



**United Nations Development Programme  
Afghanistan**

**SUPPORT TO CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT PROJECT  
[01-01-2007 – 31-12-2007]**

**ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT**



**Exposure visit for senior CoS and OAA officials organised at Administrative Staff College of Hyderabad, India, December 3rd 2007.**

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| <b>Project ID:</b>                                | 00046407  |
| <b>Duration:</b>                                  | 3 years   |
| <b>Component (MYFF):</b>                          | 2.7. Public Administration Reform and Anti Corruption   |
| <b>Total Budget:</b>                              | 16,275,000  |
| <b>Unfunded:</b>                                  | 878,899   |
| <b>Implementing Partners/Responsible parties:</b> | UNDP in collaboration with Chief of Staff (CoS), Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) Office of the President and The Asia Foundation (TAF) |

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## Executive Summary

During the reporting period the SCoG Project achieved the deliverables presented in the project Annual Work Plan for 2007. The project provides assistance to the OAA and CoS offices through its six interacting functional domains. The summary of achievements by domain is included below:

### **Facility domain:**

This domain has achieved its deliverable which includes completion of the design work for CoS administration Building and Arg Towers as well as repairing the OAA Building. The finalised design of Delkoshia garden will be completed by February, 2008

### **Information Technology**

Server room physical security enhancement, centralized secure server system environment deployment and Council of Ministers building ICT network design has been completed by SCoG IT domain. Moreover, OAA website was developed and launched with the technical assistance provided by the SCoG project. Assistance provided by the SCoG IT domain also includes server and client software purchase and installation, network cabling design for the new under-construction COS building, wireless connectivity project to connect four key palace buildings and automation of President's scheduling department processes.

### **Administrative Work Process**

The SCoG Administrative Work Process Improvement Domain (AWPI) has been able to initiate two main process improvement projects for transformation of Procurement Process and Document Process which included submission of an assessment report and recommendations. The AWPI domain also facilitated a review of the transport fleet for the CoS office. Additionally, a reform of the Office of the Spokesperson to the President was initiated and recommendations and an action plan presented to the president's spokesperson. The AWPI domain has also been able to finalize the OAA Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate strategy.

### **Policy Processes Domain**

The Policy process Domain has been able to map the policy processes for the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. Moreover, the domain conducted workshops on public policy processes to introduce process improvements and international policy process best practices. The policy process domain also designed and launched a Cabinet Liaison Officer (CLO) program to help improve Cabinet meeting coordination process among the 26 ministries. Some other activities such as drafting mission statements, Terms of Reference, meeting agendas and job descriptions for the CoS office have been achieved by the policy process domain.

### **Organization/ Human Resources Domain**

A comprehensive HR assessment was completed by the Organization domain of the SCoG project and recommendations were accepted for implementation by the OAA and CoS leadership. HRM mentoring on three policies – "Grievance Procedures," "Leave and Benefits" and "Performance Appraisal" – was also provided by the domain. One of the other main activities under organization domain is the Presidential Protocol Department's management capacity assessment; recommendations were delivered and accepted by the CoS for implementation.

### **Training**

A comprehensive training plan for officers and staff at all levels was designed by the SCoG training domain. This domain has also been able to implement integrated training strategies to address specific needs of various occupation groups and a rudimentary evaluation system was also implemented in order to evaluate all training activities carried out. In addition, a database to manage training functions was implemented and is now fully functional.

### **Project Challenges/ Issues**

The list below highlights some of the top challenges the project faced throughout the year, along with suggested solution ideas to help overcome those challenges:

*Unavailability of Centre of Government of Staff-* Solutions: The project team continued to work with other colleagues from their counterpart departments.

*Ongoing Staff Turnover- Key personnel at both OAA and CoS-* Solution: The project teams now meet weekly and work with a larger number of project counterparts.

### **Lessons learnt**

A summary of lessons learnt and documented in each project domain since the beginning of 2007 is listed below:

- The volatility of the working environment at the centre of government required the project team to be as flexible as possible when planning and implementing project activities.
- Adequate time for building relationships and the trust of senior leadership is crucial to the success of the project.
- Ministries and government agencies should be encouraged to conduct extensive consultations and coordination with other ministries, government organizations, civil society organizations at the time of policy formulation and adoption.
- The time needed to progress through the “awareness, interest, education, understanding” learning cycle is significant and must not be under-estimated. Language issues and the nature of work in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan compound the problem. It is not possible to omit a stage in this linear sequence and still achieve understanding and successful implementation of an improved process.
- Information Technology presents critical issues in a manner that is difficult to understand and process in laymen’s terms. Therefore, it is difficult to obtain counterpart buy-in to the process.

## I. Context

The objective of the Support to Centre of Government project is to strengthen the institutions at the Centre of Government that they are more agile, streamlined, transparent, and effective in their support of the Office of President as it strives to meet its policy objectives. The SCoG project targets the Afghan Center of Government, which includes (a) Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) and (b) Chief of Staff Office (CoS). Whereas in particular, the CoS office supports the president in his role as the head of state, the OAA supports the president in his role as the head of the government.

The intended outcome of the project is CoS and OAA offices that have been transformed over a three-year period according to their PRR designs through the building of their capacities, rationalization of their organizational structures, redesigning of their administrative work processes, and upgrading of their facilities and information technology to international standards.

The outcome will be attained through a project implementation strategy that views the CoG institutions as part of a “whole” and is based on the assumption that every organization is a “system,” composed of a set of interacting functional “domains” that need to work well together to enable good organizational performance overall. The project document envisages a “systems approach” that simultaneously improves performance in the following six key inter-related domains:

1. Physical facilities
2. Information Technology
3. Administrative Work Processes
4. Training
5. Organization
6. Policy Facilitation & Decision Making Processes

During the reporting period, the activities of the SCOG project supported the “Good Governance and Rule of Law” pillar in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy that has as its objective the improvement of public administration and implementation of civil service reform.

This project supports Outcome 2 of the UNDAF: “By 2008, an effective, more accountable and more representative public administration is established at the national and sub-national levels, with improved delivery of services in an equitable, efficient and effective manner.”

Project resources have been applied towards the achievement of CPAP outcome 2: “The democratic state and government institutions strengthened at national and sub-national levels to govern and ensure quality public services including security with special attention to marginalised groups;” and CPAP Output 2.1: “Public sector capacity strengthened through the development of civil service at the central and sub-national levels, the establishment of accountability mechanisms and the enhancement of information management for better service delivery.”

Progress towards the UNDAF and CPAP Outcome and Output is measured with reference to progress toward the following project outputs:

- 1: The buildings that house the OAA and CoS have been repaired or reconstructed to international standards according to a comprehensive architectural design for each building and their immediate surrounding grounds.
- 2: Critical administrative work processes are streamlined, predictable, timely, and transparent.
- 3: An organizational culture based on transparent and fair leadership qualities, trust, collaboration, pro-action and encouragement of innovation and experimentation is established.

4: All employees who require additional training in order to perform their jobs have received the necessary training.

5: Both OAA and CoS have the necessary information technology and communications infrastructure to function at international standards

6: Policy facilitation and decision making procedures are clear, effective, and working as designed.

It's also worth mentioning that due to the nature of the project which is mainly related to change management in both the OAA and CoS, the developmental challenges are inclusive of but not limited to resistance by counterparts to change which has a direct impact on the outcome of the project and project life and constant staff turnover which can be addressed by implementation of a workable staff retention policy by both, the OAA and CoS.

## II. Performance review

Achieving collaborative goals requires effective planning and follow-through. The Support to Centre of Government (SCoG) project, throughout the year, used the project Annual Work Plan as a road-map to attaining and measuring progress towards the project outputs and outcomes.

### 2.1 Progress review

#### Overall progress towards the ANDS benchmark(s)

The Support to Centre of Government project is aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy "ANDS" and supports the "Good Governance and Rule of Law" pillar in the ANDS that has as its objective the goal of improving the public administration and implementing the civil service reform. In this regard the SCoG project is providing direct support to the Chief of Staff Office and Office of Administrative Affairs, who count among the direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

#### Overall progress towards the UNDAF outcome

The SCoG Project is significantly contributing towards achievement of UNDAF outcome # 2 "BY 2008, an effective, more accountable and more representative public administration is established at the national and sub-national levels, with improved delivery of services in an equitable, efficient and effective manner"

#### Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome and output(s)

The SCoG project is actively contributing towards the achievement of CPAP outcome # 2 e.g. strengthening democratic state and government institutions. Project resources are applied to ensure that the centre of government institutions are more agile, streamlined, transparent and effective in their support of the Office of President as it strives to meet its policy objectives. The project, in particular, contributes to the development of government capacity in policy coordination, policy analysis and decision making at the Centre of Government.

### Capacity development

Capacity development is a key element of the systems approach employed by the Support to Centre of Government project. Under its training domain, the SCoG project has designed and developed an integrated skills and behaviours improvement programme that supports and complements all project activities and efforts undertaken in the other four domains. The SCoG project offers progressive training programmes and workshop activities to support the transition of institutions at the centre of government to a higher level of performance and to sustainability.

During the reporting period the training domain conducted a three-phase needs assessment process. On the basis of this initial assessment a comprehensive training strategy was developed for CoS and OAA. These resultant strategies consisted of a variety of learning activities including classroom instruction, exposure visits and participation in workshops and seminars.

One of the areas in which training was needed most was in English Language instruction. It was understood at the time that fluency in English would be necessary to take advantage of advanced level and technical training, most likely provided by international partners. Classroom facilities were provided at CoS and at OAA and SCoG also contracted AIMS to provide instruction. In addition, with the introduction of computers and the installation of networks and internet, important Computer

Skills training is now available to train staff in the use of basic office applications. The courses are ongoing and will continue for the next six months at least.

Between July, 2007 and February, 2008 we have scheduled 154 training days, with average attendance of 15 staff per day for a total of 2310 participant/day. A major challenge facing the project had to do with selection of candidates to attend the various courses that were scheduled each week for delivery at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute. Initially participants were selected by one or two officers and bore little or no relationship to individual or departmental needs and priorities. In response to this challenge, the Training Domain initiated a system to facilitate candidate selection as part of a rudimentary Training Management Information System. A brochure was prepared and distributed to all staff. They were asked to identify three training courses of interest and to indicate the appropriate dates for attending. This brochure listed the calendar of courses that were available and most courses included two or three alternate dates to offer maximum flexibility for staff. These data were put into a data base. As a result, a list of participants is prepared for each course offered and this list is sent to OAA and CoS who then select the candidates who have priority according to their own selection criteria.

In addition to the ongoing schedule of generic skills courses, three senior staff attended a Senior Managers Training Programme at the National University of Singapore, and seven participants attended an Innovations Workshop sponsored by Ash Institute (Harvard University) and Rai Foundation in Delhi.

A system of course registration, post-course evaluation and three-month follow-up has been developed and will allow for more comprehensive evaluation of performance improvement resulting from training. Eventually this system will be expanded to include a personal learning plan for each employee and will provide a basis for longer term planning.

To date, all training has been provided by local institutions, NGO's and private companies in an effort to develop local capacity in this area. An arrangement was made with the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute to conduct all SCoG training at their training facility and to promote use of the facility with other government ministries.

### **Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries.**

The Support to Centre of Government project is aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy "ANDS" and supports the "Good Governance and Rule of Law" pillar in the ANDS that has as its objective the goal of improving the public administration and implementing the civil service reform. In this regard the SCoG project is providing direct support to the Chief of Staff Office and Office of Administrative Affairs, who count among the direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

As described above, the project demonstrated significant impact on the improvement of administrative work processes without which an organization cannot function efficiently; use of information technology at an expected international level; application of HR policies in coordination with IARCSC HR Policy Directorate; and upgrading the workforce of OAA and CoS so they can fulfil their roles.

To the extent that the institutions at the Centre of Government are enabled to function in a more efficient, transparent and accountable fashion, the public benefits from improved access to information and services from the executive branch of the Government of Afghanistan.

## **2.2 Implementation strategy review**

### **Participatory/consultative processes**

The Support to Centre of Government project is a joint effort between the CoS, the OAA and the international donor community. The project conducts joint project planning, designing and

management with a strong commitment from all stakeholders to achieve the project outcome in a participatory fashion.

In a project of this nature success is contingent upon the commitment and buy-in of all stakeholders. Throughout the year the project ensured that TAF staff worked closely with the counterpart organizations to produce clearer reports and develop a realistic plan based on the inception plan for 2007 following the assessment process.

The SCoG project is overseen by a Project Steering Committee, co-chaired by the UNDP Senior Deputy Country Director, the President's Chief of Staff, and the Director General of the OAA, which is responsible for providing the overall strategic direction for the project. Major decisions regarding project strategy, progress, and budget are made at the Steering Committee meeting on the basis of committee consensus.

At the project management level, all domain leaders teamed up with their counterparts/domain focal points to develop detailed project plans and implement those plans. The teams meet on a weekly basis to review the progress, discuss obstacles, identify risks and challenges and develop mitigation strategies.

The SCoG project also attended the IARCSC Capacity Building Group meeting to coordinate project activities. In these meeting OAA was selected as a Resource organization to improve the capacity of government institutions to develop and formulate policy proposals. SCoG assisted the OAA in submitting a proposal to IARCSC in this regard.

## Quality of partnerships

In a post-conflict country like Afghanistan, capacity constraints to project activity implementation are both human and organizational. The SCoG project has partnered with key government institutions, NGOs, private companies and academia to help intensify capacity development efforts and, by extension, to help achieve the desired outcome of the project.

The SCoG project has teamed up with different partners in different domains of the project to perform specific tasks. Implementing partners are selected through a transparent, competency-based process. A list of SCoG implementing partners is included below:

### Facilities Domain

- SCoG partnered with Studio Z to handle the facilities domain. Under this arrangement the Studio Z worked on various projects within the CoS and the OAA. At the CoS they worked on designs for the new CoS administrative building, the Dilkhusha Gardens, renovation/ fortification of two Arg Towers. At the OAA they were required to renovate the Qasr-e-Marmarin building, specifically the roof, exterior walls and guard room, which was completed as part of the facilities domain as well.

### Information Technology Domain

The SCoG project has teamed up with private companies to perform specific ICT tasks at OAA and CoS:

- Partnered with a UAE based ICT company (EmirCom) to design the ICT of the Council of Ministers building
- Partnered with a local company (AATG-GSI), affiliated with an American based company to install a wireless point to multipoint connectivity at four presidential buildings.
- Partnered with a local company (DigiCom) to install network infrastructure at OAA and to carry out the testing, repairing and mapping of the existing cable network

In the information technology area, SCOG works in close coordination with Bearing Point to design and implement the network infrastructure at CoS and at the Council of ministers building.

The SCOG project also works closely with Ministry of Communication and IT and Civil Service Commission on establishing a unique E-Governance strategy to deploy the HRMIS at OAA and CoS HR Departments.

### Administrative Work Process Domain

- SCoG has engaged Xala Technologies “a private company” to develop the software application for the Kitchen/Depot pilot. This handles meal and menu planning, food inventory management, requisitioning and receiving and provides management reporting.

### Training Domain

- Established partnership with local training providers – private, public and NGOs - to deliver skills-building training courses (157 training days) for staff at all levels at CoS and OAA;
- Established partnership with local NGO (AIMS) to provide English language and Computer Skills training for CoS and OAA;
- Established partnership with Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI) for training facilities;
- Established partnership with Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) to host six Exposure Visits to their campus in Hyderabad for middle- and senior managers

### Organization/ Human Resources Management

- In partnership with the Civil Service Commission, the project is assisting OAA and CoS to implement the HR policies and procedures
- The SCoG project in partnership with Civil Service Commission and Bearing Point consultants facilitated the adoption of HRMIS at OAA and CoS

### National Ownership

The SCoG project is implemented over three years under UNDP Direct Executing (DEX) modality through contracting the project implementation management to The Asia Foundation. The project benefits from commitments and support of CoS and OAA leadership to deliver its activities. However, the project faces significant challenges as the implementation affects every employee by changing the old work methods, the use of new computer technology, the implementation of new HR policies, and new decision making paths. The SCoG project management team meets with senior management of both the CoS and OAA on a weekly basis to review project progress and discuss implementation barriers, and to suggest possible ways of overcoming those barriers.

### Sustainability

The Support to Centre of Government project makes the best use of its resources to build the required institutional capacity in the institutions at the centre of government so they are more agile, streamlined, transparent and effective in their support of the Office of President. To achieve the sustainability at the CoG, the project hired a full-time professional international project manager who works closely with two full-time national project managers designated by the CoS and the OAA. The international project manager provides the necessary support to his counterpart managers and

coaches and mentors them on a daily basis to implement best practices in order to reduce the project risks and ensure that outcomes are achieved.

To develop the human capacity at CoS and OAA, the SCoG project designed a comprehensive training strategy to deliver progressive training so that all employees who require additional training in order to perform their jobs acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. Collectively this will ensure the sustainability of the project through the implementation phase.

In addition, the project has hired a national co-team lead for each key domain to work closely with international team leaders. The international team leaders coach and mentor their national counterparts so they can take the lead in mid-2008 when the project discontinues international TA. This approach was approved and will serve as an effective move towards sustainability.

## *2.3 Management effectiveness review*

### **Quality of monitoring**

The project implementation was subject to internal monitoring through a variety of highly articulated tools and mechanisms. Since the beginning of the project the management reports to all stakeholders including CoS, OAA, UNDP and donor community on weekly basis. The Weekly Reports highlight the project accomplishments and planned activities for the following week. It also highlights any significant issues that are of any concern to The Asia Foundation, Government counterparts or UNDP.

The SCoG project also submits Quarterly Project Reports to UNDP Country Office to report the implementation progress, update the projects implementation challenges, including risk and issues and to suggest recommended actions.

The project Steering Committee which oversees the project meets on a regular basis to review the project work plan and discuss progress, and to address any issues affecting the project's performance and progress toward its objectives.

### **Timely delivery of outputs**

Throughout the year the SCoG project faced risks and challenges that affected or suspended project activities at different periods of time. Despite these risks and challenges, progress on all 6 domains continued and the deliverables which were established in the project inception plan were achieved and are listed in the Project Results Summary section below.

### **Resources allocation**

The proportion of project staff and other operation costs represents more than 40% of the annual project budget. This is mainly due to the nature of the project which entails the provision of national and international technical assistance to strengthen the institutional capacity of the CoS and OAA to perform according to a higher level of standards. The technical assistance has been provided in six areas (Policy Process, Administrative Work Processes, Training, Organization, Information Technology and Facilities).

Having the afore-mentioned six interacting "domains" in the project providing technical assistance to the OAA and CoS (This is with the exception of "facilities domain" which is responsible for the

architectural design and construction of required infrastructure); each domain is required to be staffed with a certain number of required international and national consultants.

### **Cost-effective use of inputs**

The Asia Foundation has an improved financial and administrative framework that ensures project resources are used in a cost effective manner. The Asia Foundation's policies, procedures and internal controls that ensure what is supplied is both cost effective and of high quality.

The project management team monitors and reviews the project expenditures and measures performance against those expenditures. This ensures that a sound cost control practice is being followed by The Asia Foundation.

## III. Project results summary

### Facilities Domain

#### Annual target deliverables

*OAA/CoS building rehabilitated*

#### Progress

##### Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)

- Qasr-e-Marmarin, as the office building for the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), was renovated “including design, management of the bidding process, contract preparation and quality control and monitoring of construction work”;

##### Chief of Staff (CoS)

- Design/Construction of the CoS office building completed “including development of schematic design, detailed architectural design, management of the bidding process, contract preparation and quality control and monitoring of construction work”;

### Information Technology Domain

#### Annual target deliverables:

*ICT assessment, deployed systems and network infrastructure; applications strategy, mentor ICT managers and technical staff; designed governance and standards framework.*

#### Progress

##### Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)

- Deployed Centralized Secure Server System (Client/Server) environment; clients connected to the main server through centralized manageable logon system, protected against virus attack and illegal access by powerful antivirus and hardware/ software security systems. Two high level technicians supporting the system deployment on site.
- Server and client software (Microsoft windows 2003 server, Microsoft windows XP Pro client, Microsoft Office Professional), Antivirus software, web monitoring software and helpdesk + asset management application purchased and installed.
- Additional server, back up solution, automatic tape loader, high capacity UPS with battery pack new server rack/cabinet and accessories purchased and installed.
- Network security and performance enhanced; re-configuration, proper utilization and performing preventive maintenance on Cisco devices turned out the OAA network to a secure and enterprise level Network System.
- Server room refurbished (Physically secured, partitioned, shelves, metal door, double layer window installed), electricity properly re-wired.
- Services Department (Reasate Khedamat) data/voice cabling and wireless connectivity to the main server room and testing/repairing of the existing cabling initiated; the task is underway.
- OAA website developed (contracting AIMS), but not launched due to higher management decision.
- Council of Ministers building ICT design completed, working closely with Bearing Point for the network installation project.
- One helpdesk support technician full time stationed at the OAA to support, coach and mentor ICT technical staff in troubleshooting and maintain system and network.

- More hardware (Cisco security devices) and software identified for system security and Network performance - undergoing procurement process.
- ICT strategic plan development started.

#### **Chief of Staff (CoS):**

- Location for the permanent server room identified, Construction Company contracted to refurbish the room to protect the sensitive electronic equipment from moisture, dust and physical unauthorized access.
- The need for network cabling to the new under-construction CoS building (Telephone Khana) identified, network designed and partnering with Bearing Point to install the ICT network in the building.
- Cisco equipment base wireless point to multipoint connectivity established between four locations (Kitchen, Depots, Delkoshia Palace and CoS main sever room) in the Arg, users in the mentioned locations been able to use internet and other shared resources from main server.
- High capacity UPS, power stabilizer purchased and delivered to provide stable power conditioning to the valuable server equipment.
- A new application development project coordinated with AIMS to provide the President's scheduling department a better solution.
- ICT strategic plan development started.

## *Administrative Work Process Domain*

#### **Annual target deliverables:**

*One core administrative work process redesigned; documented in the form of flow charts; and the refined process implemented.*

#### **Progress**

- An Administrative Work Process Improvement Guide was developed in English and Dari;
- A process map of Procurement Process as defined by the Procurement Law was also developed.

#### **Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)**

- The Procurement Process at OAA was analyzed (ongoing);
  - An "As-Is" process model was developed;
  - The "To-Be" procurement process at OAA was developed;
  - The Procurement Discovery and Assessment report for OAA was drafted and submitted;
  - Constraints, enablers and quick fixes for procurement were identified and a 3 page "Recommendations and Immediate Next Steps" regarding OAA procurement was submitted; and
  - A conceptual design of IT enabled "To-Be" procurement process and a weekly/monthly procurement reporting template were developed.
- The OAA Documents and Relations Process was streamlined (ongoing).
  - The document delivery process was mapped from receipt to delivery;
  - Bottlenecks and constraints were identified;
  - A streamlined process enabled by technology was designed;
  - An 18 step plan for immediate improvements was developed;
  - An Archive project to free up space and to absorb surplus capacity (labor) was developed and the team oversaw construction of new archive room;
  - The documents in the current archive were classified; and
  - Mobile shelving was procured.
- The OAA Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate strategy was revised and edited
  - Business case for additional budget was prepared, submitted and approved.

**Chief of Staff (CoS)**

- The Procurement Process at CoS was streamlined (ongoing);
  - An Administrative Work Process Improvement Guide was developed;
  - The Procurement Discovery and Assessment Report for CoS was drafted and submitted;
  - Constraints, enablers and quick fixes for procurement were identified;
  - The conceptual design of IT-enabled “To-Be” procurement process was completed;
  - A Vendor Pre-Qualification checklist and Bid Document folder for 1386 (2007-08) was developed;
  - The Kitchen/Depot Pilot software development for requests, requisitions, receipts, inventory management, issues, meal planning and menus was initiated.
- A review of transport fleet was facilitated;
  - Vehicles which should be retained or disposed of were identified;
- The Document & Relations Department process was mapped and lessons learned from OAA were applied. Recommended improvements are being implemented.
- Reform of Office of the Spokesperson to the President was started;
  - An Organization Assessment tool was prepared
  - Staff in Monitoring, Analysis, News and Production were interviewed;
  - Recommendations and a “Six Day, Six Weeks, Six Months” action plan were developed

**Policy and Decision-Making Processes Domains****Annual target deliverables:**

*New CoS organizational support as requested; mapped policy process and recommendations for improvement; recommendations for cabinet process; new cabinet procedures developed and training delivered.*

**Progress****Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)**

- Mapped and examined policy process in three ministries; Public Health, Economy and Refugees and Repatriates.
- Identified the shortfall in every stage of the policy process and provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Office of Administration Affairs (OAA) and the related ministries.
- Prepared Council of Ministers (Cabinet-CoM) policy proposal submission procedures
- Conducted a workshop for the representatives of all ministries and public agencies to introduce the concept of the Council of Ministers Liaison Officers (CLO) at all ministries and introduced the new policy proposal format for submissions to COM.
- Assessed the Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation and provided recommendations for improvement, designed new checklist and questionnaire for monitoring and evaluation and developed a reference paper on “How to Write Quality Report”
- Started coaching and mentoring OAA policy specialists on policy secondary analysis, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

**Chief of Staff Office (CoS)**

- Defined the Office of Presidential Program (OPP) by drafting mission statements, 20 section

ToR and position descriptions for all directorates operating in the OPP framework

- Drafted mission statement for the President's Chief of Staff Office and continues working on section ToR and position description
- Prepared a concept paper to justify the creation of a Policy Directorate within the framework of CoS through meeting and consultation with policy experts and stakeholders
- Defined the CoS Policy Directorate and drafted a mission statement, 7 section ToR and position description
- Developed a set of recommendations both on the organizational structure and mandate of various directorates of the CoS

## Organization/ Human Resources Domain

### Annual target deliverables:

*HRM assessment; documented key HR policies and procedures; training for HR officers; key policies and procedures implemented and support to increase capacity and improve the state of the Protocol Function.*

### Progress

#### **Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)**

- Concurrent to the CoS assessment, a comprehensive OAA HR assessment was completed and recommendations contained within were accepted by OAA Leadership for implementation. Likewise, significant focus by SCOG Organizational/HR team towards "relationship building" with senior OAA personnel and "attitudinal leadership change" towards the importance of sound HR practices, has resulted in the acceptance of Civil Service Commission HR policies as the way forward. Three policies, (Grievance Procedures, Leave and Benefits and Performance Appraisal) will be reviewed and tailored for specific OAA requirements. Training will be conducted in late 2007 with follow-on policy implementation to carry forward in 2008. The OAA's and CoS' parallel implementation of the aforementioned policies marks the first Governmental organizations to put into operation any Civil Service Commission HR policy.

#### **Chief of Staff Office (CoS)**

- A comprehensive HR assessment was completed and recommendations contained within were accepted by CoS Leadership for implementation. Due to significant focus by SCOG Organizational/HR team towards "relationship building" with senior CoS personnel and "attitudinal leadership change" towards the importance of sound HR practices, acceptance of Civil Service Commission HR policies as the way forward was achieved. Two policies will be reviewed (Grievance Procedures and Leave and Benefits) and designed for "unique" CoS requirements with training and implementation scheduled for late 2007 with follow-on policy implementation to carry forward into 2008. The latter marks the first Governmental organization to put into operation any Civil Service Commission HR policy.

#### **Presidential Protocol**

- SCOG was requested by CoS to conduct an assessment and deliver recommendations aimed at improving all facets of Presidential Protocol Department. SCOG Organizational/HR Team conducted the assessment between October – November 2007 and a draft assessment report was presented to CoS for review. All signs point towards positive acceptance of the assessment recommendations by CoS with implementation to begin immediately and carry through 2008.

## Training Domain

### Annual target deliverables:

*Training needs assessment; comprehensive training plan; ongoing English language and computer skills classes implemented; calendar of course prepared and being implemented.*

### Progress

#### **Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) and the Chief of Staff (COS)**

- Conduct Training Needs Assessment: A training needs analysis was carried out at the start of the project. On the basis of information obtained a comprehensive training strategy for officers and staff at all levels were produced and presented to OAA and CoS.
- Design Training Plans: On the basis of the needs analysis a programme of training 'events', including classroom instruction, exposure visits, professional conferences and seminars within Afghanistan and within the region form part of a Comprehensive Training Plan developed for each counterpart organization. Ingredients of that plan include:
  - Two fully equipped in-house training centers at OAA and CoS have been established for English Language and Computer Skills training and are operational. These classes have had an impact on staff in both organizations and these courses will continue for the foreseeable future. It is likely that as training needs become more specialized and job-specific, courses will be available only in English and year one activities in this area were intended to provide basic language skills in preparation for more advanced training content.
  - Computer Training has been successful focusing on the most common business applications – Windows, MS Word, Outlook and Excel – and interest remains high. As computers become more prevalent courses will focus on other applications like MS Access, Publisher, and Project Management software.
  - A calendar of generic skills-based courses (154 training days in total) aimed at every staff layer in the client organizations is continuing at the Civil Service Institute and will continue through March, 2008. Currently all training is done in Dari and/or Pashtu languages. It is likely, given the more technical nature of the training to be provided in the future, that English will increasingly be the language of instruction.
  - During July, 2007 three senior staff – two from the Chief of Staff's Office and one from Office of Administrative Affairs – attended a Senior Manager's Training Program at the National University of Singapore – Centre for Public Policy.
  - An Exposure Programme for senior staff at OAA and CoS was developed in partnership with the Administrative Staff College of India located in Hyderabad. The objective of this activity was to provide selected staff with exposure to how governments function in other countries, to identify 'best practices', and to see how familiar functions are carried out in other administrations. Six visits will take place with twelve selected staff in each group. The first visit included 6 nominees from both counterpart agencies and began in December, 2007.
- Implement Integrated Training: Training Strategies are implemented to address specific needs of various occupation groups:
  - Executive Development – Exposure Visits form the largest part of the training strategy to strengthen and broaden the capacity of senior managers. Visits have been organized and have been planned for visits to India, Singapore, Malaysia and Dubai. Year Two will see an

- expansion of these activities to focus on regional and international visits for specialized functions.
- Management and Leadership Development – A number of management training courses have been implemented to form the basis on which more advanced training will be provided in Year Two. At the same time, Directors and Managers have been encouraged to participate in English language courses as preparation for more advanced training in the future.
  - Administrative/Clerical Staff – An Office Management course focusing on administrative and clerical tasks has been conducted for both CoS and OAA. Courses included telephone skills, interpersonal communication, filing and archives, use of office equipment, scheduling appointments and other skills for an efficient and modern office. Courses for this audience will continue in Year Two.
  - Policy Experts – A basic Policy Process course was conducted for staff directly involved in policy development. The course was developed and delivered by the Policy Domain team at SCoG.
  - Service Staff – These staff have been involved in English language and Computer Skills training provided by SCoG. Several courses are offered at the Civil Service Institute that are aimed at all staff, including those from the Service Directorate. Titles include Time Management, Team Building, Workplace Safety and Governance.
- Conduct Structured Evaluation: A rudimentary evaluation system has been implemented in order to evaluate all training activities carried out under SCoG. It is accepted that until systems are in place to monitor and assess individual and departmental performance, training needs will be largely based on observation by supervisors and self-selection by individual staff. At present the Training Domain has pre-training data obtained from course registration forms, post-training data gathered at the end of each course, and data obtained from supervisors three months after training. Taken together this enables us to answer basic evaluative questions about each course and each training provider, as well as data concerning individual changes in job performance. During Year Two this database will be expanded to other training-related activities and will provide useful data for a more comprehensive Human Resource Information System planned for the future.
  - Develop Training Infrastructure for Sustainability: A database is now in use, initially by the Training Domain, to be transferred to both counterpart agencies at the end of the project. The database now enables course registration, course scheduling, and selection of participants and will hopefully enable a more rational process for assigning staff to relevant training activities under SCoG. In addition, data obtained from post-course evaluations will provide measurements for each course offered to staff. As data is gathered through training registrations, course feedback, and a variety of other documents, one area of focus is further training needs. These data will provide a basis for planning for 2008 and 2009. As the data becomes more refined over time, and as staff become more purposeful in pursuit of training opportunities, and as human resource 'systems' are operationalized and business processes are streamlined, it is hoped that more objectives measures of need will be identified.

## IV. Implementation Issues

### *Project risks and actions*

#### **Unavailability of Centre of Government Staff**

Both organizations, the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the Office of Administration Affairs (OAA), are engaged in highly sensitive political and administrative activities. Due to their proximity to the President, in addition to their mandated responsibilities, the President quite often assigns them to deal with emergencies and newly emerged priorities such as the "Peace Jirga". This makes regular

access to the CoS and OAA leadership difficult, if not impossible and often adversely affects the timely execution of project activities.

#### **Ongoing Staff Turnover – Key Personnel at both OAA and CoS**

Frequent turnover of high ranking officials, for example the Chief of Staff of the President, slows the pace of progress on SCoG project activities. In response to this challenge, the project strategy has been adapted so that project domain teams are now meeting weekly with their respective counterparts to improve coordination and information exchange.

#### **Unavailability of Local Providers**

The limited number of in-house vendors and service providers puts the project team in a difficult position when there is a need to make quick decisions on procurement e.g. procurement of ICT hardware and software. Thus timely execution of project activities may be undermined as a result of this risk. The SCoG project management team has been able to mitigate this risk so far by managing expectations of the government counterparts related to the timeline for such procurement as well as expediting, where possible, the procurement and delivery process for such high priority items.

### *Project issues and actions*

#### **Realignment of Unspent Funds**

One of the issues for the SCoG project is re-alignment of funds unspent by Facilities Domain. Since Construction project of the CoS Administration Building (This was originally one of the deliverables of the SCoG Facilities Domain) has been transferred to UNDP to be funded through the above-mentioned contribution by DfID, leaving a substantial balance of USD 1,384,309 in the SCoG project's Facilities Domain. Considering the underachievement of the other domains of the project due to a variety of factors including Peace Jirga, Ramazan and other factors, a letter has been sent to UNDP for a decision on re-alignment of funds from the Facilities Domain to the remaining five domains of the SCoG project. The approval of such re-alignment is under process and the outcome will be reported accordingly in the next report due by the end of first quarter of 2008.

## **V. Lessons learnt and next steps**

The SCoG project team started identifying and documenting the lessons learned in each project domain from mid year 2007. The purpose of this documentation was to share and use the knowledge and experiences derived from the project implementation with the project team and project stakeholders to increase effectiveness and efficiency and to build on the experiences that has already been earned by the project team. This exercise also assisted the project team to promote the achievement of the desirable project outcome and to identify remedy actions that will be taken as a result of the lessons learned. Lessons learned in each domain are listed below:

### *5.1 Lesson Learnt*

#### *Information Technology Domain*

- Middle management has been generally distrusting of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), mostly because ICT operatives usually present critical issues in a manner that is difficult to understand and process in laymen's terms. We should strive to educate, not only inform.
- Middle management often sees any ICT project effort only in terms of being a vehicle for procurement of ICT equipment and software. Other project goals are either ignored or

discounted as not being important. More emphasis on overall project goals should be stressed rather than just the “glitz” of hardware and software.

- All ICT infrastructure (wiring, cables, network equipment, servers, software, etc.) must be perceived as “suspect” until certified as suitable and operational by independent technically competent authority. Verification is necessary.
- The training of ICT technical staff cannot be considered in the same context as end-user training. They are two separate areas of education, and delivery of such training is different, and requires different support facilities. The Training Domain needs to be brought in earlier, and more often.
- Developing capacity to ensure the proper maintenance of existing resources is a challenge greater than that of providing new technology.
- All trained and experienced staff can get better-paying jobs outside of government, and there is the likelihood that once a person is fully trained, they will leave for better jobs. The Human Resources Domain must be brought in to mitigate staff turnover.
- Sufficient staff to properly carry the existing work load confronting the ICT departments is not available. Again, the HR Domain can perhaps offer assistance.
- There can never be too much change management applied or a failure to assess risk before proceeding in a major task area.

### *Administrative Work Process Domain*

- Lack of delegation of financial authority is a severe constraint to improving processes such as supply chain management;
- Non-acceptance of electronic signatures precludes full automation of processes such as procurement;
- Widespread education in the relevant laws and regulations (Procurement Law, Public Expenditure and Financial Management Law, Civil Service Law) is needed to ensure consistent performance of core administrative work processes;
- The time needed to progress through the “awareness, interest, education, understanding” learning cycle is significant and must not be under-estimated. Language issues and the nature of work in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan compound the problem. It is not possible to omit a stage in this linear sequence and still achieve understanding and successful implementation of an improved process.
- Care must be taken when translating from English into Dari. Many English words and management terms do not have a Dari equivalent. Accurate translation requires several iterations to ensure that the context and the content are accurately translated;
- Unavailability of localized (Dari/Pashto) software programmes and the low level of English and computer literacy significantly increase software development time.

### *Policy and Decision Making Process Domains*

- In most cases policies are initiated and formulated by donors with little or no participation from Afghans. Serious efforts should be undertaken to transfer the policy ownership to Afghan experts.
- Policy formulation and adoption is happening in an uncoordinated manner, which creates major problems at the implementation stage. The agencies must be encouraged / taught to conduct extensive consultation at the time of policy formulation with other agencies and communities that might be affected as a result of the implementation of a particular policy.
- Some policy objectives and implementation procedures / modalities are not clear and as a result success and failure can not be gauged properly. Therefore, efforts should be increased to make policy objectives clear. Also, clearer and more measurable indicators, benchmarks and milestones should be developed and agreed upon with the OAA and MoE (depending on the nature of the activity) at the time of policy development.

## Organization/Human Resources Domain

- Time spent building relationships and the trust of senior leadership is paramount to success. The SCOG Organizational/HR Domain implementation achievements that have been noted are a direct result of a strong focus on “Attitudinal Leadership Change” and achieving “buy-in” as it pertains to the positive effects that modern HR practices bring to an organization.

## Training Domain

- The major lesson learned from year one of the project was that “nothing succeeds like success”. It is felt that high participation in the training activities implemented by SCoG has increased interest and demand for basic and advanced skills and knowledge. The participatory nature of the training that is provided has engaged participants in the learning process and there is a much greater awareness of the importance of continuous learning at all levels of the organization as a result.
- A second lesson has to do with the volatility of the working environment and the need to be as flexible as possible when planning and implementing training activities. Supervisors and managers seem reluctant to free their staff for training activities claiming that work will suffer in their absence. A means must be found to ensure that work continues uninterrupted while members of the staff attend training programmes. At the same time it is important that managers be informed of the significance of training and their responsibility to encourage staff to engage in professional development activities.
- An ad-hoc selection process has meant that the ‘right staff’ have not always been involved in the ‘right training’ and we have observed many participants who have attended two or more training courses while the vast majority of employees have not yet been given the opportunity. Better information is required in order to rationalize selection. This will ensure that no one office is without staff during training programmes, and that training activities will not conflict with other priority activities.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The Chief of Party of the SCoG project and the National Project Manager have had to leave due to various reasons and their positions need to be filled for better management and regular coordination between the SCoG project team, UNDP CO and the government counterparts.

## VI. Financial status and utilization

### 6.1 Financial Status

**Table 1: Contribution overview (September, 2005 – June, 2009)**

| Resources    |                   |                   |                          |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| DONOR NAME   | CONTRIBUTIONS     |                   | CONTRIBUTIO<br>N BALANCE |
|              | Committed         | Received          |                          |
| USAID        | 5,000,000         | 5,000,000         | -                        |
| DFID         | 9,720,101         | 5,130,710         | 4,589,391                |
| UNDP         | 630,000           | 630,000           | -                        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>15,350,101</b> | <b>10,760,710</b> | <b>4,589,391</b>         |

**Table 2: Funding status (December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007)**

| Financial Status |                   |  |                        |                  |                  |  |
|------------------|-------------------|--|------------------------|------------------|------------------|--|
| DONOR NAME       | RECEIVED*         | EXPENDITURES                             |                        |                  | PROJECT BALANCE  | AVAILABLE<br>FUNDING (as of 1<br>Jan of the next year) |
|                  |                   | Period Prior to<br>the Reporting<br>Year | Reporting Year<br>Only | TOTAL            |                  |  |
| USAID            | 5,000,000         | 1,936,537                                | (192,129.00)           | 1,744,408        | 3,255,592        | 3,255,592  |
| DFID             | 5,130,710         | 675,480                                  | 4,118,931              | 4,794,411        | 336,299          | 336,299  |
| UNDP             | 630,000           | 345,057                                  | 337,932                | 682,989          | -52989           | -52989   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>10,760,710</b> | <b>2,957,074</b>                         | <b>4,264,734</b>       | <b>7,221,808</b> | <b>3,538,902</b> | <b>3,538,902</b>                                       |

### 6.2 Financial Utilisation

**Table 3: Annual expenditure by activity [1 January – 31 December]**

| Activity                                | BUDGET<br>[2007] | EXPENDITURES     | BALANCE        | DELIVERY<br>(%) |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Activity 1 PD Formulation               | 4,232,861        | 3,694,619        | 538,245        | 87              |
| Activity 2 Leading SCoG<br>reform       | 399,221          | 363,440          | 35,781         | 91              |
| UNDP GMS (based on donor<br>agreements) | 239,293          | 206,674          | 32,619         | 86              |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>4,871,375</b> | <b>4,264,733</b> | <b>606,645</b> | <b>87</b>       |

**Table 4: Annual expenditure by donor [1 January – 31 December]**

| DONORS                  | ACTIVITY (as in ATLAS)          | BUDGET [2007]    | EXPENDITURES*    | BALANCE        | DELIVERY RATE (%) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| USAID                   | Activity 1: PD Formulation      | 33,207           | -207531          | * -174324      | 295%              |
|                         | Activity 2: Leading SCoG reform | 28,421           | 25513            | 2,908          |                   |
| GMS [5 %]               |                                 | 3,424            | -10112           | -6688          |                   |
| <b>Subtotal [USAID]</b> |                                 | <b>65,052</b>    | <b>-192130</b>   | <b>-127078</b> |                   |
| DFID                    | Activity 1: PD Formulation      | 4,245,653        | 3,902,145        | 343,508        | 92%               |
|                         | Activity 2: Leading SCoG reform | -                | -                | 0              |                   |
| GMS [5 %]               |                                 | 235,870          | 216,786          | 19,084         |                   |
| <b>Subtotal [DFID]</b>  |                                 | <b>4,481,523</b> | <b>4,118,931</b> | <b>362,592</b> |                   |
| UNDP                    | Activity 1: PD Formulation      | -                | -                | 0              | 91%               |
|                         | Activity 2: Leading SCoG reform | 324,800          | 337,932          | -13,132        |                   |
| GMS [0 %]               |                                 | -                | -                | -              |                   |
| <b>Subtotal [UNDP]</b>  |                                 | <b>324,800</b>   | <b>337,932</b>   | <b>-13,132</b> |                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            |                                 | <b>4,871,375</b> | <b>4,264,733</b> | <b>606,642</b> | <b>87%</b>        |

\* Negative balance is shown because funds were not available on time

## **Annexes**

### *Annual Work Plan*