



MDG-F (MDG Achievement Fund)

ANNUAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2009

Submitted by:

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Country and Thematic Area¹

Afghanistan/Environment

Programme No: 00067162

MDTF Office Atlas No: 00062490

Programme Title: SAISEM (Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environmental Management in Afghanistan)

Participating Organization(s):

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)
UN FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization),
UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)

Implementing Partners:

National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MoAIL)

Programme Budget (from the Fund):

UNDP: 2,500,000
UN FAO: 2,500,000
UNEP: 0

¹ E.g. Priority Area for the Peacebuilding Fund; Thematic Window for the Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDG-F); etc.

Programme Duration (in months):

Start date²: 11 November 2008

End date:

- *Original end date: March 2011*

² The start date is the date of the first transfer of funds from the MDTF Office as Administrative Agent.

I. Purpose

The major outputs of the JP are the following:

The Outcomes and Outputs of this Joint Programmes are:

Outcome 1: Environmental issues mainstreamed in national and sub-national policy, planning and investment frameworks; and.

Output 1.1: National environmental concerns reflected in the ANDS and selected sectoral plans, and institutional capacity strengthened to operationalise them.

Output 1.2: environmental concerns are fully reflected in provincial and district development plans.

Outcome 2: Local management of environmental resources improved and services delivery enhanced.

Output 2.1: Communities are able to develop and implement projects for sustainable use of natural resources and livelihoods (to include rural energy systems).

Output 2.2: Institutional knowledge management improved in relation with community based field interventions.

Poverty Reduction is a national priority for Afghanistan and a prerequisite to ensure sustainable development through a private-sector-led market economy, improve human development indicators, and making significant progress towards the attainment of MDGs. ANDS and MDG based PRSP recognizes environment and natural resources management as key elements for the achievement of sustainable development.

The SAISEM Joint Programme provides focused support to the Government of Afghanistan for realizing some of the government priorities for the environment management as identified in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), building upon or scaling up the on-going initiatives and initiating new interventions. It also directly contributes to the achievement of the UN Country Team (Outcomes 5) defined under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2010- 2013) (Improved capacity to manage natural resources to support poverty reduction and dispute resolution and to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters). It also supports the GoA to achieve their commitment to MDG-7 - to ensure environmental sustainability.

II. Resources

Financial Resources:

n/a

Human Resources:

- National Staff:

UNDP

National Environment Specialists – three

National Training Coordinator – one

Admin./Finance Assoc. – one

Driver – one

Cleaner – one

FAO

Senior National Natural Resource Management Officer: duty station Ghor

National Natural Resource Management Officer: duty station Herat

National Female Community Mobilization Officer: duty Station Herat

National Monitoring and Evaluation Officer: duty station Herat

- International Staff:

UNDP

Environment Specialist/Project Manager - one

Sr. Environment Specialist/Joint Programme Coordinator - one

FAO

Chief Technical Advisor – one duty station Herat.

III. Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

- *Summarize the implementation mechanisms primarily utilized and how they are adapted to achieve maximum impact given the operating context.*

UNDP

Institutionalization of the project objectives, national ownership, transfer of expertise, knowhow and international best practices and sustainability lies at the core of project implementation processes. To ensure these objectives are met, an inception workshop was held on 29 June 2009 to ensure all joint programme partners (UNDP, FAO, UNEP) and government counterparts (NEPA, MRRD and MoAIL) share common understanding of the programme objectives and the outputs that the project is designed to deliver. Likewise two Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings were held attended by all key partners including the participating UN Agencies and government partners to better plan the delivery of planned activities and to provide technical advice to Project Implementation Teams (PITs).

The TWGs also critically reviewed the project in terms relevance and realistic context based on the original intended objectives. The PITs regularly met as needed on weekly/ biweekly basis aimed at coordination of planned activities. A total of five PITs meetings involving the FAO and UNDP component teams were held. The government counterparts were involved at all stages of project implementation including but limited to joint planning , joint field missions and joint progress review meetings . Government counterparts were an integral part of field missions to maximize implementation, institutional ownership and sustainability. The UNDP component adopted a participatory approach to implement project activities at national and sub-national levels.

At the national level project focal points identified and selected from the government *partner* agencies e.g. National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) and MRRD played a crucial role in harmonizing project activities are aligned to the institutional priorities and plans. Desks

were established within the designated institutions that facilitated the development of close working relationships. This resulted into facilitation of project access to peer government officials, information sharing, joint planning and implementation of activities. Given the importance of institutionalization of the project objectives for sustainability, government officials were involved in all stages of implementation and monitoring of project activities. In addition to immediate benefits of this approach, it ensures transfer of skills and know-how to government counterparts who can then replicate the project activities beyond the scope of the project timeline hence ensuring sustainability.

At the sub-national level the project utilized existing delivery mechanisms that have been tested and proved to be the most effective tools to reach the grass root level where the bulk of development effort is required. This included selection and targeting existing local governance structures i.e. Community Development Councils (CDCs) and District Development Assemblies (DDAs) as well as use of the government agencies (NEPA, MRRD, MoAIL) extension staff at district and village levels. These intuitions are mandated to identify, plan and implement development interventions at the community level. In the context of this project these institutions will be used to ensure integration of environment protection and sustainable management of natural resources through sub- committees of environment that have been established within these institutions.

This approach ensures achievement of project results with limited exposures to potential risks such as security of staff while in the field as well as ensuring cost effective when government staff plays a proactive role in implementing project activities. In the longer term it plays key role in sustainability of the project objectives beyond project's life span. The project also aligned its activities with those of partners' agencies to leverage resources and time and benefit from the government institutional memory and expertise.

FAO

The FAO component focuses on the delivery of community-based rangeland management assistance. The team decided to implement directly, i.e. without subcontracting local NGO's. Unfortunately, no local NGO's with relevant expertise were available. FAO recruited a team of Afghan nation consultants and deployed them, after appropriate training, in four districts in Badghis (through cooperation with the Spanish Development Agency AECID), in two districts in Ghor, and in two districts in Herat. A total of 32 communities in all three provinces were selected as cooperating communities for the program.

For details of the field implementation scheme at the community level, please refer to the FAO Inception report. The implementation approach chosen has provided us with optimum flexibility and efficiency, given the security conditions restricting access of FAO personnel to the field.

FAO has established, either directly or in cooperation with ACEID, seed multiplication production centers in 3 farms belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (Qalay-e-Naw (Badghis), Chagcharan (Ghor), and Zenderjan (Herat).

FAO has, under the leadership of the FAO female community mobilization and livelihoods officer, established a kitchen garden and home economics program in all cooperating communities, with a total of over 800 female farmers now successfully cultivating kitchen gardens. A family nutrition training program has started in Herat and will be expanded to Badghis and Ghor in the spring.

- Provide details on the procurement procedures utilized and explain variances in standard procedures.

Procurement (UNDP- FAO)

All procurements were done in accordance with the participating UN agencies (UNDP, FAO) standard procurement procedures utilized throughout the year to procure goods and services. Briefly, these included going standard procurement procedures e.g.

- Invitation to Bid (ITB) for provision of goods and services ranging from 100,000USD and above
- Request For Proposal (RFP) for provision professional services ranging up to 100,000USD and above
- Request for Quotations (RFQ) for goods and services ranging above 2500USD to 100,000USD
- Long Term Agreement (LTA) through which a company supplying goods and services are selected through a competitive process to provide certain types of commodity or services e.g. Fuels, Stationary, IT equipment and accessories etc.

During the reporting period both participating agencies (UNDP, FAO) mainly utilized RFQ, LTA and open market shopping (CARD shopping) to procure goods and services. In addition UNDP component used/ signed MoU with relevant government counterpart e.g. National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) for rent of the project office facilities. Of note, there have not been any variances in application of standard procurement procedures by both agencies during reporting period.

- Provide details on the monitoring system(s) that are being used and how you identify and incorporate lessons learned into the ongoing project

Monitoring

Monitoring has been an integral part of the implementation process during reporting period. This was carried out at the project level, participating UN agencies' country offices level and the senior beneficiary and the Project Management Committee (PMC) levels. The latest was more concerned with progress reviews, provision of strategic direction, approval of the next stage plans and other areas stipulated in PMC's ToR(Joint Programme Implementation Guidelines)

At the project level the following were organized (by respective UNDP and FAO staff) on a regular basis or as needed; field visits, weekly internal meetings, interviews with government officials at national and sub-national level lead by respective JP component (UNDP, FAO with technical support from UNEP) project manager/Chief Technical Advisors were undertaken. The outcomes and the feedback obtained through this has been incorporated in the plan of action regularly developed by Project Implementation Teams (PITs)

At the UN agencies' country offices level, the progress is monitored in line with the quality assurance mechanisms. For the UNDP component, this entails the regular quality assurance meetings on weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly basis at Programme Portfolio and Country Office Management Levels. The Programme Portfolios with the oversight and quality assurance roles oversee the project progress against the set standards and plans and regularly notify the project in case of any deviations from the standards and plans. The Country Office management reviews the progress of the project in the monthly review and planning meetings chaired by the Country Director and provide the project with strategic management and operational directions.

At the senior beneficiary and recipient levels, the project undertook regular monthly/ Quarterly progress review meeting with the government counter parts which ensures that the expectations of the beneficiaries are being taken into consideration and issues arising acted upon.

The following were used as monitoring tools during the reporting period:

- Project RRF for developing annual, quarterly and monthly plans
- Monitoring plan (including benchmarks, indicators and indicators) within the annual work plan (AWP)
- (UNDP) Issues and risks logs used for tracking management actions on the identified issues and risks.
- Joint field missions including monitoring of field activities with government partners
- Reports from government partners during monthly / quarterly partner review and planning meetings
- Project Management Committee (PMC) – the PMC was held chaired by Resident Coordinator, Co-chaired by lead JP government counterpart NEPA Director General, and Deputy Ministers from MRRD and MoAIL
- Technical Working Groups (TWG) : Two TWG were held during the reporting period. Technical representatives of government counterparts (NEPA, MRRD and MoAIL), and the PITs participate in the meetings. The TWG mainly focused on review the progress, next stage plans and provided technical advice to the PITS for the next stage.

- *Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken.*

FAO has published the first Technical Report, a study on community selection and mobilization in natural resource management

(http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/rangelands/FAO_Afghanistan_Rangeland_Conservation_Program_TP_1_English.pdf).

IV. Results

- **Provide a summary of Programme progress in relation to planned outcomes and outputs; explain any variance in achieved versus planned outputs during the reporting period. UNDP Environmental Mainstreaming (EM) Guidelines MRRD**

The capacity and skills development for MRRD staff regarding environmental mainstreaming within their policy planning and implementation process for rural development projects was initiated. An Environment Working Group to help mainstream environmental considerations into the planning and implementation of MRRD's rural development projects/programmes was constituted. Environment Mainstreaming (EM) guidelines were drafted and embedded within the overall MRRD programmes implementation mechanisms [e.g., Community Empowerment component of the UNDP/ National Area Based Development Programme [directly supporting District Development Assemblies (DDAs)], the World Bank supported National Solidarity Programme (NSP) [directly supporting Community Development Councils (CDCs)], and incorporating environmental management aspects into the training curriculum of the Afghanistan Rural Development Institute (ARDI) as part of the institutional sustainability strategy and plan for environmental mainstreaming].

NEPA

EM Guidelines could not be drafted as planned. Information on EM Guideline development in other countries worldwide was compiled. The recruitment of a qualified international consultant with proven expertise in this specialized field was initiated, however the individual could not be flown into Kabul in Q4 as scheduled, because of increased insurgency activities in Kabul and a subsequent freeze on the hiring of consultants. This major output is a priority for Q1 and Q2 2010.

Institutional Capacity Building (National and Sub-National) MRRD

The knowledge base of partner government institutions on key concept of Environment Mainstreaming (EM) improved through participatory trainings workshops. This included three Environment Mainstreaming training workshops two (for MRRD Central staff) and one for provincial (MRRD and NEPA) staff.

NEPA

A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for Central Headquarters was conducted incorporating input from other UN agencies (i.e., UNEP) and development organizations (e.g., USAID) offering institutional support A Training Plan was finalized. The plan will be an evolving document which identifies NEPA's needs for capacity development and will be used to guide NEPA's institutional development process supported by various development partners and UNEP conducted a training workshop for NEPA and other line ministries and departments (25 staff) on climate change as part of the process to prepare the Country Team who participated in the

UN Global Conference on Climate Change (CoP15). The knowledge base of Parliamentarian Environment Protection Commission members improved on basics of climate change. Given the important role legislature plays in approval of key government regulatory instruments and policies including the national budget. The training served as the initiation of sensitization process of MPs who has the potential of influencing decision making process at various levels. At this end 10 members of the mentioned parliamentary commission were the main recipients of the workshop.

Environmental Awareness

NEPA

The Public's awareness of the environment is at the core of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) mandate and forms an essential component of the environmental mainstreaming into the public and government domain. The Project supported NEPA to fulfill its obligation in regards to this process with commemoration of World Environment Day, publication of monthly newsletters, and financing of radio and TV spots on Climate Change. These activities aim to raise the awareness of the general populace that will hopefully result in changes in attitudes and behaviors. This contributed to the strengthening of NEPA's ability to fulfill its mandate as provided for under the Environment Law.

FAO Community Selection

FAO has selected a total of 32 cooperating communities which are serving as local extension centers. These communities meet a set of stringent criteria which maximize the likelihood of project success and sustainability. Details are provided in FAO Technical Report 1 (see above).

Needs Assessment and Resource Inventories

Needs assessments for all three provinces are completed, and quantitative rangeland inventories are currently in preparation for spring season.

Capacity Development

In all three provinces, FAO has integrated field officers from NEPA, MRRD and MAIL into the project team. The design of the FAO project intends to develop the selected partner communities into farmer to farmer learning centers as the most effective means to build broad extension capacity in Afghanistan. Knowledge about appropriate resource conservation management is very scarce and extreme poverty places high pressure on resources. Only a systematic approach building and developing autonomous capacity of the rural communities can be long-term sustainable and successful.

During reporting period the JP faced a number of challenges that somehow delayed the implementation of certain activities hence delayed achievement of planned outputs to some extent for the year. The areas include transfer of the first installment, staffing, unexpected changes in security situation in the country and attack on UN personnel in Afghanistan, some gaps in the areas of coordination among the JP PITs. Some details on all these are provided in the following sections.

- **Report on the key outputs achieved in the reporting period including # and nature of the activities (inputs), % of completion and beneficiaries.** (please refer to the table below)

Completion Rate (as of 31 Dec. 2009) of FAO-UNDP-UNEP SAISEM JP Results

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>% Progress</u>	<u>Output</u>	<u>% Progress</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>UNDP/FAO Component</u>				
1. Environmental issues mainstreamed in national and sub-national policy, planning and investment frameworks	35	Output 1.1: National environmental concerns reflected in the ANDS and selected sectoral plans, and institutional capacity strengthened to operationalise them.	45	Most activities for Outcome 1 are UNDP and the few FAO activities are scheduled for Year Two
		Output 1.2: Environmental concerns are fully reflected in provincial and district development plans.	25	
<u>FAO/UNDP Component</u>				
2. Local management of environmental resources improved and services delivery enhanced	30	Output 2.1: Communities are able to develop and implement projects for sustainable use of natural resources and livelihoods (to include rural energy systems).	20	Most activities for Outcome 2 are FAO and these percentages represent only FAO field activities to date. UNDP activities for Outcome 2 are scheduled for Year Two.
		Output 2.2: Institutional knowledge management improved in relation with community based field interventions.	40	

Beneficiaries

Direct Beneficiaries

Indicate Beneficiary type (i.e., farmers, policy makers, SMEs, etc.)	No. Institutions	No. Women	No. Men	No. Ethnic Groups
Ministerial Policy Makers UNDP: NEPA, MRRD, & MAIL FAO: MAIL	3	5	1,955	-
	1		4	-
Provincial Govt. Officials UNDP: (NEPA, DRRD, DAIL) FAO: (NEPA, DRRD, DAIL)	3	2 per province X 4 provinces = 8	10 per province = 40	-
	3		14(NEPA=3;MRRD =1; MAIL=10)	-
Local Governance Units (e.g., Provincial Development Committees, District Development Assemblies, Community Development Councils, Shuras, etc.) UNDP	4	5 /province=20	20/province = 80	-
Farmers and their families (Total population, not further differentiated) FAO				
Badghis		17,250	-	-
Herat		10,000	-	-
Ghor		5,000	-	-
Total	10	32,250	-	-
Farmers directly benefiting from livelihood program				
Badghis		500		
Herat		300		
Ghor				

Indirect Beneficiaries

Indicate Beneficiary type (i.e., farmers, policy makers, SMEs, etc.)	No. Institutions	No. Women	No. Men	No. Ethnic Groups
Farmers, Nomadic Herders, & other Local People	N.A.	20 CDCs (Community Development Councils) and 10 DDA (District Development Assemblies) are targeted for 4 provinces; the estimated number of 40,000 ID beneficiaries is based on the population in these areas		-
Total		40,000		-

- Explain, if relevant, delays in programme implementation, the nature of the constraints, actions taken to mitigate future delays and lessons learned in the process.

Delays in Programme Implementation

1. Early (11 Nov. 2008) transfer of funds to UNDP and late recruitment of national and international staff for both FAO and UNDP. All UNDP staff was in place by Oct. and FAO has hired most of their field staff in the four targeted provinces.
2. Identification and recruitment of qualified national staff for both FAO and UNDP. Measures were taken and national staff selection/recruitment was satisfactorily completed. Effective teams are now operating and maintaining fast-paced progress. International team members should be on board and contribute to the recruitment process of national staff.
3. Security Concerns: The second half of 2009 coincided with an increase in insurgency activities in Kabul that had different implications to both JP components.

FAO

National and international staff were based in the provinces and there were minimal impacts on field work

UNDP & UNEP

The international Project Manager of the UNDP Team survived a gun attack on his guest house and was then on a special "Compassionate Leave" for 10 weeks. UNDP (including the JP Coordinator) and UNEP international staff connected to this JP were relocated outside the country in late Oct. /early Nov. and only permitted to start returning in early December. All continued working during the relocation.

Both components acknowledge the need to build the capacity of national staff with immediate effect in the event of additional unforeseen events in 2010 that may compel international staff to leave the country for extended periods of time, subject to security guidance from UNDSS headquarters in New York.

- List the key partnerships and collaborations, and explain how such relationships impact on the achievement of results.

UNDP

- Collaboration with other UNDP projects and programmes. This facilitated logistics and community mobilization during field missions. UNDP projects such as the ANBP, ELECT and ASGP projects with established project offices provided support during field missions.
- Collaboration with UNEP on environmental awareness and publicity campaigns. Partnership with UNEP helped to organize two key events namely World Environment Day commemoration and training and preparing the Afghanistan Delegation to CoP15 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen
- With FAO for community selection and reaching out to local communities.
- Collaboration with UN-Habitat for community empowerment and training in provinces.
- Spanish PRT in Badghis was helpful in providing logistical support in the field as well as community mobilization.

FAO

FAO has established close working relationships with the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID) and their program in Badghis. We further collaborate successfully with the University of Herat. University professors and students are integrated into our field teams and participate in the implementation process.

- Other highlights and cross-cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on.

FAO - UNDP

In Afghanistan, experience has shown that women and children are the most affected by adverse impacts of environmental degradation or unsustainable management of natural resources in communities. Women and children have to spend hours payless in search for fuel wood or bushes to meet the energy needs of their households for cooking and heating.

In addition unavailability of alternative resources of energy for cooking and heating a lot women and children suffer life threatening respiratory diseases as a result of inhalation of poisonous gases produced from the bush, wood, cow dung etc used to for cooking and heating.

Given the facts above, both UNDP and FAO gave Gender as cross cutting theme a high consideration in all aspects of the project management. Some key example includes selection of equal participation of men and women for the Environment Sub-committees within existing local governance structures such as Community Development Councils (CDCs) and District Development Assemblies (DDAs) (mandated to identify development needs and do the planning); establishment of women sub-committees where appropriate; equal participation of women and men in the selection process of cooperating communities. This included planning implementation of activities, formation of the environmental sub-committees at CDCs and DDAs level where the equal participation of men and women will be given a high consideration in selection the mentioned 32 cooperating communities.

Recruitment of female staff in the project teams to ensure project outreach and access to women in the target communities. This approach will ensure both Afghan men and women equally enjoy the benefits of the results produced by the project that in turn ensures sustainability and human right principles in the longer run.

V. Future Work Plan (if applicable)

- Summarize the projected activities and expenditures for the following reporting period (1 January-31 December 2010), using the lessons learned during the previous reporting period.

Activities as extracted from the AWP 2010.

Action 1.1.1: National Guidelines for mainstreaming environment into the policy, planning and implementation frameworks formulated / developed and operationalised

Action 1.1.2: Environment Mainstreaming (EM) guidelines incorporated into the various ANDS sector plans and strategies (rural development, health, education, public works, agriculture, water and energy etc.

Action 1.1.3: Specific EM Guidelines implementation toolkits developed and operationalised for MRRD, MoEW, MoPH, MoAIL, MoPW

Action 1.1.4: Capacity of NEPA to conduct Environment Monitoring and Evaluation (EME) strengthened to ensure Environmental Mainstreaming into the policy development and investment frameworks.

Action 1.1.5: Public awareness and outreach programmes to disseminate environment mainstreaming and management undertaken, targeting key ministries, and agencies and the general public.

Action 1.1.6: Public policy and legislative assessment and monitoring regarding EIA implementation undertaken.

Action 1.2.1: 34 Sub-national Environmental Advisory Councils established as required and mandated to NEPA by Article 12 of the Afghanistan Environment Law.

Action 1.2.2: 10 DDA and 20 CDCs supported to establish environment sub-committees in at least 4 provinces.

Action 1.2.3: Capacity of provincial and district level institutions to mainstream environment into their planning and implementations frameworks enhanced (PDP, DDPs, CDCs)

Action 1.2.4: Capacity of NEPA and MRRD central and provincial staff in Environment Mainstreaming approaches and practices into rural development and infrastructural development projects enhanced.

Action 2.1.1: Local community capacity to undertake CBNRM activities including resource mapping, data collection, monitoring and environment mitigation) improved.

Action 2.1.2: At least 3 community based natural resources management initiatives (based on EIA compliance standards) supported through a community conservation fund/grant.

- Indicate any major adjustments in strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs planned.

None

VI. Performance Indicators (optional)³

- Fill the table in this section to report on the indicators set at the output level as per the approved results framework in the programme document. **This table was completed for the recently submitted MDG-F Monitoring Report (for the period 1 July – 31 Dec.) so may not need to be included again, especially since we have a max. of 15 pages. RCO could please check on this.**

³ E.g. for the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund and the MDG-F.

VII. Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **List the main abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report. Please add to the list. Will be completed once the narrative section is finished.**

ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AIRD	Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development
CDC	Community Development Council
DDA	District Development Assembly
EM	Environmental Mainstreaming
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
JP	Joint Programme
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Industries, and Livestock
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDTF	Millennium Development Trust Fund
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme