	Period of Implementation	Data Sources / Available info
World Bank	Basic Education			PADs.
	EQUIP 1	210	Mid-2004 /mid 2009	World Bank MTR's of April and July 2011.
	EQUIP 2	660	Jan 2008 / Sept 2012	Audio interview with EQUIP task manager.
	Vocational Education and Training (NIMA)	54	Jan. 2008- Feb 2013	
UNICEF ¹⁴³	Basic Education, literacy training	27 in 2006	2006- (no end date found) project is still running	Evaluation Report; Interview with UNICEF task manager.
UNESCO	Education Planning	9 (only funding by Norway)	2006,2007,2009	Interview with Education Specialist; NESP I.
NAC	Basic Education - 2 projects; Phase out Education in Ghazni and Badakhshan;	4,5	2008	Dossier analysis.
	Education projects in Ghazni and Badakhshan GAP.	12,0	2007	
NRC	Basic Education (Teacher training); Over 3 years in Faryab.	6	2006,2007,2008	Performance Evaluation Interview with director of NRC.
NCA	Basic Education - 4 projects; Development of Educational Sector in Daikundi and Uruzgan Provinces.	3,3 (all projects combined)	2006	Dossiers analysis;
	Literacy and Peace Building in Daikundi;			Interview with director.

¹⁴² NGO projects were sorted by project and size of budget. For each NGO every fourth project was then selected.

¹⁴³ This project was supported by Norway and Sweden jointly. Norway terminated its support, while Sweden continues its support.

Partner	Type of project	Expenditures in millions of NOK	Period of Implementation	Data Sources / Available info
	Skill Training for Income Generation and Marketing. Training of Community Health Workers.			
FOKUS/NAC	Vocational Education and Training; Midwife Education.	4,2	2002 until, 2009	Evaluation study; Dossier analysis; Interview (Skype).

Relevance of education projects¹⁴⁴

All projects studied within the education sector are fully aligned with Afghan Educational Policy as laid down in the five year National Education Strategy Plan (NESP) and its successor NESP II. NESP I and II addresses general education, vocational education and training, teacher education / training, education as well as administrative reform and development of the education sector. Under the Economic and Social Development pillar of ANDS, a well-functioning education system, with basic education especially for girls is a cornerstone and a prerequisite for realising achievements in all three pillars. There was and is a clear and pressing need for education both in terms of infrastructure and teachers. Enrolment was down to nearly 2 million children (of the 7 million in the relevant age-group) in basic education with almost no girls enrolled shortly after the end of the Taliban era. All projects in the portfolio are therefore relevant.

Effectiveness

Education Strategy Development

Norway has funded the realisation of the five year National Education Strategy Plan (NESP) and its successor NESP II through the UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP). Achievement of NESP I and II has served as an important vote of confidence and as a result Afghanistan was admitted to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The realisation of NESP I is seen as the principle output of this project, improved management of the Education Sector as the primary outcome.

Outputs: UNICEF: Basic Education and Gender Equality¹⁴⁵

BEGE has contributed to the increase in the number of girls enrolled in basic education. There are, however, wide disparities between provinces and many children are reported as permanently absent, despite being registered as enrolled. An evaluation done in 2008 found community-based schools (CBSs) in 28 provinces in the country, catering for nearly 150,000 children, with a fairly 50:50 % distribution between girls and boys. A total of 2,409 teachers had been recruited and trained although only 10% of them were women. By 2008, more than 7,000 literacy centres had been established with 194,124 women participating in the nine month course.

Outputs: Selected Norwegian NGOs¹⁴⁶

The Norwegian NGOs have implemented relatively small scale projects:

- **NAC:** In final reports studied of two projects as implemented NAC in Kabul, Ghazni and Badakshan provinces it is indicated that all outputs agreed have been realized in terms of

¹⁴⁴ Description of policies as found in Education Sector Analysis Afghanistan. Adam Smith International, June 2010.

¹⁴⁵ Wirak, A. J. Lexow, *Evaluation of Moe/UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality Program for 2006-2008*. Kabul, Sida & the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, 2009.

¹⁴⁶ Final reports as submitted to the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul.

schools built, equipment supplied and access to clean water established. In total, 17633 students and 547 teachers directly benefited;

- **NRC:** The projects studied¹⁴⁷ concern a teacher training program that has extended over several years from 2006 until 2008. Within the framework of the Teacher Education Program (TEP) that ran in Faryab province a total 3616 teachers have been trained, a number far above the target of 1200. Teachers appeared to accept and appreciate the new teaching methods and demonstrated a 45% increase in technical knowledge;
- **NCA** projects studied all produce satisfactory results. In Daikundi and Uruzgan Province, 15500 students are reached and 400 teachers trained with Community Shura responsible for maintenance of the school building. 550 girls/ women participated in literacy, peace education and health education. 40 female and 40 male Community Health Workers were received follow-up training;
- **FOKUS** (a women's network organisation linked to NAC) supported Midwife education in Nangarhar province Eastern parts of Afghanistan, a TVET project in the health care area implemented through NAC.¹⁴⁸ 85 midwives graduated and are deployed as health professionals and sustainability is promoted through the Afghanistan Midwife Association.

Outcomes of the projects on education

In discussing the outcomes of the projects on education we include the findings on the EQUIP projects as reported in Chapter 5.

No specific studies have been found detailing possible outcomes of the EQUIP projects and UNICEF's project on Basic Education and Gender Equality on literacy and numeracy levels of children or women. It would seem likely that these have risen as the projects are large scale and aim to reach children / women in large parts of the country. Children's likely numeracy and literacy levels have been estimated, therefore, by using an accepted proxy for this, namely the retention rate of children in basic education and the amount of instructional time children receive in a school year. International assessments suggest that instruction time in a primary school should probably be between 700 and 900 hours. Regrettably the retention rate is quite poor as almost a fifth of the children drop-out of school before grade six. Also the target instruction time of 700 hours per year is not met in many Afghanistan schools. International literature further suggests that children would need four to five years of instruction to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. Given these figures, it is likely that a considerable number of children do not acquire these skills.

Furthermore, literacy levels of girls/women –as targeted by the UNICEF project- have not increased over the years. Since 2006, the literacy rate of women is around 15 to 18 % of the women, which indicates that the large majority of women is still illiterate with no noticeable increase over time yet¹⁴⁹.

The World Bank has conducted a survey to determine the extent to which children indeed have mastered literacy and numeracy skills in the areas EQUIP has been active. The results were expected by the end of 2011. Hopefully this study can shed some further light on the question whether the efforts of the EQUIP projects have resulted in positive outcomes (such as increased literacy levels of children in the areas of Afghanistan where the program has been active).

¹⁴⁷ Nordic Consulting Group. Review of Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Afghanistan FINAL REPORT, 2011.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.fokusvinner.no/en/About-FOKUS/>. Progress reports of FOKUS to NORAD (2010).

¹⁴⁹ Data are from UNICEFs statistician as interviewed.

For NGO projects there is no systematic data on outcomes, except for the project on midwife education. Reviews suggest that this project has been effective in strengthening the Afghan midwifery services.

6.3.3 Conclusions on Education

Most of the education projects have reached their intended output targets. As increased access to schools, especially also for girls, is an important MDG, this can be considered as a success in such a problematic context. However, it is unlikely that these outputs have already resulted in positive outcomes such as higher literacy and numeracy rates of children and women as targeted by the EQUIP and BEGE projects. A positive outcome has been noted in relation to enhanced teacher pedagogy skills and improved access to midwifery services, one of the small scale projects implemented by Fokus and NAC. For the rest of the projects studied there are no systematic data available on outcomes. Whether projects will prove to be sustainable is an open question at this point as well. Informants assert, however, that those projects working through the Afghan government, building adequate capacity along the way, might yield sustainable results in the end. This assertion, of course, needs to be substantiated by further research.

6.4 Community Development

6.4.1 Community development portfolio analysis

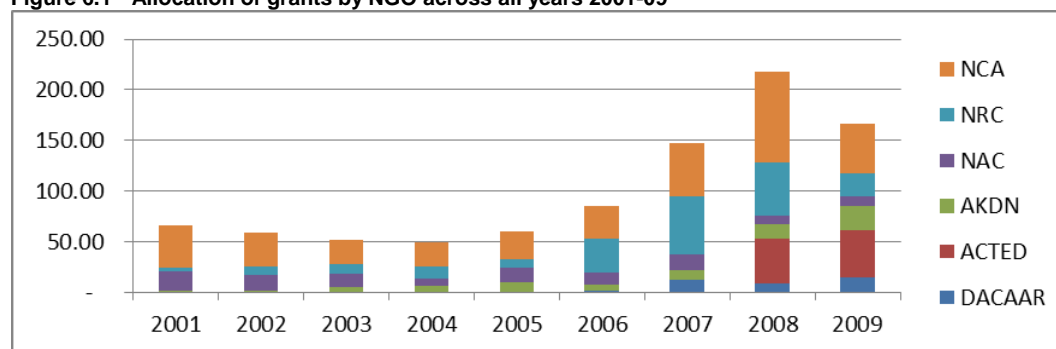
In the period 2001-2009, Norway provided 73 grants in the area of community or rural development, which is illustrated in the following table. This does not include allocations to NSP, which amount to \$32m preferenced through ARTF, and discussed in the ARTF chapter.

Table 6.9 Allocation of grants by partner across all years 2001-09

Agency	No of Grants	Total MNOK	of which Faryab	Description
NCA	46	177	51	Multi-sector in many provinces through local partners
ACTED	2	56	56	Faryab Integrated Development Program
UNDP	2	54	19	National Priority Program through MRRD
AKDN	6	39	-	Alternative Livelihoods in Baghlan, Bamyan, Badakshan
DACAAR	4	36	36	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion in Faryab
FAO	4	27	-	Pest control, plant protection, national priorities
NAC	5	18	-	Multi-sector in Badakshan, Daikundi, Ghazni
UNDP	4	64	19	NABDP
Total	73	471	181	

Figure 6.1 shows the allocations for NGO partners across the years 2001-2009.

Figure 6.1 Allocation of grants by NGO across all years 2001-09



NCA (Norwegian Church Aid); NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council); NAC (Norwegian Afghanistan Committee); AKDN (Aga Khan Development Network); ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development); DACAAR (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees).

Analysis of the portfolio shows:

- of the total allocation, NGOs received 82% compared with UNDP 13% and FAO 5%;
- of the NGOs, NCA has been by far the largest partner, receiving 38% of total CD funds and 28% of Faryab allocations;
- 38% of total funds have been allocated to Faryab across all years. Province-specific funding only started in 2006, with CD for Faryab comprising 46% of all CD from 2006 to 2009;
- ACTED and DACAAR are funded solely for Faryab, comprising, respectively, 12% and 8% of the total allocation and 31% and 20% of the Faryab allocation;
- AKDN receives 8% of total funding specifically for alternative livelihoods programs in the poppy producing province of Badakshan.

It is not easy to establish a clear overview of community development as a sector. NGO programs in particular are difficult to categorise because they often combine several elements. Also, community development is often used to describe *how* a project is implemented rather than *what* it is about. Moreover, several projects categorised as CD are clearly humanitarian, for example 'emergency flood relief'. For the purpose of analysis we have taken an inclusive view of what comprises the sector.

6.4.2 Analysis of selected community development projects

The methodology for analysis of CD was a combination of document review and interviews. In the case of UNDP, document review was easier because most are in the public domain and because the team was able to interview three people who had been involved in NABDP since its inception through to the present.

Characteristics of selected projects

The National Area-based Development Program (NABDP)

NABDP aims to enhance district-level governance to deliver services to the poor and vulnerable, as well as improve sustainable and diversified livelihoods through productive infrastructure. It is complementary to NSP in that it focuses on district rather than community level and can bring larger scale projects which benefit greater numbers of people. During the first phase 2002-05, before Government institutions were fully established, it delivered quick-impact projects. During the second phase 2006-08 the focus was on support for local governance, poverty reduction and institutional capacity development, while linking the Program with the ANDS framework. It is now in the third phase.

NGO Programs and Projects

The NGOs implement a large number and type of CD projects across many provinces and Norway has generally allowed them to pursue their own program goals. There is therefore a range of programs based on different criteria:

- longstanding partnerships with Norwegian NGOs (NCA, NRC, NAC) active across Afghanistan;
- new partner NGOs already active in Faryab where Norway aimed to allocate 20% of funds (DACAAR, ACTED);
- partners based in remote and poppy cultivating areas (AKF).

Overall the strategy of each NGO, and their combined programs, can be described as “multi-sectoral, multi-province and multi-partner”. If plotted on a chart, which is impossible as accurate geographical data is not compiled, it would look like a scattering of efforts across most of Afghanistan. If it was possible to do this annually, the area of coverage would most likely have shrunk each year, corresponding to deteriorating security. The NGO Safety Office reported that, by May 2011, extraordinary levels of conflict related activity were recorded. Evidence suggests that NGOs are not routinely targeted as a matter of Afghan Opposition Group policy but they are impacted as a statistical inevitability by the increase in violence, especially through collateral damage and accidental Improvised Explosive Device strikes.¹⁵⁰ Other changes over the decade are internal attempts to focus programs in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency as well as responding to the changing priorities of donors. All the NGOs funded by Norway for CD activities are also funded by other donors and some (ACTED, AKDN, DACAAR) are facilitating partners in NSP, contracted by MRRD.

Relevance

The community development projects fit with Afghan and Norwegian priorities for rural development and poverty reduction. NABDP is a National Priority Program contained in the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and is implemented by MRRD in the same way that NSP is. NABDP also aims to improve district level governance although it has done so in the absence of national policy on subnational governance. For the NGO projects, since 2008, Norway has required NGOs to demonstrate alignment with ANDS and Provincial Development Plans as a condition of funding. This has limited value because ANDS and its associated benchmarks are so general that it would be difficult to find an NGO project which was not aligned. At provincial level many Provincial Development Plans are, at present, little more than a list of all the projects that agencies are implementing. This means that NGO projects are included in Plans because they are already there rather than because they emerge from rational planning based on a consultative needs-based process. This was the case with NSP and NABDP at national level since they predated ANDS.

Effectiveness

Determining effectiveness across all programs has been a challenge, reflecting the absence of baseline data, the pressure to design and implement quickly, and the generally low quality of monitoring and reporting. For NGO programs and NABDP this means that results are presented as outputs rather than outcomes. Available external reviews all comment on this weakness.

National Area based Development Program (NABDP)

NABDP has also been externally evaluated twice, in 2006 as part of a global UNDP evaluation of assistance in conflict affected countries and in a 2010 management review. Neither attempted to assess outcomes but key output-oriented results were:

¹⁵⁰ Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, *Quarterly Report*, June 2011. It is worth noting that this important facility receives funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- DDAs established through democratic election processes in 382 districts in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Three years after initial formation, 123 DDAs have also held re-elections;
- District Development Plans (DDPs) have been compiled through community consultation processes in all districts and updated in 123 districts;
- 227 DDAs have received training on local governance, conflict resolution, gender equity, finance and procurement, and project implementation and management topics;
- DDAs have launched 16 District Information Centres across 8 provinces to collect reliable data on development, social, and economic aspects;
- 1,891 productive rural infrastructure projects have been completed across all 34 provinces, 803 projects are on-going, and 1,252 are in the survey and design process.

The least effective component of NABDP is the economic regeneration component which aimed to create jobs and incomes for people throughout the country. This is one of the most important challenges in Afghanistan, which various donor-funded projects have also aimed to address, but so far limited results have been realised.

NGO Community Development Programs

Broadly, the kinds of results obtained by Community Development NGOs are:

- Contribution to the overall success of NSP by those NGOs that are facilitating partners;
- Construction and, in the best case scenarios, maintenance of a large number of community facilities such as water sources, sanitation, irrigation, schools and health centres;
- Hygiene promotion activities which serve as an entry point to addressing women's empowerment issues;
- Capacity building of Afghan NGO partners which, over many years, has resulted in those NGOs being able to attract new donor funding in their own right;
- Establishment of high and sustainable incomes through saffron cultivation and attempts by local government to take cultivation to scale;
- Establishment of new small businesses through microcredit schemes;
- Reforestation and nurseries for vegetables, fruit trees and seedlings.

Efficiency

NGOs

For Norwegian NGO partners the Norad-commissioned Organisational Performance Reviews give reasonable assurance that NGOs either achieve, or become capable of achieving, Norway's requirements. However, they are general reviews and not specific for programming in Afghanistan.

Analysis based on experience of the Afghan team members and interviews with their networks identify the following factors as important in terms of efficiency:

- *Level of resources.* NGOs benefit from levels of resources that enable them to recruit professional staff and provide office facilities and transportation to ensure they can do their jobs. This is envied by government staff who work under far greater constraints;
- *Working through local partners* is likely to be more efficient, at least in terms of cost, although the kind of evidence that would support such a conclusion is not gathered;
- *Whether there are alternatives.* Where the measure of efficiency includes comparison with alternative means of provisions, if NGOs did not deliver services in more remote areas no one else would;
- *How scattered projects are.* In some cases scattering is necessary in order to achieve a fair ethnic and religious distribution in an area or region. However, project scattering reduces the combined impact of projects and imposes many administrative demands on the organisation as well as making monitoring more difficult, time consuming and expensive. Even at local level, whilst responding to a range of local needs is important, offering a wide range of project

interventions means that each project becomes more costly and less efficient than with more focused effort;

- *Pressure from the donor.* Whilst NGOs have improved the quality of monitoring, most reports are very long on description but short on results other than outputs. In part this is because the operating conditions are so difficult that most energy go into simply making things happen. In part it is because results in the less tangible areas such as capacity building are difficult for even the best organisations. But it is also the case that the NGOs continue to get funds, and at increased levels since 2007, so the incentives to improve further are not strong. In theory the Framework Agreements would, by virtue of guaranteed funding over longer periods, increase incentives but these are too recent to assess.

UNDP

NABDP uses the National Implementation Modality (NIM) through MRRD which makes it, in principle, more efficient in terms of cost than the Direct Implementation (DIM) used in the governance projects. A UNDP evaluation in 2006 found that NABDP contributed positively to strengthening existing mechanisms in MRRD but also commented that this amounted to consolidation of an inherently inefficient centralized system.¹⁵¹ The 2010 NABDP management review undertaken by UNDP¹⁵² probed efficiency in some depth, finding insufficient program oversight; uneven distribution of program benefits to regions; slow implementation rates; inadequate monitoring and evaluation; and sub-optimal reporting to donors and stakeholders. Some of these factors relate specifically to UNDP management but others would be common to any mechanism or partner.

NABDP is an interesting example of the difficulties of defining efficiency and the way the definition needs to change over time. In its early days, before DDAs became functional district institutions, NABDP projects were implemented mainly through the community level CDCs of NSP. At that time, donors, including Norway, criticised its duplication with NSP and questioned whether there was even a need for a separate program. It was also the case, in the early years that UNDP and NSP were seen as rival donor programs. However, as NABDP has brought the DDAs into existence, the separation of roles and responsibilities has begun to make more sense and the additional responsibility given to the CDCs may have served to strengthen their capacity as managers of infrastructure development because they had more funds to control. In time, as subnational governance policy becomes enacted, DDAs may or may not have a role in governance. If this happens, they may be shown to have been effective and efficient (or not) at a particular point in time but they would not have been sustainable. These are the kind of issues which are part of the context in conflict-affected states and highlight the need for much better monitoring and evaluation so that, at the appropriate time, decisions about the future of newly created institutions can be made on the basis of evidence about their performance.

Sustainability

Although all partners state that they aim for their programs to be sustainable, they all acknowledge the reality that, in the face of deteriorating security, few of them are. All those interviewed during the course of this evaluation were asked what they had learned about sustainability in the Afghan context. All responded, knowingly, that it was a difficult question. This highlights the point that discussion of sustainability may mainly take place at the abstract level based on definitions of sustainability which cannot be realised in such a context.

¹⁵¹ *Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict affected countries: Case Study Afghanistan*, UNDP Evaluation Office, 2006.

¹⁵² *Independent Management Review: National Area Based Development Programme*, UNDP, 2010.

In examples given to the team in Faryab, improved water facilities remain public after the withdrawal of the site engineering team and are not privatised by any of the wealthier and more powerful households in the community; water points are accessible to women at all times of the day when water is collected; community ownership of water points ensures that maintenance takes place as needed and the facilities are sustained; and behaviour change in hygiene results in lower morbidity. In the absence of follow up over a number of years it is impossible to know whether this happens in practice.

Discussions in Faryab with NGOs suggest that the best results are likely where NGOs:

- root their projects in strategy and where staff participate in government-led forums working towards joint development of policies and standards;
- coordinate their efforts fully with government and other development partners;
- base their design and implementation on participatory need assessment and ways of working so that the community has ownership and develops the capacity for operations and maintenance, which is the area most commonly undermining sustainability;
- work with a clear sectoral focus based on established professional skills and standards.

In contrast, sustainability is less where staff are not specialist, engage in non-measurable activities (such as 'empowerment'), or introduce new technologies which create dependency (such as hybrid seed). One of the NGOs in Faryab was deeply critical of one of the others for such practices. Also in Faryab, though the military PRTs are much criticised for constructing infrastructure such as schools or health centres when there are no teachers or health workers to provide the service, some NGO projects have been caught in the same 'trap'. This was one of the reasons one of the NGOs withdrew from engagement in school construction.

6.4.3 *Conclusions on Community Development*

There are many outputs, some of which appear impressive and the result of long established programs by experienced partners. For an evaluation such as this, which takes a strategic overview, there would need to have been credible evaluations during the decade. All the reviews and evaluations reviewed by the team commented on the weakness of the monitoring data at project or program level. However, the picture that emerges on outcomes is roughly the same as for the governance and education sector and points at limited outcomes and impact.

6.5 Gender Equality

In this section we deal mainly with specific gender projects as gender aspects of the selected governance, education and community development projects have been dealt with in the preceding sections. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming has been touched upon in the chapter on policy analysis and in the ARTF chapter.

6.5.1 *Gender portfolio analysis*

In chapter 3 the main elements of the gender equality policy and how this policy has been put in practice have been presented. In this section we focus on the portfolio. As gender is a cross-cutting priority the Embassy in Kabul reports on the importance of gender equality in their portfolio as indicated in the following table.

Table 6.10 Use of policy-marker "Gender equality" for development assistance managed by the Norwegian embassy in Kabul, 2007-2011 (NOK 1000)

PM - Gender equality	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Main objective	55 910	56 314	39 021	22 320	10 000
% av total	18 %	13 %	7 %	4 %	2 %
Significant objective	236 600	312 361	379 884	171 569	176 802
% av total	76 %	71 %	71 %	31 %	29 %
None	17 090	69 172	119 108	362 215	423 415
% av total	6 %	16 %	22 %	65 %	69 %
Grand Total	309 600	437 847	538 013	556 104	610 217

It is interesting to see that according to this table gender equality as a main or significant objective, becomes significantly less important in 2010 and 2011. This is due to the strategy to have less preferred funds and ARTF as an increasingly important channel (see chapter 5), which indicates the importance of a good policy dialogue on gender equality and good donor coordination.

This section concentrates on those projects where gender is the main component. Allocations through UNIFEM/UN Women constitute 80% of the expenditure as illustrated in table 6.11.

Table 6.11 Value of gender projects 2001-2010 in mill. NOK¹⁵³

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Sum
Gender	0	0	2,0	1,2	1,5	2,9	9,4	4,3	11,4	22,3	54
UNIFEM	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	2	11	20	43

6.5.2 Analysis of selected projects

UN Women (UNIFEM)

UN Women, and its predecessor UNIFEM until 2010, is the only exclusively women's organization to receive consistent funding from Norway since 2001. UN Women is supported by 13 bilateral donors, of which Norway is the largest contributor. This section concentrates on the role of UNIFEM/ UN Women in Afghanistan. UNIFEM was a subsidiary body of UNDP, which hindered its effectiveness.¹⁵⁴ In June 2010, the UN General Assembly agreed to merge UNIFEM with three other bodies to form UN Women as from February 2011 onwards. The underlying assumption is that UN Women is in a better position than UNIFEM to put gender equality higher on the international and national agenda's and to report on progress being made. Although there are various initial reviews and reports on internal and external challenges that UN women is facing, it is too early for a clear assessment and beyond the scope of this report that focuses on Norwegian support to UN Women in Afghanistan

Support to UNIFEM / UN Women in Afghanistan has covered various aspects of their activities, with a major focus on capacity building in the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA). This has been crucial in relation to development of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the mechanism for its implementation. It also supported Gender and Justice programs between 2007-09. Through the mechanism of UN Women Norway has supported a large number of

¹⁵³ 'Gender' as reported under DAC 151-70 (NORAD statistics). Data on Unifem from NORAD.

¹⁵⁴ DFID, Multilateral Aid Review, Assessment of UN Women, February 2011

NGOs and extended moral, political and material support in the most sensitive situations including the recent dispute over the issue of “shelters” (women protection centres). A Norad report¹⁵⁵ stressed the importance of the then UNIFEM's comparative advantage in analysis and advocacy especially since there is little awareness among donors about Afghanistan's history of gender and its role in conflict.

Interviews with Afghan stakeholders by the female Afghan team member showed no awareness about Norway's contribution to UN Women. This was true even in MOWA which acknowledges the role of UN Women without understanding the sources of funding or the value of moral support from donors. Nevertheless, a specific element of women's empowerment is Norway's support for recruitment of staff for MOWA through UN Women prior to their incorporation in the *tashkeel* (government establishment), which is appreciated.

In the joint SIDA and Norad Gender Review of 2011, due attention is paid to the role of UN Women in Afghanistan. This report points at two important external factors influencing performance: 1) the fact that the international restructuring has consequences for the country office in terms of staffing and this was expected to take months, 2) the bombing of the UN guesthouse in October 2009 resulted in major setbacks and delays because of tighter security regulations. These factors led to limited visibility of UN Women according to the review¹⁵⁶.

In line with our more general policy analysis that indicates that Afghan ownership of internationally agreed upon policy priorities remains limited, the joint gender review also reports that the strong support of UNIFEM in developing the NAPWA had as consequence that the ownership within MOWA remained limited. There were also no signs of increased capacity in MOWA as a result of UNIFEM support. There were other complaints of women's organizations to the joint gender review team about UNIFEM / UN Women' role that could not be verified.

The joint gender review identified a number of specific challenges for UN women in Afghanistan including the need for better reporting, a coordination role between civil society and the government and improved guidelines for funding. At the time of the field evaluation it was not yet clear how UN Women was going to address these challenges.

NGO projects

The focus of this section is on NGOs that are working to strengthen women's participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding activities at local, provincial and national levels. Some of them focus on international actors' obligation to safeguard the UN Security Council's resolutions in order to ensure women's participation and protection.

A positive example of Norway's positive role was in Faryab where last minute support from the PRT with the Governor and the NGO AWSDC ensured that two female representatives were mobilised to attend the Peace Jirga in Kabul in 2010. The representation of women from the provinces and the opportunity for them to link with women from other parts of the country is invaluable (see also chapter 7 on gender issues related to the Faryab strategy).

Women in Kabul also appreciated the various functions hosted at the Embassy which provided activists with safe space to meet each other as mentioned in interviews. An anecdote from the early years demonstrates the fact that capacity is built over a long period and does not necessarily relate to the purpose at the time. In this case, some women who participated in literacy programs

¹⁵⁵ Assessment of UNIFEM Afghanistan Norad Report 21/2009 Discussion.

¹⁵⁶ SIDA and Norad, Joint Gender Review Afghanistan, p. 29

provided by NCA local partners in 2002-04 in Parwan province are now serving in the local police force. An example showing the opposite effect was the discontinuation of funds to the newly formed AWSDC Women's Shura initiative in Parwan when Norway shifted its geographical presence to Faryab.

The joint gender review reported also on the gender strategy of DACAAR, one of the NGOs supported by Norway. DACAAR has established 23 Women Resource Centres at the local level. This is considered to be a remarkable achievement in a country where women are hardly ever allowed to go outside their villages. Literacy training is one of the activities of these resource centres. Despite some achievements, DACAAR's budget for targeted women's projects will be reduced.

In chapter 7 it is reported that most NGO projects work *in* or *around* conflict, and there few or no projects that work *on* conflict. This has also consequences for the role of women in conflict that has not been given much attention.

A strong point of Norwegian assistance is the representation of Norwegian women in the development program overall. Having access to foreign women role models is important because there are no women in senior positions in the provincial government so women's needs, can easily be overlooked. When the Development Adviser was a woman it resulted in wider engagement of national level women-led organisations in Faryab (as above) according to the women interviewed in Faryab. It also helped improve the situation of women prisoners in Faryab including the establishment by AWSDC of a shelter in Faryab. The presence or absence of funds for women-led organizations also impacts on the extent of their participation at the provincial level.

6.5.3 Conclusions

Through its support to UNIFEM/ UN Women Norway has contributed to national policies related to women such as NAPWA. However, there are indications that Afghan ownership is still limited.

Norway is recognised as a strong supporter of gender equality and the efforts on gender mainstreaming are reported elsewhere in the report. The support to UNIFEM / UN Women constitutes more than 80% of specific gender funding. In fact, it is too early after the previous joint Norad and SIDA gender review to assess whether UN Women has sufficiently addressed the challenges that were identified in that review, but also in reviews of other donors.

Despite Norway's reputation as strong promoter of gender equality, the Norwegian contribution and support for capacity building in the MOWA through UNIFEM / UN Women, especially the development of the policy framework have not been visible. Norway is not so eager to push visibility and it cannot be assessed whether this affects performance. On the other hand strengthening of Afghan civil society and advocacy regarding women's rights and gender equality has been very appreciated and is recognised as a specific strong point of Norway. It is also interesting that the importance of female staff both in donor and Afghan organisations is considered as an important aspect of gender strategies

Regarding overall gender impact, there is little impact outside Kabul and the more liberal cities. This makes Norway's moral support much more important than in other sectors, especially among those women who have never left the country and who have a different view about what is feasible than returnees.

6.6 Conclusions

Relevance

All selected projects in the development priority sectors are aligned with the Afghan policy and address priorities recognised by the international community. Therefore, relevance seems to high. However, the Afghan ownership of priorities is not always clear, which might negatively affect relevance. Furthermore, the strategies of the projects and programs to realise their objectives are sometimes problematic. Sometimes, there has been too much pressure to deliver with too much money involved. Also the integration of appropriate gender strategies has been problematic in a number of projects, despite all good intentions.

Effectiveness

In all sectors many positive outputs have been reported that vary from the construction of schools, democratic elections, trained police officers (including women), community infrastructure, etc. Specifically for education the reporting system of the MoE for the year 2010 reports on 7 million children enrolled in basic education, of which 40% girls. In urban areas there is hardly any difference between enrolment of girls and boys, whilst in rural areas enrolment of boys is twice that of girls. Enrolment in urban areas is 53% of the eligible population against 36% in rural areas. The figures show clear improvements over the years.

This positive part of the story is counterbalanced by the very limited indications on development outcomes and impact. We have only come across improved pedagogy skills of teachers and improved access to midwifery services. There are no clear signs yet of improved literacy or better quality of education, governance is still weak and gender equality is still far away despite some good initiatives and good examples at the micro-level.

The deteriorating security situation further complicates the situation. The already weak M&E systems become even weaker, because parts of the country cannot be accessed anymore. Moreover, weak M&E systems threaten accountability both towards the beneficiaries, but also to donors. There have been some incidents that M&E results led to conclusive action either to improve performance such as in the case of EQUIP or to stop funding such as in the case of ASGP, but also some positive examples at the local level have been reported.

Efficiency

Because of the limited local capacity and the deteriorating security situation projects tend to be quite costly. Whilst development outcomes are not very clear, the assessment of efficiency is not very positive.

Explanatory factors

Overall performance is to a large extent determined by factors outside the control of Norwegian government or its partners. This has to do with the drivers of insecurity and conflict that are insufficiently addressed in the various projects and programs. Furthermore, the capacity of Afghan institutions is still rather weak, which creates sustainability problems.

The role of Norway

Norway has consistently tried to avoid the imposition of separate and specific requirements for the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects. Even where Norway sets clear priorities such as in the case of women's rights and gender equality, the soft and humble approach adopted

raises the appearance of a donor driven agenda. This may lead to limited visibility and possibly to limited effectiveness.

The studies of the priority sectors have indicated that it is important to have specialist staff that can participate in working and steering groups. This has been the case for the education adviser who has been able to influence the strategy of EQUIP in a positive way. The responsibility for gender in the Embassy has always been combined with another responsibility such as development adviser or Faryab adviser. Despite good working relationships with other Embassies and agreements on division of labour, it is clear that for key sectors and themes the presence of experienced staff in that area is a key asset to realise the Norwegian development objectives and to keep track of progress.

Regarding gender equality Norway has a clear profile. Strengthening of Afghan civil society and advocacy regarding women's rights and gender equality has been very appreciated. It is also interesting that the importance of female staff both in donor and Afghan organisations is considered as an important aspect of gender strategies. Nevertheless, questions are raised whether with some more qualified staff more results could have been achieved. As the capacity of the Embassy in Kabul is limited, the question is whether the portfolio should be more concentrated in terms of sectors in order to improve performance and to manage for results.

7 The Norwegian Model in Faryab Province

7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report is a case study of Norway's model in Faryab province. Especially evaluation questions related to effectiveness and to a lesser extent efficiency and sustainability are addressed in this chapter as explained in chapter 2 on methodology. The specific Norwegian strategy for Faryab province is also analysed, and this analysis can be considered as deepening of the assessment of relevance in chapter 3.

Three methods were used. The main, and most important, one was a five day visit to the province by the Team Leader and two Afghan team members, both of whom were men. Gender-based cultural and security issues meant that the Afghan Gender specialist could not travel with the evaluation team. The Team Leader, who needed to stay with the PRT and be low profile in Maimana for security reasons, was responsible for interviews with stakeholders based on the PRT, including MFA, Norwegian military personnel and USAID. The Afghan consultants, who could not stay on the PRT because of security restrictions but who benefited by staying in a local hotel where they could informally interview secondary stakeholders, were responsible for Government and NGO programs. All the team interviewed the Governor, the Deputy Director of Education and UNAMA. The team member responsible for NGO programs was also able to visit two projects in the vicinity of the provincial capital. This provided valuable insights which have been used as triangulation rather than findings because the projects visited are not representative either of all NGO projects or of results across the timeframe.

A second method was document analysis. This focused on Norwegian commissioned research on Faryab which would provide answers to questions relating to context and internet research to provide background on PRTs. Annual monitoring reports of four NGOs operating in Faryab (ACTED, DACAAR, NCA and NRC) were also analysed. In addition, the team drew on broader document analysis and interviews for the other components of the evaluation. Finally, the team drew extensively on its combined knowledge and experience. The Team Leader is operationally familiar with PRT models in Uruzgan (Netherlands and Australia) and Bamiyan (New Zealand). The Afghan team members have in depth knowledge of subnational governance issues and the NGO/humanitarian sector. With different ethnic backgrounds and experience in different parts of Afghanistan, considerable thought was given to conflict dimensions.

7.2 Background to Norway's Involvement in Faryab

7.2.1 *Norway's Engagement in the PRT*

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were established in Afghanistan under US initiative and the responsibility was subsequently taken up by ISAF. Since 2003, the objective of the PRTs has been to extend the authority of the central government, enhance security in the provinces, and facilitate humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts. Up to 2005 they were involved at provincial level in maintaining the momentum of the political transition as defined in the Bonn Agreement. Since the elections in 2005, the main objective has been to bridge the gaps between provincial and district levels of government.

Over the years, PRTs have been increasingly criticised by different stakeholders for different reasons. Although PRTs were supposed to improve security through reconstruction activities, already in 2007 a World Bank report on service delivery stated that increasing insecurity had undermined all attempts to deliver benefits.¹⁵⁷ Since then anti-government elements have grown in power and the PRTs have had neither the capacity nor the resources to address what has generally been acknowledged to be a deepening legitimacy crisis of the Afghan Government. On the other hand, the Afghan Government has regularly criticised PRTs for operating in parallel to Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). By undertaking work themselves, the concern is that PRTs undermine capacity building in government. This criticism continues to date.¹⁵⁸

A published review of literature from US Government sources, NGOs, think tanks, and academia between 2004 and 2009 identifies trends and broad consensus on a number of issues. The most prominent of these is the failure to learn lessons throughout this period. Challenges and gaps which were identified as early as 2004 repeat and persist. In particular, PRTs in all provinces are characterised by poorly defined mission objectives and transition strategy; “culture clash” between civilian and military approaches and weak planning processes to integrate them; and discontinuity of human resources and loss of institutional knowledge.¹⁵⁹

The only publically available rigorous study of PRTs found by the team showed that, in 2007, the expansion of PRT numbers and funding had little impact on the interlinked political and security crises and the assumption that reconstruction and development would buy stability in Afghanistan had not been realised.¹⁶⁰ An important finding was that PRTs had strongly promoted the appearance of progress and, in doing so, distracted attention from what was described as the “dire state of governance” in many provinces. The study also elaborates on the perverse effects of PRT contracting processes and assessing technical requirements which have lacked rigour. These have included “empowering the kinds of authorities that Afghans despise”, such as warlords with records of human rights abuses. Although some donors paid lip service to principles of “Do No Harm” the study found that these often proved meaningless in the face of undesirable practices.

In 2010, the introduction to a report to the US House of Representatives on contracts to provide security to PRTs and other military operations stated *“The findings of this report range from sobering to shocking. In short, the Department of Defence designed a contract that put responsibility for the security of vital U.S. supplies on contractors and their unaccountable security providers. This arrangement has fuelled a vast protection racket run by a shadowy network of warlords, strongmen, commanders, corrupt Afghan officials, and perhaps others. Not only does the system run afoul of the Department’s own rules and regulations mandated by Congress, it also appears to risk undermining the U.S. strategy for achieving its goals in Afghanistan.”*¹⁶¹

This is mentioned because, although Norway has avoided these excesses, the reputation of all PRTs is at stake. Although Norway has aimed to develop its own unique model, as will be

¹⁵⁷ Service Delivery And Governance At The Sub-National Level In Afghanistan, World Bank, July 2007.

¹⁵⁸ The 2009 Declaration from the annual NATO Summit in 2009 states that the International Security Assistance Force’s (ISAF)’s objectives will be consistent with the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghanistan Compact, as well as the priorities of local actors. Summit Declaration on Afghanistan, Issued by Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl on 4 April 2009”. North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

¹⁵⁹ Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) Literature Review. Christoff Luehrs, CCO/CTNSP. 2010.

¹⁶⁰ B. J. Stapleton, ‘A means to what end? why PRTs are peripheral to the bigger political challenges in Afghanistan’ Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, 2007, Vol. 10, Issue 1. 2, pp 1-49.

¹⁶¹ Warlord, Inc. **Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan** Report of the Majority Staff, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives. June 2010.

discussed in relation to the development component, in the eyes of most observers these distinctions are usually not known or made.

The PRT in Faryab

Norway has led the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Faryab since 2005. In the early days, in common with PRT approaches in other provinces, the Norwegian military were involved in delivery of quick impact aid projects which were part of a strategy to 'win hearts and minds'. Such projects were, and continue to be, criticised across Afghanistan for their lack of sustainability and Norway's support to Maimana provincial hospital was one such example, mentioned by both military and civilian Norwegian officers during interviews. The PRT provided equipment that could not operate with the poor electricity supply. It could not be maintained because Afghan personnel were not trained and the manual was in Norwegian. In addition there were no running costs in the government budget.

As a result of such direct experience in the Faryab PRT, and on the basis of emerging evidence about the weaknesses of the hearts and minds approach across Afghanistan, the Norwegian military have not implemented their own projects since 2006. The 'Norwegian Model', outlined in the Faryab Strategy (discussed below) clearly distinguishes between and separates the roles of civilian and military actors. From the humanitarian policy perspective (discussed in Chapter 3) this has been positive and has enabled NGO partners to conduct their programs without association with the military.

Within and between the military, the Norwegian Government and NGOs, notably NRC, there has been lively contestation in the public domain on the issue of separation of military and civilian roles during the last five years, reaching a climax at the end of 2010. From the military perspective, described during interviews with senior outgoing and incoming officers during the field mission, the lack of a 'toolbox' (in the form of projects) means they have nothing motivational to offer communities after they have been stabilised militarily. They argue that providing security is the easier part of the NATO PRT agenda to deliver on. In contrast, poor governance, which is generally acknowledged to be one of the key drivers of insecurity and therefore a more critical issue, is much harder to address and needs closer cooperation between military and civilian efforts. This issue is discussed later in the chapter.

7.2.2 Strategy in Faryab

Two strategies inform the Norwegian Model in Faryab: the Faryab Strategy¹⁶², which is specific to the province; and Norway's Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation 2009-11¹⁶³, which covers the whole country.

The Faryab Strategy was published in 2009 and is a joint document of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Justice and Police. As an agreed whole of government approach it is an achievement in itself. Key elements of the strategy, relevant to this evaluation, are:

- The separation of military and development support together with better coordination between civil and military actors.
- The intention to be a driving force for the development of models of *Afghanisation*.
- The intention to support UNAMA in its lead role as coordinator of international efforts.

¹⁶² 'A Strategy for comprehensive Norwegian civilian and military efforts in Faryab province, Afghanistan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice and the Police - May 2009.

¹⁶³ Norway's Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation 2009-11. Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kabul.

In aiming to be a driving force in developing models of Afghanisation, Norway's approach is to avoid international assistance becoming a substitute for, or an obstacle to, Afghan-led development. To achieve this, the strategy states that the civilian component should be drawn out of the PRT and linked more closely to the local authorities and the UN (UNAMA) whose mandate is to support the government in its efforts to improve critical areas. Civilian development projects will be geared towards the local authorities and the UN. On the military side support to the police and justice sector through capacity building and mentoring is deemed important.

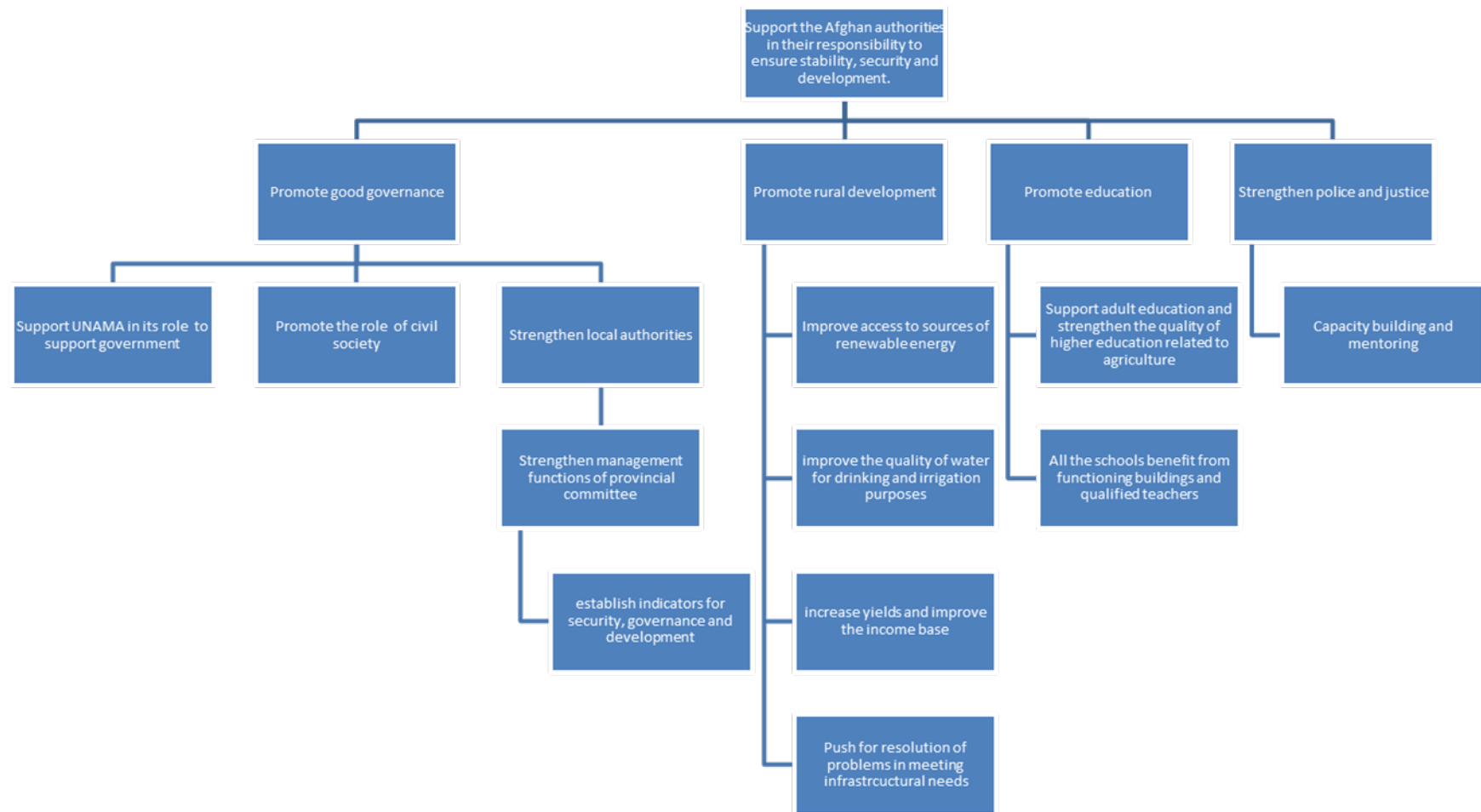
Other important aspects of the Strategy relate to, promoting good governance through strengthening local authorities and promoting the role of civil society, education and rural development and are in line with Norway's priorities (see chapter 3). Education is stated to be the main sector for development cooperation with the aim of supporting the Afghan authorities' ambition to make Faryab the first province where all the schools benefit from functioning buildings and qualified teachers. Support to rural development aims at increasing yields and improving the income base, improving the quality of water for drinking and irrigation purposes, increasing sources of renewable energy and meeting infrastructural needs by pushing for resolution of the problems in using funding earmarked by WB and ADB.

In order to support local authorities, in recognition of the need for a solid data base for planning and policy Norway states its intention to take the initiative to establish indicators for security, governance and development in Faryab in close cooperation with Afghan authorities and UNAMA. The strategy also states that Norway will also use the indicators in the management of its own efforts. No further specification is made on the promotion of civil society.

The Strategic Plan for Development Cooperation 2009-11 includes special priority for Faryab. It states that the main support from Norway will be channelled through national programs although it will also be given either through NGOs or by earmarking projects for the province under national programmes with the aim of speeding up development. Aid to Faryab will constitute a maximum of 20% of total Norwegian development aid to Afghanistan.

Both documents are useful in spelling out broad priorities. However, as strategies against which it is possible to make choices and measure progress they are less useful. The Faryab strategy document looks more like a platform to be shared by concerned actors than a strategy in technical sense. It cannot be considered as a comprehensive development strategy: it does not formalise a clear intervention logic, not all development issues are addressed and transversal issues are presented at the same level as sectoral issues. In the diagram on the next page the evaluation team presents their own reconstruction of the intervention logic underpinning the strategy document. In terms of sectors and themes, good governance, rural development, support to justice and police, and above all education are key priorities. Good governance implies both support to civil society and reinforcement of local authorities. The support to UNAMA is to be understood as a way of supporting local authorities indirectly. However, this logical structure is not clearly spelled out in the document. Therefore this is only one of the possible interpretations of the strategy. Moreover, limited or no attention is being paid to risk assessments or risk mitigation strategies (see also chapter 3).

Another problematic issue is that the underlying theory of change is not clear. As the Faryab strategy dates from 2009 one would expect a more solid theory of change based on learning from experience and literature (see also chapter 3). In fact, there are some clear outstanding elements of the strategy that have been indicated above, but this does not make it a comprehensive strategy yet that starts with analysis of the main drivers of insecurity and conflict and how to address these.



7.3 Development Portfolio Analysis

The Portfolio

The portfolio has been delivered through Norway's main channels:

ARTF - NSP and EQUIP;

UNDP - ASGP (DIM) and NABDP (NIM);

Bilateral - Norwegian Ministry of Justice (police and prisons) and NGOs.

The table below summarises the partners, projects and implementation status and is presented in order to reflect the way in which projects are seen by the Government in Faryab. The Governor, Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD) and Department of Education (DoE) have strong ownership of NSP, NABDP and EQUIP, considering them to be Afghan programs not donor programs. Norway has earmarked NSP at national level but not specifically for Faryab. EQUIP was earmarked for Faryab up to 2009-2010. ASGP is an on-going project of UNDP but Norway did not continue funding after 2009 because of poor performance.

Table 7.1 Projects and implementing partners in Faryab

	Implementing Partner	Project	Status
Government	Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD)	NSP (ARTF funded)	Ongoing
		NABDP (UNDP-funded)	Ongoing
	Education (DOE)	EQUIP (ARTF)	Ongoing
UNDP (parallel)	Governor's Office	ASGP	Ongoing
NGOs (parallel)	NRC, NCA, ACTED, DACAAR	Various	Ongoing
Norway (parallel)	Ministry of Justice	Prison	Complete
	EUPOL	Police	Ongoing

Faryab specific Allocations

The table below shows approximate allocations of earmarked funds for Faryab. As some figures cannot be disaggregated accurately, the intention here is to provide a sense of relative funding to government and NGO-implemented projects.

Table 7.2 Project allocations Faryab 2006-2009, million NOK

Agency	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total	% Total
NCA	3	17	34	13*	69	24%
ACTED	-	-	24	32	56	20%
DACAAR	1	13	8	15	37	13%
NRC	11	15			26	9%
UNDP/NABDP	12	7	-	-	19	7%
EQUIP					80**	28%
Total	27	52	66	60	287	

* 1/3 of 39m allocated for 3 provinces. All figures rounded. **50 allocated for EQUIP and 1/2 of 60 for NSP/EQUIP combined.

Over all years approximately 66% of funds were allocated to NGOs. Two NGOs (NCA and ACTED) receive 44% of the total funds. About 28% appears to have been allocated to the government-implemented EQUIP. Only 7% was allocated to the government-implemented program NABDP. In 2008 the Afghan authorities were particularly disappointed that Norway did not discuss the allocation to NGOs with the Ministry because both NGOs were Facilitating Partners of NSP. This was compared unfavourably with Canadian CIDA who sought regular inputs and endorsement for funding to NGO funding whether or not they were NSP partners.

Management and organisation

The Norwegian PRT civilian team comprised three officers with responsibilities for Political, Development and Civmil Coordination. With frequent absences for R&R, they cover for each other which has the advantage that each understands the role and activities of the others. The Development Adviser is supported by two Afghan Program Officers. Management of the portfolio, and maintenance of the archives, is done from the Embassy in Kabul, not in Faryab. The role of the Development Adviser in Faryab is liaison with partners. As there is no longer earmarking for government-led projects there is little interaction with the line departments as the direct funding partners are UNAMA and the NGOs. The Development Adviser has bilateral discussions with the Governor and attends meetings such as the Provincial Development Committee and Inter Agency Standing Committee as an observer. The Afghan Program Officers used to participate actively in Sector Working Groups but their role is now that of observers.

The role of the Development Adviser has changed with the three rotations since 2005. The first, who was much praised during interviews with the Education Department, was very active in supporting EQUIP at a time when funds were earmarked and when security allowed access to more areas. The role of the second adviser, when there was no longer any earmarking, shifted towards supporting UNAMA's coordinating role, by facilitating contacts with other parts of the PRT and NGO partners. It also involved encouraging NGOs to work more closely with the Government which is discussed below. The second Development Adviser also set up a database. The third Development Adviser was fairly new in post at the time of the evaluation and was beginning to be heavily involved in transition planning.

7.4 Results of the Funded Programs

This section aims to answer questions about the extent to which intended results were achieved. It briefly describes the results from individual programs, under the same headings as in the previous section. This question refers to effectiveness, but in some cases considerations regarding efficiency are also added on the same project. All information was obtained through document reviews complemented with interviews with personnel in the programs using data provided by them.

7.4.1 *Government-implemented National Priority Programs*

National Solidarity Program (NSP)

NSP has reached all districts in Faryab except Kohistan and Gormach, establishing 1,002 Community Development Councils (CDCs) which have implemented 2,517 projects. ACTED and DACAAR are two of the NGO facilitating partners in the NSP which gives them credibility in the communities and gives them a base upon which to implement Norwegian-funded activities. Interviews with officials in NSP and the Head of one CDC near Maimana confirmed that NSP is popular with ordinary Afghans because they consider that they implement it themselves. Only a handful of CDCs have been blacklisted or permanently stripped of their funding, indicating high levels of transparency and accountability. It is said that NSP can also operate in some areas outside government control, with the example given of one village developing 14 km paved road, a wheat mill, 14 wells and 4 culverts in exchange for providing insurgents with one tenth of the humanitarian assistance they received. This, as with all projects in conflict zones, cannot be independently verified. Efficiency of NSP, according to officials in DRRD, would be greater if the department took over some of the functions held by facilitating partners who have high operating costs and no longer offer value for money (triangulated in section 5.6).

Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP)

Faryab has 477 schools, 83 of which were built through EQUIP1. This is seen by the Governor and the DoE as the most substantial assistance in the province and they expressed particular gratitude to the first Development Adviser who was renowned for his hard work and respected for his understanding of the province. DoE associate the current poor performance of EQUIP2 with Norway's decision to stop earmarking for the province, but according to other sources security also played a role (see also section 6.3). Whilst DoE understands Norway's theoretical logic, they are acutely aware of the reality that funds provided centrally are either disbursed too slowly to the province or not disbursed at all. They do not, however, understand why NGOs continue to receive direct funding, which officials view as equivalent to earmarking. They believe that Norway is more committed to the NGOs as partners than to government

Experience of constructing schools through local education *shura* (committees) was positive but DoE was deeply frustrated with construction companies contracted centrally by the Ministry. These were blighted by delays and cost overruns because companies lacked knowledge of the availability of construction material and equipment and the logistics of transportation to the province, and choice of contractors not always according to best value for money criteria. This caused long delays and unfinished schools. Substandard delivery of schools has already been mentioned as an issue in the chapter on EQUIP (Section 6.3). As Faryab should be the first province where all the schools benefit from functioning buildings and qualified teachers according to the Strategy, there is a clear risk of going off-track. Earmarking of EQUIP funds for Faryab is not in line with national priorities and it is not strictly necessary to earmark funds to realise specific goals.

National Area Based Development Program (NABDP)

Although NABDP is funded through UNDP it is implemented through DRRD and therefore seen as a government program. Several projects (up to \$60,000) have been successfully implemented through the CDCs of NSP and others up to \$200,000 implemented through the District Development Assemblies created under NABDP. Like EQUIP, efficiency has been affected by central-level contracting of companies for larger projects. NABDP is part of the mechanism to improve both the planning process and the implementation of locally determined projects but the overall limited capacity for planning at planning and district levels remains weak and the absence of structures which are trusted leads to political manipulation.

As shown in table 7.2, NABDP has had only NOK19m earmarked for Faryab in 2006 and 2007 which is only 7% of the total. From 2008 no funds were earmarked. In 2008 MRRD requested funds from Norway specifically for Faryab but the request was turned down.

7.4.2 Parallel Programs

Afghanistan Subnational Governance Program (ASGP)

According to the Faryab Strategy, Norway aimed to support good governance by strengthening the management functions of the Provincial Governor's Office, supporting the Provincial Development Plan process, and strengthening accountability of the Provincial Development Committee. The route to achieving these was through ASGP's support to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). After five years there are few tangible results of ASGP, due to lack of a clear vision and a proper institutional and legal framework, and diverging visions between national and international actors (discussed in Governance section 6.2). We had a confirmation of this divergence during interviews: staff attributes limited success to a top-down design for reform, which they believe is unrealistic in the context of Faryab, and to protracted and non-transparent UNDP systems for procurement. ASGP is a capacity building project which brings no tangible physical outputs to a provincial government which seeks these above all else. Cooperation is not helped by

the fact that UNDP's technical expertise tends to be through junior personnel in a culture where age and experience are preferred. Government officials did not see a purpose to the role of the advisers. Where there has been success, such as in municipal government reforms which were nationally praised in 2009, they have not been sustained following changes in key personnel. An unintended result of ASGP which is positive in terms of capacity building is that several officials who have improved their skills under ASGP have left government for better paid jobs with NGOs.

NGO implemented Programs

A wide variety of projects have been implemented by NRC, NCA, DACAAR and ACTED. The largest of these are the Rural Development Program (RDP), WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education), Youth Education package (YEP) and Information and Legal Counselling (ICLA), all of which have several sub components. The Afghan members of the team spent considerable time trying to gather and assess evidence of results but, although there were baseline surveys in most cases, monitoring reports contain many examples of outputs but almost nothing about outcomes¹⁶⁴. According to these reports, most projects managed to deliver the planned outputs and in some cases targets were exceeded, also thanks to decreased costs. Security problems affected output delivery in very few cases. Droughts and natural disasters are mentioned as an equally significant intervening factor than security. This less than could be expected reported impact of security is maybe explained by location choices or could be the sign of scarce interest in deeper analyses by NGOs themselves.

In interviews with the PRT Development Team we were informed that their GIS database enables tracking of activities across the province. This is reasonably effective in showing the location of partner projects and the sectors they are involved in. Only limited interpretation of the data is possible because the reports from partners do not distinguish between discrete activities within projects and projects themselves. At present the database is not comprehensive enough to support any assessment of impact.

One aspect of the database which is very useful is that it shows where NGOs work is concentrated. Norway's partners work in the more secure districts, and the poorer Pashtun communities who reside in the more seriously conflict-affected areas receive limited assistance. This even if, according to the embassy's analysis of the database information, about one-third of all registered outputs/activities have been implemented in the districts of Almar, Qaisar and Ghormach, considered the most insecure districts in the Faryab.

The database does not allow to track the trend over time. NGOs are clearly confronted by the dilemma between reaching out to needy areas - but where insecurity can negatively affect efforts - and focusing on areas where there are greater chances of success. The Norwegian NGO partners are still operating in insecure districts and are daily taking considerable risks through their movements within and through insecure areas. Several cases of kidnappings during 2011 (one with a fatal outcome) demonstrate this. The response to the increased security risk is not limited to movements to "safe" areas, but has involved several additional mitigating measures to maintain access (e.g. reliance on local personnel and negotiations with local power brokers). However, as

¹⁶⁴ An exception is the report of ACTED on the Rural Development Program in 2009, where a series of first results in terms of changes for beneficiaries is listed for all components. These include for example income increase for farmers who received seeds and inputs to reductions in animal mortality rates, for the agricultural component; improvements in personal, household and food hygiene practices for the Hygiene component; high percentage of trainees of vocational training courses who started their workshop, for the vocational training component; high pass rates for end-of-course literacy tests as a proof of increased knowledge; etc. Impacts are also mentioned in a NCA report, but in vague rather than in SMART terms (e.g. "increased awareness...."). Most other reports are just focused on activities and outputs.

the insurgency has become active in new areas, opportunities for “civilian” access has certainly diminished.

A concrete example of how the no-arms policy was implemented by one of the humanitarian NGOs, NRC is the following project.

Support to Return and Integration of Displaced Persons to the Faryab Province, March 2007 till March 2008.

The goal of the project was to achieve a situation where displaced persons’ access to durable solutions would be improved by protection and promoting their rights through increased literacy and access to primary education and the provision of information, counselling and legal aid. This would be achieved through two primary objectives:

- 1) Increase access to education through the construction and equipping of 10 school facilities. Primary schools constructed and provided with furniture and basic teaching aids.
- 2) Support good governance in Faryab through the provision of training, needs assessment/ referrals and legal assistance to both the state justice and through the communities it seeks to service.

A part of this project envisaged cooperation with the Norwegian Police Project which had proven to be slightly difficult due to the different security standards of NRC and the Norwegian security presence in Faryab. As an impartial, independent organization, NRC has a very strict no-arms policy in Afghanistan and cannot be associated directly with an armed unit, such as the Norwegian military camp in Maimana. Moreover, the 24/7 armed escort routine followed by the police made NRC premises an unacceptable meeting ground. Thanks to great will and commitment to cooperate the two parties continued to liaise closely on neutral ground, which slightly complicated some of the logistics arrangements.

As an example of a different approach, USAID and CERP use NGOs as implementing partners, like Norad, but in open association with the US military. In this way they reach out to unsafe areas, at the expense of clear military-civilian separation. If donors make choices, local NGO partners can sometimes follow both approaches depending on the donor involved – we found at least one case in which this happens, although we did not receive confirmation that this is a frequent case. .

7.4.3 Norwegian Implemented Projects

Rule of Law (police)

Norwegian police officers in Maimana perform various roles including acting as mentors and monitors in the City Police and Justice Program. Some positive progress is being made but the pace, as has been documented in numerous publically available reports, is very slow, most notably because the majority of recruits (47 of 50 in the current training) are functionally illiterate and cannot perform basic functions such as documenting evidence. Other challenges are a ‘missing middle’ between capable senior leadership and low level officers which leads to a culture of micromanagement and bottlenecks because top officers do not trust their rank and file. These are very long term challenges which require substantive improvement in overall governance in Afghanistan and meaningful security sector reform.

Police training is a necessary but not sufficient means of developing a legitimate and trusted Afghan National Police. These issues are discussed in more detail in the context section of this report.¹⁶⁵ Norwegian police officers in Faryab appear sensitive to local culture and politics and are realistic about the time frame and conditions for progress. As one officer told us “*In Norway we face*

¹⁶⁵ The Police program is excluded from the evaluation owing to the classification of the majority of documentation.

the same issues of power and money, it's just that the consequences in Afghanistan are more serious. We were a lot like them a hundred years ago but we expect them to change more quickly than we did".

On the side of the Afghan National Police (ANP), much media attention has been given to the fact that the majority are illiterate, that corruption is rampant, and that considerable numbers are drug addicted. These are facts which are not disputed, even by the Afghan government. But the reasons why this state of affairs has come about owes as much to the international community as it does to Afghans themselves. There is no shortage of analysis about the problem, nor of recommendations to improve the situation. However, at the heart of one of the most important challenges facing Afghanistan lie a myriad of interests, issues and dilemmas which perhaps only the most naïve might argue could have been dealt with differently in the context of a global 'War on Terror'. The text box below describes the challenges of the ANP and the reform process:

Reforming the Afghan National Police

"Before criticising the ANP, the efforts of many honest and effective Afghan police should not be ignored. One cannot overstate the bravery of those Afghans who choose to don the uniform of an ANP officer in an environment of acute and ever-present danger. The job of a policeman/policewoman in Afghanistan ranks as one of the most dangerous in the world. Nevertheless, despite seven years of international assistance, billions of dollars investment, and numerous reform programs, dividends have been little more than negligible. The ANP remain ineffectual, corrupt and more of a danger to the security of Afghan citizens, the government and the stability of Afghanistan itself, than a solution to its many pressing problems".

Quotation from 'Reforming the Afghan National Police' Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (London) and the Foreign Policy Research Institute (Philadelphia) 2010.

Prison Advisory Project

An external review of the Prison Advisory Project found that it had a positive impact on the provincial prison in supporting physical improvements which laid a foundation for adherence to international norms and protection of human rights.¹⁶⁶ However, in focusing on short term measures to meet standards, little attention was paid to coordination with the central Afghan authorities and other donors which weakened the project's ties to the overall prison sector and missed opportunities to engage with and feed into reforms. In terms of aid effectiveness the project, which was implemented by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, would have benefited from greater integration with the overall development assistance program in Faryab and Kabul.

7.5 Results against the Faryab Strategy

In this section we investigate the extent to which Norwegian development assistance in Faryab has contributed to the ultimate goal of the Faryab Strategy by applying two key elements of its approach: the separation of military and civilian assistance –with coordination of the respective roles - and the intention to be a driving force in developing models of Afghanisation (directly or by supporting UNAMA).

Before going into the details of these two issues, it has to be recognised that the thematic priorities provided in the Faryab Strategy are clearly reflected in NGO projects. Education is addressed through teacher training and school construction by ACTED and NRC and literacy courses are delivered by ACTED and DACAAR; vocational training is tackled by ACTED with the Maimana

¹⁶⁶ Review of the Prison Advisory Project in Faryab, Afghanistan. NOARD and CMI, Oct 2010.

Centre. Rural development through better food security and water and sanitation are the focus of DACAAR, while water and renewable energy are a key component of NCA's program. Good governance was also pursued through the strengthening of civil society, particularly by NCA (but indirectly also by the other NGOs in setting up community institutions), and to some extent also through involvement of local authorities – although with some limitations as it will be shown in the following paragraphs. There was also some support to the police and justice, e.g. NRC's legal training to law enforcement structures. By interviewing stakeholders in the field (NSP officials, NABDP, educated figures, villagers and government senior officials), we had the feedback that particular choices of outputs made by NGOs within the thematic priorities were not always relevant. Washing hands projects in remote villages where people have no access to the needed water, building a straw berry farm for a rich land owner, or an apple orchard, a short term literacy course with high stipends to attract those who are not interested in getting literacy at all are some of the examples we were told.

Furthermore, we found less consistency with the two general principles mentioned above.

7.5.1 *Separation of Military and Civilian Assistance with coordination of respective roles*

Perhaps the biggest issue for humanitarian actors throughout the decade has been that of 'Civmil' separation. There are many aspects to the debate but at its heart is the involvement of military forces in assistance to 'win hearts and minds' which is normally undertaken by humanitarian and development agencies. In Afghanistan confusion arises because, like the UN, the PRTs have an explicitly political mandate to extend the reach of the central government. In most PRTs, military personnel are involved in one way or another with the delivery of aid. Even where there is separation of functions, civilian personnel cannot go 'outside the wire' without the protection of the military so that any distinctions are blurred.

For those NGOs which define themselves solely as humanitarian actors the issues are clear and they seek to deliver assistance on the basis of established humanitarian principles. NRC is one such NGO and it has advocated strongly in Afghanistan, Norway and internationally for complete civmil separation. This is not to say that the issue has gone unchallenged in Norway and there have been lively challenges in the public domain from military personnel.¹⁶⁷

A thorough analysis of the civil-military coordination is not the purpose of this evaluation and more in-depth analysis than allowed by this assignment would be required to properly assess this aspect. We limit ourselves to a few considerations.

Since discontinuation of earmarking for education and NABDP, the visibility of Norway's funds is now predominantly in the form of NGO programs. As the NGOs largely determine where, how and in what sectors they work and, as they generally work in safe areas, there has been no connection between the military efforts to support improved governance and the development program. The unintended consequence is that the development program appears to be ring-fenced in the relatively better off districts while the grievances of the poorer and more conflict affected areas are less well attended.

Coordination among actors, and especially between military and civilian actors, has been there. According to embassy staff, there has been extensive coordination and contact between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Police and Justice, from the

¹⁶⁷ See for instance R. Solberg, 'Bistand på ville veier. Norsk politikk er med på å styrke opprøret i Faryab-provinsen i Afghanistan', *Aftenposten*, December 6, 2010.

political level and down to the responsible desk officers, and we also found examples of coordination in the field. However, this does not correspond to a coordinated approach. As insecurity has increased over the last few years the areas in which the NGOs operate has shrunk considerably. NGOs tend to attribute increasing insecurity to increasing military activity and this reinforces their argument for complete separation. From the military perspective, the NGOs are seen as naïve about the drivers of insecurity and see the issue mainly in terms of the effect on their programs rather than the effect on security and development in the province. Because the military are engaged mainly in the conflict affected districts of the south-west, and because the NGOs either established their original programs in the safer districts or have withdrawn to them as security has deteriorated, the effect is that there is almost no connection between Norway's military and civilian programs.

NGOs claim to follow principles of Do No Harm. NCA has a pillar relating to conflict. Under the Conflict prevention and transformation program, NCA delivered training on peace building and conflict transformation and developed a conflict analysis tool. Conflict is mostly addressed in its concrete daily instances – water, land and family conflicts. Most disputes and conflicts in Faryab are local, and the issue at stake in the majority of cases is control over water, land and grazing rights. If the parties to such disputes are bonded to the warlord system, conflicts may easily escalate¹⁶⁹. By building community institutions, strengthening the existing ones like shuras and their relationships with government, and training community leaders in conflict transformation, projects contribute to increased security although in a different way from the military. The People's Council Project implemented by the provincial government under the NSP, and aimed at strengthening shuras and government-shura relations and reciprocal confidence, had a substantial impact in solving community disputes, Shura problems, tribal conflicts and issues relating to violence against women, according to ACTED who facilitated the project. The Community Development Councils promoted under the NSP distinguish themselves from traditional tribal shuras as they are elected by citizens through a transparent democratic process. Their greater legitimacy helps strengthening social cohesion and preventing conflicts.

On the other hand NGOs tend to remain in safer areas because they are the only ones where delivery can be guaranteed. Some of them had to withdraw from insecure areas, e.g. ACTED had to withdraw from Ghormach where a school was destroyed by the opposition. Even NRC, which defines itself as a humanitarian agency, was clear that its work in Faryab has been about recovery, not life-saving, which means that it does not justify any risk-taking in relation to security. NGOs therefore work *around* conflict, and sometimes in the margins of or *in* conflict, in the sense that they are operating in a context which is insecure. But they are not working *on* the main conflict in the sense that they do not define it as an issue to understand more deeply and try to address. The main drivers of conflict and insecurity are not targeted. The main underlying theory of change seems to be that poverty reduction through socio-economic activities will contribute to peace and security.

In Norway's broader development policy there is commitment to conflict sensitive planning. This was a feature of early planning in Faryab in 2007 with the conflict analysis undertaken under the auspices of Norad.¹⁷⁰ This looked at the drivers of conflict and set out a range of appropriate responses. It was intended that such analysis be undertaken on a regular basis and that objectives and indicators would be identified so that progress could be measured.

¹⁶⁹ Ståle Ulriksen, Norway's political test in Faryab, Afghanistan: how to lead? Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre, Noref Policy Brief No. 10 July 2010.

¹⁷⁰ Afghanistan: an assessment of conflict and actors in Faryab Province to establish a basis for increased Norwegian civilian involvement. Petter Bauck, Arne Strand, Mohammed Hakim, Arghawan Anwari. Feb 2007.

In the bigger picture, the 'Winning Hearts and Minds' research conducted by Tufts University, with a Norwegian funded case study on Faryab¹⁷¹, highlights that Norway's focus is mainly on military and development solutions. The main grievances that drive continuing conflict are political and related to ethnic-based struggle for power would not be sufficiently analysed and addressed by Norway, according to the study. Some of these issues have been considered in the preparation of development programmes. Still, an overall comprehensive analysis with the purpose of planning is missing.

At the end of 2011, at the time of the evaluation, a Provincial Profile of Faryab was being finalised with an NGO. This had elements of conflict analysis within it which provided useful updated information. However, there had been no development input and the result was that the draft contained a very long description but very little which could be used to inform conflict sensitive development programming.

The Norwegian Development Advisers and their civilian political and civil colleagues have multiple interactions with the military and benefit from continuing updates about security issues. These also form a kind of context analysis. The Embassy commissioned a conflict analysis through Norad/CMI in 2007, and a more comprehensive external analysis in 2009 (made public by Tufts in January 2011). A similar analysis was performed by the Liaison Office in 2011. The military side of the PRT has regularly shared with RNE analyses on the drivers of conflict and the dynamics of the security situation. However, the available information has not been translated into any overall plan on how to actively address the drivers of the conflict more thoroughly and has not been used to determine choices of channels, partners and interventions. The result is that the portfolio, in terms of addressing the drivers of conflict, has not changed. It is a mirror image of the channels, partners and interventions of the overall Afghanistan program rather than being specifically tailored for Faryab in the light of the political, governance and security challenges and risks. Especially in a context where staff are few and the pressures are high, a different and more practical format and way of approaching conflict sensitive planning would be of great help¹⁷².

7.6 Development of Models of Afghanisation

Provincial Government Capacity and Legitimacy

Norway's ambition is to be a driving force in developing models of Afghanisation. There is the intention to avoid international assistance becoming a substitute for, or an obstacle to, Afghan-led development and gear civilian development projects towards local authorities and the UN in their supporting role to the government. Capacity of the government, at all levels, is inarguably weak and there is consensus between Norway and the Governor that more direct support to Faryab is needed if legitimacy is to be improved in line with the overall state-building agenda of ISAF and UNAMA. The point of divergence is on the means by which support is provided. The Governor, whilst grateful for Norway's contribution, believes that his needs are not met through the twin track approach of funding through the central government and through NGOs.

The analysis suggests that the provincial government's legitimacy is affected by many factors. Among these are historically contentious centre-state relations and the strong autonomy of NGOs.

¹⁷¹ G. Gompelman, *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the relationship between Aid and Security on Afghanistan's Faryab Province*. Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University. Jan 2011.

¹⁷² Some useful frameworks and tools for conflict analysis in the context of development programmes are listed here: <http://www.qsdrc.org/index.cfm?objectid=3133E975-14C2-620A-277DFFB9CA069184#tools>.

In addition, NGOs appear to be better resourced than the provincial government (e.g. they are never short of vehicles and computers, and staff are paid higher salaries) and, according to the governor, better equipped to showcase their results.

Funding from the central government is uncertain: although Norway's support to ARTF is good practice in terms of harmonisation and alignment, the dysfunctionality of the government system and the excessively high level of corruption mean that the required funds do not flow to the provinces in the way it is envisaged. Funds which were supposed to have been allocated by the Ministry of Education for 10 schools in 2011 have not even been budgeted. From the point of view of officials "now no-one here knows where the Norwegian money is going". Officials at provincial level are therefore not convinced that the Ministry of Finance and service delivery Ministries are really engaged in Public Administrative Reform.

In Faryab responsibility for coordination lies with the Governor. However, as is the case for all Governors in Afghanistan, the absence of policy clarity about the roles and responsibilities of subnational government means that his power to coordinate national programs across the line departments is weak. An example mentioned to the team was that the inefficiency of having two broadly similar community institutions, Community Development Councils established under NSP and the education shura set up under EQUIP.

This is a common problem with centrally designed programs, not only in different ministries but sometimes in the same one. In the line departments, staff respond to centrally determined goals and objectives that do not always take into account local needs. Education is a good example of a contested service. There is the perception that the attention of central government and donors is on numbers of children attending, especially of girls, with apparent disregard for the poor quality of teaching which results in high dropout levels and low achievement.

There is also the criticism that spiritual values are ignored and the demand for Islamic education underestimated. In Faryab responsibility for coordination lies with the Governor. However, as is the case for all Governors in Afghanistan, the absence of policy clarity about the roles and responsibilities of subnational government mean that his power to coordinate national programs across the line departments is weak. An example mentioned to the team was that the Governor cannot address inefficiencies in implementation through the broadly similar Community Development Councils established under NSP and the education shura set up under EQUIP. This caused confusion at local level and was inefficient because the same people tended to sit on each committee and much of the content discussed, about process and community involvement was the same.

Relations with NGOs

On the other hand, NGOs are not seen by the provincial government as instrumental to greater capacity and legitimacy. There are divergences on priorities: the governor has been particularly concerned about those aspects of NGO programs that do not deliver tangible benefits, when the primary demands of the people would be for jobs and electricity. As already said, during earmarking, the combined local authority and UN allocation was only one third compared with two thirds for NGOs. Since Norway ceased earmarking, the specific allocation for Faryab for 2008-2010 is primarily to NGOs. At more than NOK 60m per year this is a very prominent and visible contribution. It is not clear whether this situation has come about intentionally or as an unintended consequence of Norway's commitment to harmonization and alignment.

In this context, the NGOs are seen by the provincial government more as parallel structures than as entities that support their efforts. In a letter to the Norwegian Ambassador in February 2011 the

Governor raised concerns that NGOs do not coordinate their activities adequately, that their budgets are not transparent, and that they do not provide capacity building to government staff. Norway responded by directing NGOs to report their activities to the Provincial Authorities as required by the NGO and to actively support the provincial authorities to have an adequate overview of development projects in Faryab. The letter noted that NGO Memoranda of Understanding and reporting lines are with line ministries at central level and acknowledged that the authorities may still have limited capacity. However in Norway's strategic documents and plans there does not appear to be any discussion about the governance relationship Norway envisages between the Afghan state and international NGOs or Afghan NGOs/civil society.

With no formal power to govern NGO programs, government officials often resort to informal power strategies. NGOs gave many examples of this such as delaying approval of project proposals against the Provincial Development Plan; exerting pressure to provide stipends and special vehicle/transport allowances; requiring inclusion of government nominated beneficiaries; and introducing new rules such as requiring beneficiaries to get approval from the governor's office. On the NGO side there is frustration that government capacity to support activities is weak and their staff are not motivated. In fact, accountability for performance is weak on both sides as illustrated in the following example.

NGOs complementary role in building civil society

Prior research found that development projects, rather than generating good will and positive perceptions, were consistently described negatively by Afghans. Responses suggested that not only were projects not winning people over to the government side, but perceptions of the misuse and abuse of aid resources were in many cases fuelling the growing distrust of the government, creating enemies, or at least generating scepticism regarding the role of the government and aid agencies.¹⁷⁴ In this context it is important also to assess which are the most effective ways of working by NGOs. According to the stakeholders interviewed, people seem to have more favourable impressions about NGOs who have been working with communities for a long time, mainly those who are Facilitating Partners for NSP. These have developed a complementary rather than a parallel structure. Among the reasons for this is that the role of NGOs is one of facilitating CDCs to implement projects themselves rather than implementing directly, a role which is part of the government system rather than one in parallel. ACTED for instance established 121 Village Development Councils (VDCs), but in Kohistan only, where NSP was not implemented yet, in the other districts the program helped in creating clusters of CDCs self-identified by communities. Also DACAAR's program established 120 village organisations, 20 of which coincided with CDCs.

Other CBOs started by NGO programs, like water user groups, represent a necessary form of organisation to ensure proper utilization and maintenance of facilities and should be probably there also in the presence of strong government structures. Farmers' associations and self-help groups of women aimed at microcredit delivery are also necessary for the viability of income-generating activities and pertain to the private sector rather than to the government realm. Of course the question is whether the coordination of these organisations should or could be taken over by the government in case of NGO withdrawal. However these organisations could also be seen in as part of an independent civil society acting in complementarity with government, rather than being coordinated by it. To this respect there were efforts by NGOs to aggregate CBOs in larger structures and ensure their sustainability. For instance ACTED proposed to aggregate water user groups in a water union. This proposal was however rejected by authorities with the argument that the project only covered four districts of the province, therefore could not be representative of the province in its entirety. A more successful form of aggregation, based on the sharing of common facilities, was that of women's groups in Women Resource Centres. These centres were handed over to

¹⁷⁴ G. Gompelman, *Winning Hearts and Minds?* Op cit.

communities in cooperation with the Ministry of Women Affairs and regularly registered at the Ministry of Justice to ensure sustainability.

Monitoring and evaluation

Achievement of Afghanisation is not helped by the fact that Norway did not develop indicators for its governance and development objectives as was recommended in the conflict analysis and stated in the Faryab Plan. The most likely reason for this is that staff were simply too busy and overloaded. But contributory reasons may have been the need to disburse funds and the assumption that 'more of the same' in terms of channels, partners and interventions was an appropriate choice. The assumption that NGOs can deliver results more quickly has not been tested against the core purpose of Norway's support. Without a good monitoring system, when the program strays from what was intended, it goes unnoticed. At this stage, there is little local government ownership of Norway's choice of supported interventions, either for unearmarked funding through ARTF or through the parallel mechanism of NGOs. Since there has also been no serious analysis of how NGO programs should interface with government in the long term, sustainability is highly questionable.

Determining the efficiency or inefficiency of different potential providers (government or NGOs) requires analysis of alternative means of achieving the same result. Clearly the NGOs can deliver services that government never could because of the formidable logistical challenges but the cost of this to Norway is high and unsustainable in the long term. Norway does not have a system for evaluating effectiveness and efficiency so there is no way it can assess value for money or the opportunity cost of continuing to invest heavily in the NGOs rather than government priority programs. Such an assessment should not limit itself to comparing costs of quantifiable outputs (e.g. costs of building schools or water and sanitation infrastructures). It should also consider the value in terms of social capital and human capital that can be achieved by NGOs and the government respectively. As for human capital, those of women are extremely in need and government and NGOs may have different sensitivities regarding empowering women. NGOs can be more strongly inclined to pursue women's empowerment because under direct pressure by Norway (or any other donor). Regarding social capital, NGOs may have advantages in developing community trust and institutions because less compromised with local corruption dynamics. On the other hand, government can also commit to confidence building and women's empowerment and it is more naturally and better placed to ensure long-term sustainability. All in all, decisions about channels in relation to intended impact need a much stronger analysis than Norway (or other donors) had. The outcome of such analysis could also concern *what* NGOs and government can better do respectively, i.e. complementarity, and how coordination can be strengthened.

UNAMA's coordinating role

Norway intended the main thrust of its efforts in Faryab to be based on UNAMA's integrated approach for implementation of ANDS and the Provincial Development Plan as part of its support to UNAMA in its lead role as coordinator of international efforts.

UNAMA's mandate is to support the Government in its efforts to improve critical areas, including security, governance and economic development. In Faryab, Norway has strongly supported this role. An example discussed during interviews was that the Development Advisor had facilitated coordination relationships with the Norwegian and US military for funding under the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP). CERP has been controversial in other provinces because of the large amounts of money distributed without adequate controls and without proper coordination. This does not appear to be the case in Faryab where such controls and coordination appear to be in place. It is however unclear whether this can be attributed to Norway and UNAMA

since the quantum of funds are much less and CERP has come into the picture much later than in other provinces.

The team had a long and fruitful discussion with UNAMA which highlighted several examples of the positive relationship with the Norwegian Development and other civilian PRT Advisers. Regular government-led coordination meetings are held, such as the Provincial Development Committee and between development partners and the line departments. UNAMA plays a supportive role in these.

However, in interviews with the NGOs, staff could not give concrete examples of how UNAMA added value in coordination and they saw the Afghan sectoral advisers in UNAMA as duplicating the role of government departments. Meetings appear to be predominantly information-sharing forums.

In Faryab, with a Norwegian Development Adviser in the PRT, and with all funding channelled bilaterally to the NGOs, it is not clear what the role of UNAMA is in relation to Norway's development program. The NGOs are accountable only to Norway and, though they have been encouraged to coordinate more closely with the Government and devote more attention to capacity development, the governance relationship is a bilateral one between Norway and the NGOs with little room either for the Governor or UNAMA.

Drawing these findings together, Norway has certainly provided support to UNAMA and has facilitated it to play its coordinating role. What is missing is an analysis of UNAMA's role in relation to the Governor and government departments in relation to coordination. The result is continuation of the kind of coordination which is more about information sharing than strategic planning.

7.7 Conclusion

The field mission to Faryab was the most useful part of fieldwork in Afghanistan and the team gathered a range of interesting and important evidence which have been presented. Analysing the reports of projects delivered by NGOs was a useful complementary source of information. Drawing conclusions, in such a complex context, is very challenging. Norway has limited degrees of freedom in its operation as a PRT and the deterioration of security across Afghanistan has steadily impacted on Faryab in addition to the Faryab specific issues. All actors – in the Afghan and Norwegian governments, UNAMA and the NGOs - are working sincerely to make Faryab a better place. We therefore draw conclusions tentatively and prefer to see them as aspects of learning.

Relevance weakened by insufficient analysis linked to conflict and development

Assessment of relevance revolves around questions regarding the content and quality of the context analysis that determined the choice of channels, partner and interventions, the ability of MFA and partners to understand local capacity and the political economy of government, and the extent of local ownership in the choice of supported interventions.

Norway has had good intentions and has sought to understand the particular context of Faryab in terms of conflict actors and dynamics. This has been good but not sufficient. Conflict analysis focused on the actors and dynamics in 2007 but was not developed into a plan with indicators against which progress can be measured. Moreover, the underlying theory of change was weakly developed with little attention for the main drivers of conflict and based on a belief that voluminous development support to a large number of sectors would contribute to sustainable development and peace. Therefore, the Faryab portfolio is a mirror image of the national program with the same

channels, sectors and partners rather than being specifically tailored for Faryab in the light of the main drivers of conflict there.

In the meantime the development program has taken on its own life. On the one hand given the strategy to have less preferenced aid, the only targeting for Faryab is now the NGO support. This makes it more difficult to realise explicit Faryab goals such as in the case of education. The channelling of funding to NGOs has also generated a sense of disempowerment in the provincial government which is in search of legitimacy. On the other hand because of worsened security conditions in the province, development efforts have become increasingly confined to the safer areas. This despite the huge effort to address difficult districts – like Ghormach - with special project extensions. It is difficult to say whether it could have been otherwise, as there is merit in implementing programmes in areas where security threats do not put at risk achievements. It still remains however a dilemma as both Norway and NGOs aim to reach out to the neediest areas and populations.

Relevance to the Faryab strategy in terms of themes, less so in terms of principles

Given the broad focus of the Faryab strategy the choice of channels, sectors and partners are in line with this strategy and therefore can be considered as relevant. However, the strategy show deficiencies in terms of its underlying theory of change, the lack of clear intervention logic and the lack of risk mitigation strategies.

Another main element of the strategy requires additional analysis. The separation of the military and civilian components and the implementation of the civilian components mainly through NGOs did not result in strong coordination, but simply in a division between the military operating in the insecure areas and the NGOs operating in the safer areas. Support to UNAMA contributed to coordination with PRTs and the military, but limited to that part of programmes more under control of the provincial government.

Effective delivery - until security conditions worsened

Effectiveness concerns the achievement of results, as well as unintended results. It also concerns responsiveness of portfolio to changes in external and internal risk and coordination with partners to mitigate strategic risk.

As long as they were not undermined by security threats, most projects managed to deliver the planned outputs and in some cases targets were exceeded, also thanks to decreased costs. In some cases first impacts were also recorded. These included income increases for farmers, improvements in personal, household and food hygiene practices, new commercial activities started. More recently, delivery of results was affected by worsened security problems. Droughts and natural disasters were another important undermining factor.

Responses to external risk were more at the level of individual projects than at the level of the overall portfolio in the province. Because of the division between military and civilians, coordination could also probably have been better. Positive examples of UNAMA liaising with PRTs and the military could be strengthened and scaled up.

Efficiency: insufficient staff for a more strategic approach

One efficiency issue is the existence of an appropriate mix of skills. The fact that the analysis of actors and conflicts could have been deeper is perhaps an indication that the relevant skills could be strengthened at country level. Workload at the Embassy in Kabul, which is where decisions are made about Faryab and where the relationships are managed contractually, is excessively high and has most likely been an important reason why staff have been unable to be as strategic as they are

capable of being. Also the capacity for learning seems to be limited given the work pressure and the idea to identify specific indicators for security, governance and development has not been followed up.

The challenge of sustainability

There are two reasons for considering sustainability of results achieved so far problematic. The first, more obvious one, is that such results are constantly undermined by worsened security conditions. The second one is that there isn't yet a conscious model of integration of parallel structures into government systems, or in larger systems that while remaining in the realm of civil society provide a stable counterpart to the government. Some attempt have been made however to this respect, that should be encouraged and supported

Further issues

Norway's experience in Faryab is worthy of a deeper evaluation than has been possible in this one, which covers ten years and all development assistance. Although we have tried to shed light on the Norwegian model, there is more to be learned. Two issues are particularly relevant.

One is the extent to which the issues of separation of the military and civilian components have contributed to the development program not addressing the drivers of conflict. This is complicated because, other than reasons identified in this evaluation over which Norway has considerable control, the nature of risk for development actors in conflict affected areas cannot be underestimated.

The second issue worthy of further exploration is barriers to Norway achieving its aim of being a driving force for Afghanisation, included herein capacity building of the national and provincial government. Norway has not achieved this ambition. There are many factors that can explain this. Sole dependency on the NGO channel can be one of those factors. But a different allocation of channels and partners would only go part way to Norway becoming a driving force and other approaches, including advocacy at political level, would be necessary. Given that subnational governance issues are a structural cause of conflict, and that Norway has pledged continuing support to Faryab after the transition, this is particularly timely.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Relevance

Main conclusions

Norway's policy and interventions match closely with the international agenda for Afghanistan and within that framework **its development agenda is certainly relevant**. Norway has managed to navigate a position, which reflects its policy to clearly separate military strategy on the one hand and humanitarian and development strategy on the other hand. The focus on governance, gender equality, education and community development has been consistent over the years, just as consistent as the choice of channels and partners.

Norway's overall context analysis is good and has been feeding the policy debate. However, political economy analysis and conflict analysis could have been better used to develop more operational strategies, risk mitigation strategies and conflict sensitive projects and programs. Although the principles of 'Do no harm' are well respected, most programs work around conflict, or sometimes in conflict, but seldom on conflict. Furthermore, the separation of the civilian and military components that was supposed to be accompanied by strong coordination, led to a division where the military operate in the insecure areas and NGOs in the safer areas. This limits the possibility to outreach to certain needy or vulnerable communities, although it is consistent with the strategic choice of strict separation of military and civilian assistance.

Alignment with Afghan priorities has always been high on the Norwegian agenda and has been realised to the extent possible. However, Afghan priorities are still to a large extent defined by the international community. Limited participation of Afghans undermines genuine local ownership. This is for example the case for gender equality. Through its support to UNIFEM/ UN Women Norway has contributed to national policies related to women such as the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan. However, there are clear indications that Afghan ownership of this Action Plan is still limited.

Furthermore, the main focus on harmonization and alignment and consequently the withdrawal of targeting to the provincial level has created some dilemma's for the management of the portfolio in the perspective of the realisation of overall objectives. The reduction of targeted funds at the provincial level for Faryab for which now only NGO funds have been earmarked, is contested by the provincial government that does not feel that their ownership and capacity are being strengthened. Also the discontinuation of preferenced funds for the education programme EQUIP might negatively affect performance, especially because very ambitious education targets have been set for Faryab. The lack of targeting might make it also more difficult to pursue the gender equality agenda.

Consistency of policy

Over time Norwegian policy towards Afghanistan has been remarkably consistent, reflecting consensus across two parliaments for the allied military intervention and support for the Bonn Process from 2001. Norway did choose to make use of all available aid channels, working with a variety of partners and in a series of broadly defined focus sectors including governance, education and community/rural development and with gender as a cross-cutting priority. Norway – contrary to some other donors- also maintained its humanitarian assistance via international and Norwegian humanitarian partners. These priorities were not changed during the entire evaluation period. Apart from increased funding to ARTF there is remarkably little change over the past decade.

To what extent context analysis and other studies such as reviews and evaluations have served the choice of channels, sectors and partners is not clear.

Whether consistency of policy is a good indicator for relevance is a question that cannot be easily answered. One would expect the portfolio to change as a result of information on results but there are only very limited signs of such changes such as in the case of specific projects to which support was discontinued. Norwegian scholarship, for example, criticises Norway for pursuing 'more of the same' even when there is evidence that it is not working.

On the one hand Norway is a good example of predictability of resources and clear commitment to internationally agreed goals and therefore Norwegian assistance is definitely relevant. On the other hand, the use of underlying analysis remains weak and does not seem to inform policy choices, which may weaken the relevance of Norwegian assistance

Explanatory factor

Limited administrative capacity is one very clear reason why policies are weak on the operational side. This has been reported also by the OAG in several reports. There is also evidence, including more credible findings from the OAG, that follow up on identified risks is not always satisfactory. Reasons are not clear but pressure to disburse large amounts of funds is a contributor, given the limited staff and effects of the security situation on working conditions.

8.2 Effectiveness

Main conclusions

In output terms, **real achievements** can be reported to which Norway has contributed. This is the return to school for millions of children (enrolment figures for 2010: 7 million children of which 37% girls, 53% of the children in urban areas attend basic education against 36% in rural areas); a series of high profile elections, thousands of community infrastructure projects, trained police officers, midwives, civil servants (Incl. women); payments of salaries of civil servants, etc.

However, there is still **limited evidence of concrete outcomes**. Exceptions are improved access to services (such as midwifery) and enhanced pedagogy skills of teachers. But the overall quality of newly constructed schools is poor, literacy remains low and school dropout rates are high, governance remains poor and gender equality is still far from reality.

Sustainable peace, after various years of deteriorating security, remains elusive. The necessary political solution is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future. Main features are:

- Governance is still poor and no signs of real improvement are visible.
- Poverty has been reduced for some people, but has deteriorated for others especially in the face of deteriorating security across the whole country.
- There has been some progress on some of the human development indicators.
- Extreme forms of gender inequality continue to persist.
- The political economy – manifested in corruption, use of patronage networks and criminality-hinders real development.

Donors, including Norway, made attempts to reduce corruption, but despite all efforts corruption remains endemic and negatively affects the attainment of real outcomes. .

Explanatory factors

The weakness of monitoring and evaluation systems is the main reason why there is so little good quality information about outcomes. At the start of the decade, after 2001, all agencies were so busy getting activities up and running to support reconstruction that M&E was one of many important design considerations that were sacrificed in favour of speed. Gender was another. This meant that virtually no baselines were done and, as M&E gradually improved, there was nothing to measure progress against. But, as security has declined since 2005, M&E has become increasingly problematic logistically and insecure for staff to visit project areas.

Donors, including Norway, have it within their power to insist on stronger M&E and it is instructive that attention to results has only become a really significant issue in the period leading to the decision to 'transition' when the failure to achieve results was becoming glaringly obvious. In the euphoria of the post-Taliban era donors were content in the assumptions they made, especially about what statebuilding would achieve and did not consider deeply the risks. Even as security deteriorated, the US and largest donors in the south had strong vested interests in continuing to tell a positive story. There is evidence that Norway did not succumb to those excesses, but Norway, as part of the international alliance investing heavily in Afghanistan, knowingly undertook risks and willingly did so.

The overwhelming reason for limited results is poor governance and corruption. Donors have known about, tolerated, and in some cases exacerbated these for many years in spite of simultaneous efforts to bring improvements. The lack of agreement among donors about how to go about statebuilding and governance agendas, and the conflicting models of implementation have complicated achievement. Although the MFA has systems in place to prevent corruption, and requires its partners to have anti-corruption policies and strategies, these may go some way to minimising, though not eliminating, corruption at the lower level but they have no effect on the far more damaging grand corruption which takes place in some of the ministries. ARTF has not proved able to manage these and the lack of monitoring is a contributory factor. All donors have taken enormous risks which have increased with the increase in budgets.

Other reasons are the tension between military and development objectives, the dominance of the US in every sphere and the associated weakness of UNAMA. Donor priorities and their funding decisions in pursuit of peace dividends, have contributed to an uneven pattern of development across the country. This has been a source of resentment for many provinces, especially the more peaceful ones where, they argue, more results would have been possible.

8.3 Efficiency

Main conclusions

Various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy in Kabul have been responsible for the management of the large majority of development and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan with respectively 42% and 40% of the total. There has been an important shift in management responsibilities from 2005 onwards when responsibilities were shifted to the Embassy and in the last three years the Embassy has managed 2/3 of the budget. This has created a heavy management burden for an Embassy that is chronically understaffed. The average size of the agreements has increased over the years, but the management burden is still high. The conclusion is that the management of such a complex portfolio in a very complex environment has received insufficient attention. The political choice to make use of all different channels, to be active in various broadly defined sectors and to work with a variety of different partners have influenced the management burden.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are notoriously weak and Norway relied heavily on generic provision by others. As stated earlier, M&E considerations were sacrificed in the favour of speed, whilst from 2005 onwards M&E has become problematic and costly because of deteriorating security, making it difficult to do enough field visits. The arms-length relationship and reliance on other donors has the risk that Norwegian influence to strengthen accountability and results-based management is quite limited.

Given the heavy management burden and the pressure on disbursement of funds, there has been limited room for reflection and learning. However, in one case Norway stopped funding, due to problems with overall management and monitoring by the implementing organisation.

The proper assessment of efficiency is problematic, because of weak M&E systems and a lack of data. No reliable assessment can be made to compare the efficiency of the various aid channels or aid partners. ARTF as a multi-donor mechanism appears to be a relatively efficient undertaking when viewed from the perspective of fund management and administration. However, not all costs are factored into the administration fee, since line ministries, who are responsible for implementing projects, carry additional costs of management and supervision. For example, with the recent discovery of weak construction outputs, more investments are needed to better measure results and to fix construction deficiencies, to raise the quality of outputs to the desired level.

Explanatory factors

For a portfolio of this size, the human resources at the Embassy are wholly inadequate. As security considerations prevent deployment of additional personnel the cost is that meaningful dialogue with partners is problematic. This has implications for efficiency. This situation has been reported annually since 2006 and has been ameliorated slightly with a decrease in the number of agreements to administer.

8.4 Sustainability

As with all donors, sustainability has not been the most important concern for Norway and has often been sacrificed where higher priority is placed on other objectives. Sustainability is a difficult concept to define in the context of Afghanistan and, with deteriorating rather than improving security results that may have been considered sustainability no longer are.

Sustainability has come back onto the agenda as Norway and other donors prepare for the transition from foreign military to Afghan security forces. Although Norway has pledged to continue support it is expected that other donors will reduce the amount of funds for development where they have been linked to their own troops.

8.5 Impact

The central question posed for this evaluation is about the contribution Norway has made to sustainable peace, improved governance and reduced poverty in Afghanistan.

The challenges in Afghanistan to realise sustainable peace and development are still enormous. Sustainable peace, after a decade of worsening insecurity, remains elusive and the necessary political solution is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future. Governance has been poor and,

by most accounts, is getting worse. It is often cited as a greater threat to the future of the country than security. The local political economy - manifested in corruption and use of patronage networks - has worked against international objectives. Poverty has been reduced for some people but has increased for many, especially in the face of deteriorating security across the whole country. There has been some progress on some of the human development indicators but Afghanistan continues to be one of the very poorest countries in the world with the majority of people illiterate and some of the more extreme forms of gender inequality.

Norway's achievement has been in being a consistent and reliable donor within the framework of the international engagement. Norway has succeeded to put the principles of harmonization and alignment into practice. Norway was the first donor to agree on a three-year Framework Agreement to provide unpreferenced core support to the ARTF. Throughout the decade Norway has maintained and still maintains a very broad and complex portfolio. Norway has a very good reputation based on its commitment, its consistent and reliable funding and its modest approach. The implication is that the visibility of Norway is not very high.

More than ten years after the start of the massive support, donors are rethinking their strategies. There is abundant literature that points in the direction of more focused and better strategies that are based on sound theories of change. **Norway should rethink it's strategy and aid programming for future engagement in Afghanistan.**

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

PART 2 -TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The object of evaluation

Norway has provided substantial assistance to Afghanistan since 2001. The total assistance during the period ending 2009 amounted to NOK 4.6 billion. Over ninety percent of the allocations of the funds have been made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Oslo, and the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul. The role played by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in allocation of funds has been limited, accounting for around eight percent of the total. Its main role has been in providing advisory inputs to the MFA processes. The rest around 2 percent has been routed through Norfund and FK Norway (Fredskorpset)..

Allocating authority	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Totalt	%
FK Norway	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,6	1,2	0,7	-0,1	3	0 %
NORAD	16,9	96,1	136,2	31,9	21,6	17,2	20,3	20,5	27,1	388	8 %
Norfund					33,8	0,0	0,4	0,4	0,6	35	1 %
MFA HQ (including the embassy)	340,2	389,9	350,7	424,5	330,6	429,1	531,3	715,0	700,2	4 211	91 %
Totalt	357	486	487	456	386	447	553	737	728	4 637	100

The Norwegian portfolio of allocations consists of over six hundred agreements with a variety of partners. The main partners are the multilateral organisation, followed by Norwegian NGOs and Norwegian government organisations. A review of the top ninety five percent of the portfolio amounting to around NOK 4.3 billion reveals that over half of this amount has been disbursed through multilaterals of which the World Bank followed by UNDP are the two largest multilateral recipients. The World Bank managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund has so far been the single most important multilateral channel for Norwegian core support to the Afghan Government. Norwegian NGOs account for over a quarter followed by Norwegian Government Organisations that account for around seventeen percent. The high share of government organisations is mainly due to the inclusion of costs incurred for Afghan refugees in Norway, and the government to government twinning projects in the justice sector, implemented by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Norwegian Police Directorate. Table below provides an overview of the portfolio.

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Totalt	%
Kirkens Nødhjelp	NGO	42,2	33,7	23,1	23,5	27,8	32,1	52,6	90,2	48,9	374,2	8,54 %
Norges Røde Kors	NGO	68,6	39,5	25,0	19,7	20,9	30,1	19,7	33,9	40,0	297,2	6,79 %
Flyktninghjelpen	NGO	3,3	8,0	9,3	12,5	8,8	33,2	57,5	51,9	23,0	207,6	4,74 %
Afghanistankomiteen i Norge	NGO	19,2	15,7	13,2	6,8	14,1	11,8	15,1	8,6	9,1	113,6	2,59 %
ACTED	NGO	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	44,2	46,8	91,0	2,08 %
World Bank	MUL	0,0	75,0	0,0	153,9	144,0	147,0	180,0	185,0	240,0	1124,9	25,69 %
UNDP	MUL	5,4	67,3	22,9	15,0	33,1	37,5	34,3	103,7	143,1	462,3	10,56 %
UNHCHR	MUL	58,4	33,8	16,0	12,0	0,0	10,0	43,0	19,0	10,0	202,2	4,62 %
UNICEF	MUL	26,3	16,0	15,8	12,4	1,2	32,0	16,1	11,5	11,0	142,2	3,25 %
KRD - Kommunal - og Regionaldepartementet	GOV	31,1	61,3	183,3	125,5	38,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	440,1	10,05 %
Politidirektoratet	GOV	0,0	0,0	2,3	12,1	13,7	16,8	25,0	45,6	0,0	115,6	2,64 %
REST		131,1	71,2	65,9	50,3	72,3	80,8	88,0	133,1	115,6	808,5	18,46 %
Total											4379,3	100 %

Context

Afghanistan constitutes a challenging environment for effective delivery of development assistance. Decades of political turmoil have left their mark. The country is plagued with shortage of administrative capacity, weak governance both at the national and the provincial levels with chronically high levels of conflict and insecurity. For the aid community consisting of multiple donors with a variety of agendas, the country has become a testing ground for a menu of defense, developmental and diplomacy interventions, implemented through different channels during the last ten years. For the international community investing enormous amounts in military as well as development activities, a concern has been to be able to report on achieved results. Tracing the outcomes and impacts of interventions is not a trivial matter in the fragile context in Afghanistan. In this process, the evaluation will take explicit account of the political, social and institutional contexts in which the Norwegian programs have operated. In particular, the evaluations shall document the effort made by the implementing institutions for understanding the context which may be rooted in the recent and more distant history of the country.

The importance of ethnicity in the political development of Afghanistan has been a constant since the establishment of the State in modern times. The same can perhaps be concluded about the gap between the Center and the Periphery. The origin of the Afghanistan state can be traced back to 1747 when a confederation of Pashtu tribal leader chose a former general in the Persian Army, Ahmad Shah Durrani, as their leader among equals. As the territory expanded also other ethnic groups were included in Afghanistan. From a rather loose confederation of equals Afghanistan, not the least at the end of the 19th century, under Abdur Rahman Khan (The Iron Emperor) and his successors, Afghanistan embarked on a path of state building. During this period steps were taken, to formalize a government, establish advisory bodies and promote equal opportunities for boys and girls for education. Even measures to avoid the development of corruption were taken in the 1920s. Later on during the 1950s and 60s several measures were taken to introduce democratic institutions and elections. For a period political parties and newspapers flourished. However, from the early developments emerged three distinct political groupings; the ethnic based pro-Pashtu movement, a faith-based Islamic movement, and a Soviet-centric movement consisting of both a pro-Soviet grouping and an anti-Soviet grouping of left parties opposing increasing Soviet influence in the country. The groupings became increasingly polarized during the 1970s and finally culminated in the Peoples Democratic Party conducting a military coup in April 1978, which then was followed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

Soviet occupation and the Afghan resistance struggle that followed started an era of conflict and insecurity in Afghanistan whose aftermaths persist to the day. Afghan opposition to the Soviet occupation consisted of well armed, though loosely connected militias led by ambitious leaders and warlords with diverse ethnic backgrounds, ideologies, political orientations and agendas. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 left a fertile ground for a violent struggle for power among the diverse leaders and warlords, many of whom or their successors are important political actors in Afghanistan today. From the struggle also emerged the Taliban movement organized by local mullahs in the Pashtu communities which continues to be a crucial political actor. The emergence of Taliban also led to a steady increase in the presence of foreign religious fighters in Afghanistan under the banner of Al Qaida; an organization with political ambitions well beyond the Afghan borders

whose covert operations has kept Afghanistan on the international agenda during the last decade.

Norwegian engagement

Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan dates back to the 1920s when the linguist Georg von Morgenstierne was invited by King Amanullah to help register and transform into writing, several of the minor languages in East Afghanistan. During the 1950s and 60s different technical experts were engaged, among others in the development of hydropower. A broader engagement started with the Soviet invasion in 1979. A few Norwegian NGOs established themselves in Pakistan to work partly with Afghan refugees, and more and more with emergency and development aid into the Mujahedin controlled areas during the Soviet occupation. The Norwegian government allocated funds through these NGOs and through different multilateral organizations.

The more recent Norwegian engagement which is the subject matter of this evaluation follows the international military intervention in Afghanistan which started in October 2001. The intervention replaced the Taliban regime by an interim government headed by President Karzai. Since then President Karzai has stayed in office while following a strategic cooperation policy towards the dominant political actors in the country. The Norwegian engagement has been anchored in the UN mandate (UN Security Council resolutions 1386 and 1510), the Bonn Agreement 2001, The Afghanistan Compact that emerged from the London Conference on Afghanistan in 2006, The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) that was formed following the agreement of the Afghan Compact with an objective of monitoring and problem-solving during the progress of the attainment of the benchmarks contained within the Compact. The other relevant conferences include the Paris donor conference on Afghanistan in 2008, the Hague conference in March 2009, and the London conference in January 2010. The most recent is the Kabul conference from July 2010 where Norway outlined its expectations from assistance to Afghanistan while at the same time emphasizing the importance of Afghan ownership of assisted interventions and need for coordination and good donorship from the donor community.

A salient feature of the Norwegian engagement is the separation between the military and the developmental assistance components, although there is consensus about the mutual interdependence among the results of these two components. The developmental assistance component during the last decade may be divided in two periods; the period 2001-2005 under the centre-right coalition government in Norway and the period since under the centre-left coalition government. The developmental component in the Norwegian engagement started with humanitarian assistance. Formally all assistance prior to 2002 was classified as humanitarian. Subsequently there has been an expansion in ambitions for development assistance. Political development objectives were pursued through support for elections in 2004-2005. The centre-left coalition government that came into office in 2005 has also focused on efforts that contribute to reinstatement of the *legitimacy* and authority of the Afghan state through improvements in its *capacity* to provide essential public services¹; the so called peace dividends that promote socio-economic conditions and lay the foundation for sustainable peace. The implicit assumption in this context has been that the legitimacy problem is the result of the inability of the State to respond to the needs of the citizenry.

¹ Focus on improvements in legitimacy, capacity and during the recent years on accountability of the state emphasizes the implicit state building objective in the Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan.

Norwegian assistance has focussed mainly on three sectors - education, community development and good governance including the judicial system's ability to enforce rule of the law². In addition, the health sector also attracted some funding. More recently, transition issues have appeared on the Norwegian agenda for Afghanistan.

Norwegian development assistance has consisted of a variety of programmes and projects delivered through different channels. An important pre-requisite for evaluating Norwegian efforts is to understand the rationale for the choice of programs and channels. Of importance here is an understanding of "why" and "how" the choices were made, the degrees of freedom Norway had in making these choices and defining its role in the challenging political environment in Afghanistan. It is the context that defined the game. Analysis of the performance of the assistance then is a matter of documenting how well one has played the game. In this context, success is critically dependent on how well the relevant contextual factors that inhibit developmental outcomes³ were identified, how efforts were sequenced and coordinated across actors and not the least the quality of the risk assessment and mitigation management strategies that were adopted to obtain results on the ground

2. Purpose

The main purpose of this evaluation is to:

Assess the contributions of the Norwegian assistance to promote socio-economic conditions and sustainable peace through improvements in the capacity of the Afghan state and civil society to provide essential public services

The main user groups for this evaluation are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and other stakeholders who have direct or indirect interest in the interventions in Afghanistan in particular and fragile state environments in general. In this context, *MFA* refers to its political leadership, its officials, the Norwegian Embassies and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation Norad. Other stakeholders include other donors, Norwegian and other international non-governmental organisations, governmental twinning partners (mainly the Ministry of Justice, and the Directorate of Police) and research institutions. In Afghanistan, the main users may be the Afghan authorities, both at the central and the provincial level, and the Afghan civil society organisations.

3. Objectives and scope

To achieve the purpose of the evaluation the evaluation will:

² See Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre reporting to the Norwegian Parliament "Redegjørelse om Norges engasjement i Afghanistan og Irak", 9th November 2005, available on http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/aktuelt/taler_artikler/utenriksministeren/2005/redegjorelse-om-norges-engasjement-i-afg.html?id=273193

See also "Redegjørelse om utvikling i Afghanistan og Norges sivile og militære engasjement i landet" 9th february 2010 available on http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/aktuelt/taler_artikler/utenriksministeren/2010/afghanistan_utvikling.html?id=592976

³ The existing political economy models, particularly those related to credibility, patron-client relations and social polarisation provide useful frameworks to understand the weak government response in a fragile state. A policy challenge is to establish which framework is most relevant for understanding the conditions in the particular context.

- Compile an overview of the political, economic and security developments in Afghanistan and identify the key agreements, strategies, and policy decisions that shaped Norway's engagement during the period under review. Included herein is an overview of the chronology, key events and factors beyond the control of development partners, budgetary commitments and channels, partners and interventions that were chosen for delivery of assistance.
- Document the rationale for choice of programs and channels, and assess the coordination and coherence efforts made to deliver assistance to Afghanistan.
- Document the resulting improvements in the capacity of the Afghan authorities and civil society organisations to deliver public services covering education, community development, health and good governance including the judicial system's ability to enforce rule of the law.
- Document actual improvements in delivery of the public services and its impacts on the welfare of the targeted groups

Keeping in view the variety of channels and interventions that have been used in providing assistance, possibilities for attribution of results of Norwegian assistance is not a trivial matter. In particular, attribution is problematic for un-earmarked support through multilateral channels in which case it is more relevant to assess the quality of Norwegian inputs. For example, support to the World Bank managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund are un-earmarked general pledges, however in practice donors attach their preferences to general pledges particularly to support their prioritized areas facing a funding gap. This opens up an opportunity for donors to align the Trust Fund financing with their bilateral support. On the other hand overzealous use of such opportunities may result in misallocation of funds, especially to donor supply-driven activities where local absorption capacity and ownership is lacking. The extent and manner in which Norway has played its donor role to coordinate its bilateral and multilateral efforts is of interest in this context. Included herein is also identification of assistance that was demand-driven and its relationship to the results obtained on the ground. The same applies to the quality of liason with the management committee of The Trust Fund.

To achieve the purpose of this evaluation, the judgemental criterion for assessments shall focus on the developmental outcomes of Norwegian assistance. The evaluation shall cover all Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan, both through bilateral and the multi-bi channels. The time period for the analysis will be from 2001 to present.

4. Evaluation criteria and questions

The performance assessments made in the evaluation shall make use of following **four criteria** - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Relevance

- What was the content and quality of the context analysis that determined the choice of channels, partners and interventions? Included herein is an analysis of MFA and its partners:
 - understanding of the local capacity and political economy of the government responsiveness in Afghanistan
 - risk assessments that were made prior to the choice of intervention portfolio
 - strategy to mitigate risks
- What was the strategy for alignment of interventions with broader foreign policy objectives of Norway? How were the links between political, security, and development efforts addressed? What was MFA's and its partners strategy for mutual coordination of assistance and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as gender and good governance
- To what extent were the interventions aligned with development policy objectives of Afghanistan? What was the extent of local ownership in the choice of supported interventions?

Effectiveness

- To what extent was the implementation at the country level anchored in the context analysis and how responsive was the portfolio to changes in external (political governance, security, economic and fiduciary) and internal risk
- How did MFA coordinate with its partners to deliver assistance, and effectively manage and mitigate the strategic risks? Included herein is an analysis of MFA relationships with:
 - Multilateral partners
 - Civil Society
 - The central and provincial administration
 - Other donors
- What was the relationship between planned and actual delivery on agreed goals? What explains deviations if any? What was the level of integration of gender and good governance issues across the project/program portfolio?
- How effective has been the governance structure for the Norwegian assistance at the headquarters and the country level?

Efficiency

Using a representative sample of multilateral and bilateral interventions,

- What was the relationship between planned and actual disbursements? What explains deviations if any? What has been the activity level break-up of Norwegian assistance for budget lines such as:
 - Staff costs (salaries, benefits, indirects) of the partners
 - International / local consultants
 - Contractual services
 - Per diem and travel expenses
 - Dissemination and advocacy - Workshops, meetings, conferences
 - Administration costs

- How efficient were the MFA and its partner's procurement processes both with respect to staff, consultants and goods and services? Was skill-mix and continuity of the staff appropriate to project portfolio and country context? Included herein is an overview of the quality assurance and advisory outputs provided by Norad and their utilisation by the MFA and its governmental and non-governmental partners.
- What has been the quality of the reporting framework of the MFA's multilateral and bilateral partners and has it offered the MFA a sufficiently clear picture of the relationship between disbursements and delivery on the agreed goals? Were the monitoring and quality assurance arrangements sufficient for efficient delivery on the agreed goals?

Sustainability

- Are the development outcomes and poverty reduction achievements promoted by the Norwegian assistance likely to be sustained and which if any are difficult to reverse? What is the likelihood that the parallel structures to deliver projects and programs will be integrated into the government systems?
- To what extent has the policy and governance environment (accountability, action on corruption) been strengthened for the governmental and non-governmental partners of Norwegian assistance?

5. Methodological comments

The consultant will reconstruct the intervention logic for the Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan in consultation with MFA and policy documents. Tracing the outcomes and impacts of interventions is not a trivial matter in the fragile context in Afghanistan. In this process, the analyses will take explicit account of the political, social and institutional contexts in which the Norwegian programs operated. The evaluation shall document the effort made by the implementing institutions for understanding the context and focus on the empirical outcomes of the adopted approaches.

A characteristic of the assistance to Afghanistan is that comparable interventions have been implemented through different channels including bilateral, NGOs and the multilateral system and often with number of partners within each group. The evaluation shall where possible provide a comparative analysis of the performance of different channels and partners. Another aspect is that same channels have received financial support from different sources of MFA (Embassy, Oslo, Norad). Effectiveness and systematic differences if any in the performance of allocations made through different sources shall be investigated where relevant. Final selection of the programmes/projects, channels and partners which form the subject matter of this evaluation will be finalised during the inception phase of the evaluation.

Various interventions financed by Norwegian Assistance have been a subject of reviews and evaluations in a number of earlier reports and studies commissioned by the implementing partners⁴ including Norad. The evaluation will avoid duplication of work, and the discussion

⁴ See references in the endnote

of the previous evaluations will be limited to a brief overview of the main finding of the earlier studies. This evaluation is expected to complement the previous work and shall focus on the Norwegian assistance in its entirety. Investigation of the potential and actual synergy effects in the portfolio will be highlighted wherever relevant.

A mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) approach is envisaged for this evaluation. The evaluation team will outline a well formed research strategy and propose an appropriate methodology to ensure a transparent and objective assessment of the issues to be analysed in this evaluation. The evaluation team will make use of secondary and primary data which will be analysed using suitably defined qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. Primary data may be collected using empirical methods through interviews and focus groups.

The field-study will be an important part of this assignment. Interviews may be the most important source of information for interventions where primary data and documents may be graded confidential. Plans for the field study will be finalised in consultation with the client during the inception phase of the evaluation, keeping in view the security situation in Afghanistan.

During the recent period, there has emerged a consensus within the international development community about best-practice guidelines and indicators for aid effectiveness. The two relevant guidelines in the current context are the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness⁵, and the 2007 OECD guidelines for engagement in fragile situations⁶. The latter is meant to complement the commitments set out in the Paris Declaration with an objective of fostering constructive engagement between national and international actors in fragile states. The evaluation shall be informed by these guidelines where relevant. Of particular importance in this context is the need to apply the “do no harm” principle in the practical implementation of the evaluation work. Assessments undertaken in the evaluation shall assure that guidelines and the related indicators are not used with retrospective effect. Evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the prevailing DAC OECD Evaluation Quality Standards.

⁵Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the indicators for monitoring its progress are available on http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html.

⁶ See “Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations”, OECD, available on <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf> . The principles emphasise the importance of a joint understanding among development partners about the political economy, conflict and risk for each specific fragile context. Other principles in this context include the importance of: state building, the whole of the government approach, a “do no harm” approach and harmonised approaches from development partners. Of relevance is also the Accra Declaration on achieving MDGs in crisis setting available on http://www.oecd.org/document/52/0,3746,en_21571361_43407692_45714804_1_1_1_1,00.html

6. Evaluation Team

The **evaluation team** is expected to cover the following competencies

Team leader	Team Members
<p>Academic: Higher degree</p> <p>Knowledge and experience with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation principles, methods and standards in general • Leading multi disciplinary evaluations • Development Cooperation 	<p>Knowledge of evaluation principles, methods and standards in general</p> <p><u>Team composition meeting</u> following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic qualifications in social sciences and at least one member with significant research experience at the doctoral/Ph.D level. • Experience with public choice models and conflict analysis • Capacity development and gender analysis • At least one member with experience in public sector accounting and auditing • Field work experience from conflict areas • Country/regional: Fragile states, experience from South Asia • Senior level local consultant with knowledge of the Afghan society and politics • An appropriate gender balance keeping in view the subject matter of the evaluation.

The proposed team must cover following language skills:

- Team leader:
 - English – Written, reading and spoken
- At least one member of the team:
 - Norwegian/Swedish/Danish – Reading and spoken
 - Dari/Pashto - Reading, spoken and written

Personnel undertaking the field study shall have the necessary training for undertaking field work in conflict areas.

The **tendering firm** is expected to have experience with delivering multi-disciplinary evaluations contracted preferably through competitive procurement process and involving field work in conflict areas during last three years.

7. Budget and Deliverables

The project is **budgeted** with a maximum input of **60 consultant weeks**⁷. The budget estimate includes the time allocated to the national team members and the time to be used during the field-visits and the seminars, including compensation for travel time used in intercontinental travel (maximum 7 hrs. travel time per intercontinental journey).

The consultants are expected to make their own arrangements with respect to **logistics related to field visit** to Afghanistan. Staff assigned for field visit shall have the necessary training and permissions to operate in conflict affected areas.

The **deliverables** in the consultancy consist of the following outputs:

- **Inception Report** not exceeding 15 pages to be approved by EVAL.
- One work-in-progress reporting **seminar**.
- **Draft Final Report** for preliminary approval by EVAL for circulation to the stakeholders. The stakeholders shall provide feedback that will include comments on structure, facts, content, and conclusions.
- **Final Draft Evaluation Report**.
- **Seminar for dissemination** of the final report in Oslo.

All presentations and reports (to be prepared in accordance with EVAL's guidelines given in *Annex A-3 Guidelines for Reports* of this document) are to be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the deadlines set in the time-schedule specified under *Section 2 Administrative Conditions* in *Part 1 Tender specification* of this document. EVAL retains the sole rights with respect to all **distribution, dissemination and publication** of the deliverables.

⁷ Budget assumes a work-load of 42 hours per week spread over six working days per week.

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Annex 3 Access to archives

Access to the catalogue could not be provided separately from access to the documents with the result that we were unable to do document level searches. This necessitated asking for long printouts to browse at file/folder level and then ask for what seemed relevant. MFA Oslo archive also attempted to get the electronic catalogue from the Kabul embassy on line or copied. They expected that this arrangement would permit them to request some documents to be scanned and sent to MFA Oslo through a secure link but they were not able to arrange this for technical reasons. These problems are probably not particular to this evaluation, but they have been more serious given the scope.

Archive staff spent a lot of time with searches and preparing files for MS OneNote which was unfamiliar to them. A specific example of the limitations is that our searches did not identify the internal MFA review of the comprehensive effort in Afghanistan. The existence of this document was only brought to our attention in mid-December but it still took two professionals several hours of searching to find the document. This highlights the challenge for an evaluation team when required to identify for themselves what documents they wish to consult. A list of the most important documents informing policy would have been invaluable at the outset. On our side, with the benefit of hindsight we would have allocated more resources to document identification in the Inception Phase. This would also have been an Oslo-based person as our Trondheim-based team member wasted considerable time on trips to Oslo only to find documents not yet ready.

The issues in relation to the Kabul archive are different. Documents have been mainly archived there from 2004 in the decentralised system. For this reason, considerable effort by archive staff in Norway could not yield the kind of documentation of signed agreements on ARTF or the receipts of payment for instance, which would have facilitated the work of the team member evaluating ARTF. In Kabul, as noted above, there has never been an experienced archivist so documents are not available without considerable effort, even for Embassy staff. The lack of physical space to store anything compounds the situation.

The first team member to request documents from the Embassy asked for 21 project documents concerning four NGOs. We were then asked to supply the agreement and group number which we obtained from EVAL. However, 10 of the 21 files could not be identified and it transpired that they had the code GLO when it should have been Afghanistan. Those files accessed provided information on the process, distinguishing between preparation, implementation and closure phases. However, there was only summary information on results as detailed evaluation information is stored in a separate set of files.

When Afghan team members approached the Embassy with requests for documents we received an email from the Embassy on 18 November reminding us that they were a very busy Embassy with limited resources and under particular pressure at that time to finalise several agreements before the end of the budget year. As a result of this, and out of genuine respect for Embassy staff we devoted our time and attention in Kabul to fieldwork in Faryab and interviews with stakeholders.

Annex 4 People Interviewed

Name	Organisation/Department/Position
OSLO/NORWAY	
Kristin Enstad	Assistant Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for South-Asia and Afghanistan
Siv Kaspersen	Head of Development, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kabul, 2009-11
Lornts Finanger	Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for South-Asia and Afghanistan
Kai Eide	Special Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Afghanistan, 2008-10
Torunn Dramdal	Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for Security Policy and North America
Gunvor Wittersø Skankce	Assistant Director, Norad, Civil Society Department
Petter Bauck	Senior Adviser, conflict, Norad, Section for Development Strategy and Governance
Jannicke Jæger	Senior Adviser, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Paul Ø. Bjørdal	Adviser, Section for peace and reconciliation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Arne Strand	Deputy director, head of research, CMI-Christian Michelsens Institutt
Kristian Harpviken	Director, PRIO-Peace Research Institute in Oslo
Astri Suhrke	Senior Researcher, CMI-Christian Michelsens Institutt
Elisabeth Rasmusson, Adam Pain & Astrid Sehl	Secretary General, Director International Programs, Political and Media Adviser, Norwegian Refugee Council
Anders Tunold	Norwegian Church Aid, Department for International Programmes, Division for Middle East and Asia
Linda Våge, Simon Forster & Tonje Merete Viken	Norwegian Afghanistan Committee
KABUL	
Grete Løchen	Minister Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul
Sabir Nasiry	Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul
Semund Haukland	Counsellor, Head of Development Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy
Sven Skaare	First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul
Anders Wirak	Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, Counsellor, Development
Zahid Hamdard	National Program Manager, NABDP
John-Helge Vang	Asst. Chief of Police, Commander NORAF
Wais Barnak	Deputy Minister (Program) Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Director Development
Gerry Garvey	Country Director, DACAAR
Ziggy Garewal	Country Director ACTED
Annette Kanstrup-Jensen	Country Director, Country Representative NCA
Simon Worrall	Country Director NRC
Tore Hattrem	Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy
Peter Crowley	UNICEF Representative
Samantha da Silva	EQUIP Task Manager, World Bank
S. Jalaluddin Shah	Program Director, NAC
Seddiq Weera	Senior Policy Adviser, Ministry of Education

Mari Akrami	Director AWSDC
Sahkela Asad	Program Officer, DACAAR
Lars Pederson	Chief of Strategy and Policy DACAAR
Shawali	Program Officer DACAAR
Syed Sadiq	Deputy Country Director UNWOMEN
Homa Sabri	Unit Manager Institutional Capacity Building UNWOMEN
Sebghatullah Ebrahimi	Deputy Program Manager UNWOMEN
Zohra Dastgir	Protection Officer UNWOMEN
Mohamad Tariq Ismati	Executive Director, NSP MRRD
Dr Vic Getz	Gender Advisor NSP - MRRD
Shabana Basij Rasikh	National Gender Advisor NSP – MRRD
Abdul Halim Azimi	Operation Manager RDP/ DACAAR Kabul
Arif Basiri	Deputy Program Manager WASH/DACAAR Kabul
David Akopyan	UNDP Deputy Country Director (Programme)
Ahmed Hassan, M. Enam Raoufi &	Norwegian Church Aid
Salmay Hadidi	
Hugh Riddell	World Bank

FARYAB

Andreas Danevad	Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassy
Wais Sharifi	Senior Program Assistant, Royal Norwegian Embassy
Reiko Hirai	Head of Provincial Office, UNAMA
Col. Lars Huse	PRT Commander (outgoing)
Col. Torger Gillebo	PRT Commander (incoming)
Major Stordahl	CIMIC (incoming)
Major Bent Inge	CIMIC (outgoing)
Elise Jensen	Health & Education Adviser, USAID, PRT
Merle J Parise	Natural Resource Manager, PRT Agriculture Adviser, USDA
Stephen Meade Smith	General Development Officer, USAID Faryab
F. Karlsen	Police Superintendent, Faryab PRT
Abdul Haq Shafaq	Provincial Governor, Faryab Province
Khesrow Qadiri	Municipal governance and development adviser, ASGP
Ahmad Jawad Ansari	Municipal economic development and private sector specialist, ASGP
Eng. Khal Murad	Municipal infrastructure development specialist, ASGP
Asef Payman	Public communication and IT specialist, ASGP
Khalilullah Behroz	Administrative Assistant, ASGP Regional Office
Abdul hadi Malikzad	Provincial governance and development specialist, PGO
Mohammad Ewaz Sakha	Provincial infrastructure and development specialist, PGO
Ali Sayeedi	Information and technology specialist
Mohammad Yasin Arsalan	Education Deputy Director
Dr Sayed Habib Saeed	EQUIP Officer in Faryab
Mohammad Razaq	Dept of Education Employee
Haji Ali Haidar KHuram	Agro-Specialist, DACAAR, Faryab
Jawaid Akbary	Provincial Manager, ACTED, Faryab
Gul Mohammad	Head of a CDC close to Maimana
Eng. Ahmad Zia Rahimi	NSP Provincial Manager, Faryab
Feroz	Man in a Restaurant
Abdul Wali	WASH Program Manager /DACAAR
Katera	YEP Youth Program Coordinator/NRC
Hashim Sultani	ICLAC Program Coordinator/NRC

OTHER LOCATIONS

Ewen Macleod (Geneva)

Chief of Mission, UNHCR Afghanistan 2007-10, Policy Adviser 2001-07

Merete Dyrud (New York)

Development Cooperation Advisor, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kabul
(Aug 2006-July 2009)

Niamh Murnaghan (Honiara)

NRC Regional Director – Afghanistan & Pakistan 2007-2009

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