



FINAL EVALUATION

Afghanistan

Thematic window
Environment & Climate Change

Programme Title:

Strengthened Approach for the Integration of
Sustainable Environmental Management in
Afghanistan

Prologue

This final evaluation report has been coordinated by the MDG Achievement Fund joint programme in an effort to assess results at the completion point of the programme. As stipulated in the monitoring and evaluation strategy of the Fund, all 130 programmes, in 8 thematic windows, are required to commission and finance an independent final evaluation, in addition to the programme's mid-term evaluation.

Each final evaluation has been commissioned by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in the respective programme country. The MDG-F Secretariat has provided guidance and quality assurance to the country team in the evaluation process, including through the review of the TORs and the evaluation reports. All final evaluations are expected to be conducted in line with the OECD Development Assistant Committee (DAC) Evaluation Network "Quality Standards for Development Evaluation", and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System".

Final evaluations are summative in nature and seek to measure to what extent the joint programme has fully implemented its activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes. They also generate substantive evidence-based knowledge on each of the MDG-F thematic windows by identifying best practices and lessons learned to be carried forward to other development interventions and policy-making at local, national, and global levels.

We thank the UN Resident Coordinator and their respective coordination office, as well as the joint programme team for their efforts in undertaking this final evaluation.

MDG-F Secretariat

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Joint Programme or MDG-F Secretariat.



**Strengthened Approach for the
Integration of Sustainable
Environmental Management in
Afghanistan
(SAISEM)**

**MDG-F 1713-E-11a-AFG
(FAO-UNDP-UNEP JOINT PROGRAMME)**



Final Evaluation Report
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Acronyms

AIRD	Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
AWN	Afghan Women Network
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Councils
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAIL	District Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock
DaO	Delivering as One
DDA	District Development Assemblies
DMIS	Data Management Information System
EIAs	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GPS	Global Positioning System
HLP	High Level Panel
I-ANDS	Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy
IEC	Information, Education & Communication
JP	Joint Programme
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M & E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NABDP	National Area Based Development Programme
PEAC	Provincial Environmental Advisory Council
PMC	Project Management Committee
SAISEM	Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environment Management (in Afghanistan)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Time-bound
TOR	Terms Of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNS	United Nations System
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WED	World Environment Day

Executive Summary

The United Nations Joint Programme titled ‘Strengthened Approach for the integration of Sustainable Environmental Management in Afghanistan’ (SAISEM) was implemented for a period of four years from 2008 to December 2012 by UN partner agencies namely: - UNDP, FAO, UNEP and Government partners like the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), with UNDP being the administrative agent and UNEP an adviser. The programme which was funded by the MDG-F aimed at strengthening Afghanistan’s efforts at managing its environment and natural resources to achieve sustainable development, in line with the 2006-2008 UNDAF, as well as Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also directly responds to the environment and natural resources benchmarks as articulated in the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

The SAISEM joint programme was designed to promote a strengthened approach for the integration of sustainable environmental management into national sectoral strategies, to promote capacity and institutional building of relevant government counterparts to operationalise and implement the environmental concerns reflected in the national strategies, and support demonstration activities in the field, the lessons from which will feed into strengthening the national and sub-national planning and community-level engagement for environmentally sustainable development of Afghanistan.

This is the result of the evaluation which was carried out from December, 2012 to January, 2013. The programme outcome was found to be very relevant to the achievement of the MDGs especially the 7th goal.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievement of results (outputs and outcomes) and the potential impact generated by the JP. Thus the evaluation assessed the appropriateness, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the JP, identifying challenges, and lessons learned and drew conclusions to inform new programmes and also contribute to decision making processes of the GoA and partners.

A mid-term review was carried out in 2010 and key recommendations from the review include: - (a) Need to review Outcome 1 Outputs, (b) review project strategies by increasing social awareness of sustainable environment (c) review fund modality to consider ‘Pool fund’ system, review community based intervention capacity.

Evaluation methodology

The final evaluation used Primary and Secondary data gathering methodologies and made efforts to triangulate data from different sources, interviewing stakeholders in Kabul, Parwan

and Herat. The key analytical framework for collecting and processing the information has been an evaluation matrix, which includes six criterion with a number of specific judgment/analytical questions for each of them, and a set of possible indicators and sources of information. The evaluation questions were formulated in the attempt to condense and reflect in a synthetic and coherent tool consultant's understanding and interpretation of the programme rational and implementation set-up.

Main Findings and Conclusion

Relevance and validity of design

The programme was highly relevant and aligned to the Government's and MDGs' priorities, but has suffered at the outset from its design and implementation set-up.

The SAISEM programme as a whole was found highly and directly relevant and aligned with Afghanistan National Development strategy and the MDG goals on environmental sustainability. The JP was also relevant and well aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcome on natural resources management. Though, the quality and overall coherence of the JP was initially challenging at the beginning of the programme, this was later on resolved with better coordination and implementation framework.

Efficiency and effectiveness of implementation and management mechanisms

The Joint Programme management and implementation set-up have mixed contributions to enhancing value of the support provided (quality of results).

The JP has been characterised by none adherence to Paris principles on channelling funds through the national system. The JP uses a 'pass through' funding mechanism where all disbursements were associated to specific deliverables. The M&E framework of the programme has proven inadequate in monitoring activities particularly carried out on the field.

Achievements and impact

The programme has supported relevant initiatives and obtained mixed results with enabling capacity for managing natural resources and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities at the community level. The programme also developed strategic framework and implementation guidelines for integrating environmental considerations in national and sub-national planning process.

On the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), 231 youths from the university and 2300 members of CDC were trained. The programme supported relevant and effective initiatives for livelihood development and income generating opportunities at the local level, but the process, duration and scope of the intervention have not allowed generating 'systemic' effects as yet. For example the project with participation of the local communities in Badghis, Ghor and Herat provinces rehabilitated 159 hectares of degraded

rangeland, for the benefit of livestock raisers, this mobilization effort worked so well that the community took ownership of the intervention and volunteered their time in the restoration intervention. Over 1000 women benefitted from the Kitchen gardening and Poultry projects while more than 5000 households from local communities were reached through awareness raising messages at village meetings for community mobilization.

Sustainability of results and impact

The programme has made substantial attempts in enhancing ownership, developing capacities and mainstreaming as basis for the sustainability of introduced systems and practice.

Establishment of Provincial Environment Advisory Councils (PEACs) in 22 provinces from a total of 34 provinces is a sustainable achievement. Also, the project established Environmental Sub-Committees (ESC) in District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs). The PEAC ensured environment issues are mainstreamed on the local development programmes through working with the ESCs. The project trained focal persons for environment in all the ministries. It also carried out environment and Gender workshops for 25 staff from all the relevant ministries, it carried out similar workshop for 70 religious leaders (Mullahs) to motivate and encourage the Mullah to their important role in dissemination of environmental issues through mosques. There is now a core of Religious Leaders that can be called upon to defend environmental issues in Afghanistan anytime.

Main conclusions

The JP constituted altogether a relevant and fairly effective intervention considering the scope and scale of the intervention, combined with the available resources and, most of all, its limited duration. The value of the programme has been more in laying good grounds for follow-up and continued support (The NABDP) programme is using existing structures in their programme). Effects on institutional transformation processes have been more structural and organic, whereas visible improvements on livelihoods seem more 'incidental'

There was no concept/guidance note specific to Afghanistan on which the joint programme could have operated, considering that the programme was a pilot programme with most of the partners who had hitherto been operating alone now expected to operate along with other organisations as one body to provide a large set of different activities.

Most achievements of the programme cannot be considered as being self-standing yet, sustainability will therefore be associated to the establishment of follow-up support initiatives, particularly for sustainability of the downstream interventions.

Main lessons learnt

- The existence of a clear and well structured design and implementation framework (durations, resources, participating agencies and partners) at the outset of the

programme is a key factor for successful implementation.

- Joint Programming and Implementation mechanisms can be effective and value adding practices, but require adequate resources allocation and monitoring mechanisms.
- The implementation of a multitude of components and activities during a relatively short period and without adequately involving the duty bearers and community leaders entails a risk of fragmentation at the community level, which affects the consolidation of results and prospects for integration with local setting. This, in turn, acts as a constraint to sustainable outcomes and limits effects on continuity and replication.

Main recommendations

- Identify options and opportunities for continuing support among governments, and conduct thorough assessment of capacities at Provincial level in order to identify gaps and major constraints to sustainable capacity development and place more emphasis on mentoring in place of workshops for internalizing acquired skills.
- Involve Governments and all groups of beneficiary at planning stage and in all interventions in future, Recognize the statutory coordination and supervisory role of the Provincial, District and Community Administrative structures appropriately, their inclusion will contribute to ownership and sustainability.

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Joint Programme

Decades of conflict, instability, coupled with socio-economic insecurity, poverty and natural hazards exerted tremendous pressure on Afghanistan's environment and natural resources. The country therefore acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between Poverty and degraded environment, recognizing that sustainable environment is central to the situation of crisis, conflict and insecurity in most part of the World. Afghanistan endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2004, much later than other countries due to the on-going conflict at the time of the Millennium Summit in 2000. As a result Afghanistan has an extended deadline of 2020 as opposed to 2015, and due to the particular post-conflict challenges of the country, it has one added goal of "Goal 9: Enhancing Security". The Afghan MDG Goal 7 remains the same as the global MDG: "Ensure environmental sustainability. Recognizing that failure to address environmental degradation will negatively affect the long-term growth of the country as well as meeting the country's MDGs, the Afghan Government embarked on the implementation of the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) in 2006 and consequently, the Afghanistan National Development Strategies (ANDS) formulated in 2010-2014, in line with the MDGs. Afghanistan qualified and was approved to receive the Millennium Development Goal's Fund (MDG-F) in 2007 under the Environment and Climate Change thematic window. The MDG-F was established in 2006 to assist countries accelerate progress towards achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals. The fund uses a Joint Programme (JP) mode of intervention and operates through the UN teams in participating countries.

In Afghanistan, the MDG-F supports a Joint Programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The JP, called Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environment Management in Afghanistan (SAISEM) works with three government counterparts; the National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MoAIL) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). The JP aims at enhancing the capacities of the government counterparts, local governments as well as local community institutions to be able to incorporate environmental management concepts and practices into their national and sub-national sectoral strategies and plans; and support community-led and owned activities aimed at sustainable environment and natural resources management. The programme was granted two an initial one year 'No Cost Extension' from June 2011 to July 06, 2012, and a further six months no cost extension which ended on December 06, 2012.

The JP has specific Outcomes and Outputs as shown below: -

Table 1:- Outcome and Output Table**Outcome 1:**

Environmental issues mainstreamed in national and sub-national policy, planning and investment framework.

Output 1.1. National environmental concerns reflected in the ANDS and select sectoral plans and institutional capacity strengthened to operationalize them.

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

Outcome 2: Local management of environment and natural resources improved and service delivery enhanced.

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

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

1.2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation is to measure development results and potential impacts generated by the Joint Programme, based on the scope and criteria of its Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Ownership and its Sustainability, to enable conclusions and recommendations to be formed for future Joint Programmes. Participating UN organizations on the SAISEM programme include - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and implementing Line Ministries – National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). A Mid-term review (MTR) was conducted in 2011 recommendations to improve performance. Most of the recommendations made by the MTR have been adopted and implemented.

1.3. Objectives of SAISEM Final Evaluation

The Final evaluation carried out a systematic and objective assessment of the entire SAISEM Joint Programme focusing on measuring development results and impacts generated by the Joint Programme, based on the scope and criteria included in the terms of reference. Thus, the final evaluation has the following specific objectives: -

- Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase.
- To measure joint programme's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.
- Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.
- To measure the joint programme contribution to the objectives set in their respective specific thematic windows as well as the overall MDG fund objectives at local and national level. (MDGs, Paris Declaration and Accra Principles and UN reform).
- To identify and document substantive lessons learned and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic window, MDGs, Paris Declaration, Accra Principles and UN reform with the aim to support the sustainability of the joint programme or some of its components.
- The final evaluation will focus on measuring development results and potential impacts generated by the joint programme, based on the scope and criteria included in this term of reference.
- The unit of analysis or object of study for this evaluation is the joint programme, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.

Table 2: Scope of work & activity time-line

Activities	Dates	No of working days
Initial preparations and familiarization with the SAISEM documents, Presentation on JP overview, including the Country Analysis, Outcomes, Results Matrix, and Monitoring & Evaluation Framework and Development of Inception report	29 th December 2012 – 1 st January 2013	4 days
Communications & Meetings with SAISEM JP team including NEPA , MAIL, MRRD, FAO,	2 nd January – 19 th January 2013	18 days

UNDP, RC office & UNEP and field visit to Parwan province		
Field visit to Heart including interview with UNDP-MDG office in New York	20 th January – 22 nd January 2013	3 days
Collation of data, development of draft Report, distribution and Presentation to Stakeholders	23 rd to 28 th of January	5days
Feedback, finalization and submission of final report		
Total		30

2.0. Country Context and Justification for the programme

Afghanistan's richly endowed environment and natural resources has always been a great source of pride for the country, precious minerals and life sustaining agricultural and forest products, provided variety of livelihood opportunities for about 80% of the people, but decades of conflict, instability, natural hazards, high population and poverty has heavily affected the environment and natural resource base of the Country.

An environmental assessment and recovery plan was conducted in 2002 by both International and National experts and this culminated in the Afghan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment and Recovery Plan (2003- 2012)¹. Afghanistan National Development Strategy was adopted in 2008 and environmental sustainability was considered as a cross-cutting issue to be included in development interventions. According to the World Bank, Afghanistan's GDP in 2012 is expected to have slowed down to about 5.7% from the 8.4% growth rate achieved in 2011, due to weather related conditions that lowered agriculture output to below average level.

In direct response to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2006-2008) as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SAISEM programme was designed jointly by UNDP, FAO, UNEP and their government counterparts NEPA with MoAIL and MRRD to promote a strengthened approach for the integration of sustainable environmental management into national and sub-national plans, promote capacity and institutional development of relevant government counterparts to operationalize environmental concerns reflected in the strategies, and to also support sustainable community engagement.

¹ : UNEP Supporting Afghanistan -2012 (1)

2.1. SAISEM Joint Programme and MDGs, Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda

The MDG-F supported SAISEM joint programme aims at enhancing the capacities of the government counterparts, local governments as well as local community institutions to be able to incorporate environmental management concepts and practices into their national and sub-national sectoral strategies and plans, and support community-led and owned activities aimed at sustainable environment and natural resources management. In line with Afghan MDG goal 7, this remains the same as the global MDG: Ensure environmental sustainability. The JP also supports the ‘Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action’ acknowledging that enhancing aid effectiveness is necessary even in challenging, fragile and complex situations,² through Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability. It also emphasizes strengthening country ownership over development by making governments take leadership roles.

It promotes a harmonized approach to environmental assessment, strengthen the application of EIAs and deepen common procedures for projects, including consultations with stakeholders; and develop and apply common approaches for “strategic environmental assessment” at the sector and national levels. Also continue to develop the specialized technical and policy capacity necessary for environmental analysis and for enforcement of legislation. It argues that worldwide humanitarian and development assistance must be harmonized within the growth and poverty reduction agendas of partner countries, Programmes should have desired results that can be improved upon.

It is a fact that Afghanistan is still off track to reach the MDGs, and despite extreme poverty, ill health and hunger, Afghan’s saw lack of insecurity as their greatest problem, hence the government of Afghanistan has added this new goal to the eight global MDGs recognizing the critical role of peace and security in achieving the other MDGs. Based on the suggestion of the UN, the MDGs have therefore been mainstreamed into Afghan National Development strategy, the UN Development Assistance Framework of UN agencies in Afghanistan is therefore designed to support the national priorities through the ANDS.³

2.2. Programme Design and Result Framework

The ‘Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environmental Management in Afghanistan’ (SAISEM) programme was designed in 2008 following decisions by UNDP, FAO and UNEP along with their government counterparts NEPA, MAIL and MRRD, to have a joint programme that will integrate sectoral strategies; promote capacity and institutional development of relevant government counterparts to operationalize and implement environmental concerns reflected in the national strategies; and support demonstration activities in the field which is expected to feed into strengthening national and sub-national

² Paris declaration on Aid effectiveness and Accra Agenda for action (2008)

³³ UNDP Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (2008)

planning and community-level engagement for environmentally sustainable development of Afghanistan.

The programme was designed to achieve two major outcome areas: -

1. To mainstream environmental issues into national and sub-national policy, planning and investment framework
2. To improve local management of natural resources and enhance service delivery.

The two outcome areas were subsequently broken down into four output areas all designed to integrate environmental issues into national and sub-national concerns with the ultimate aim of reducing poverty and increasing livelihood sustainability in the community.

The programme did not officially take off as planned until 2009 due to late fund disbursement and staff attrition and by this time, most of the original designers had left office, however, with new Managers coming aboard the programme, the original work plan changed with lack of consistent rationale and several disagreements among partners. These and some other issues (managerial, political and social insecurity) led to high staff attrition among all partner organizations, it will be recalled that UN guest houses in Kabul were attacked in October 2009 and the UN International staff were relocated outside the country for about two months, this completely paralyzed project activities for some time.

The SAISEM programme has witnessed to date, three Managers from UNDP and two managers have also been replaced on the part of FAO while UNEP has been consistent. Their government counterparts did not fare better, NEPA, MAIL and MRRD have had to change or replace Deputy Directors two to three times since the inception of the programme in 2008.

This contributed to a lot of delay in implementation as work plans were not approved on time, new leadership meant new briefing and sometimes new initiatives on how to achieve the outcome areas. From 2010 to 2011, relative stability came unto the programme with new set of leadership, following this; successful attempts were made to re-organize the programme rationale to be more unifying in direction and scope serving as reference for integrating different streams of activities within the framework of environmental management. The programme was set on track with an initial twelve months 'no cost' approval given by the funders MDG fund from June 2011, to July 2012, this was further extended to 6th January, 2013, making it a total of 18 months 'no cost' extension, to assist the programme in achieving its objectives.

The different AWP, Progress reports and M & E frameworks evidently showed that this was a pilot programme, the various documents altogether do not provide a completely consistent and harmonised benchmark on programme implementation in terms of targets, indicators, activities.

2.3. Implementation and Funding Status

The SAISEM JP was one of the three UN JPs aiming at piloting UN reforms in Afghanistan. The reforms include One Programme, to One Budget and subsequently One UN Office and One Leader. The SAISEM JP among others started to pilot the One Programme phase. The

JP approach aims to maximize development effectiveness by bringing in the cumulative and complementary expertise of different agencies, reducing transaction costs and promoting alignment to national systems and policies. JP, in particular, intended to test whether and how UN Agencies can deliver as one, influencing national policy at the upstream level, and through direct interventions at downstream level. An integral part of the ONE UN Programme, JP has been implemented through established mechanisms including, a ONE UN Joint Government-UN Steering Committee (PMC)⁴ and a Joint Programme Working Group (TWG)⁵, serving as key programming body of the programme and composed jointly by FAO, UNDP, UNEP and relevant government partners.

UNDP has played the role of JP Administrative Agent, which entailed responsibility for the overall Administration and coordination of the programme and consolidation of work-plans, reports and request for funds. Resources for JP implementation is paid into the UNDP-MDG accounts and transferred to different accounts of the UN organizations in a ‘Pass Through’ modality.

The JP has successfully used national organizations as implementing partners. At joint project output level, the M&E framework has involved developing a joint annual work-plan with indicators, monitoring results through the Technical Working Group (TWG) and reporting for results through the Annual Progress Reports produced by the Administrative Agent. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in 2010 and a final independent external evaluation have been undertaken to account for results and lessons learned.

3.0. Evaluation Methodology

To achieve the evaluation objectives, Primary and Secondary data sources were used to gather information on, Primary data was generated from Key Informant interviews including (Individual Face to Face and Phone interviews) and Focus Group Discussions, while secondary data was generated from desk review of documents such as Programme Document, UNDAF/DaO, MDG-F guidelines and standards, Annual Work Plans, MTR, Progress, Annual and M&E reports. An assessment tool was also used to assess the evaluation criteria stated in the Consultants’ Terms of reference.

The data collected during the evaluation process provides several insights into what is working and what is not working whether there are lessons learned benefits and challenges associated with programme implementation and outcomes. The evaluation mapped the entire programme outputs of the various activities and projects to the expected outcomes.

⁴ With the UN Resident Coordinator and the Director General National Environmental Protection Agency

⁵ Under the Co-Chair of the Deputy Directors of NEPA, MAIL and MRRD, who were the key functional Government ministries under SAISEM JP.

3.1. Data Collection

i. Document review

Mid Term Review Report, Programme Document, Annual and Bi-Annual Work plans and Progress reports were reviewed to obtain data related to the processes, outputs and outcomes of implementation.

ii. In depth interviews with Key Informants

Semi structured Questionnaires, Survey guides and checklists were also used for surveys and interviews to gather primary data. Interviews were held with key stakeholders and Joint Programme Partners to explore issues pertaining to implementation, achievements and coordination.

iii. Focus Group Discussions

Another method that was used to generate primary data is Focus Group Discussions. FGDs were held on field visits with key stakeholders such as, Government officials, Women and children (participating voluntarily). This was intended to fully explore stakeholder's experiences and perceptions of the programme.

iv. Expert Rating Tool

This tool was used to measure the six evaluation criteria namely: - Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Partnership and Coordination and Sustainability, it was administered to key informants and relevant stakeholders to explore their perceptions, understanding and views on the SAISEM programme.

v. Triangulation & Cross Validation

Finally, the methodological approach of the evaluation include a systematic effort to triangulate data from document reviews, key informant interviews, direct observation of facilities and focus group discussions in order to strengthen the validity of findings and conclusions.

Below is a list of people and organizations that were interviewed and their mode of interview:

Table 3: Mode of Interview

<i>S/N</i>	<i>List of Individuals/Organization to be interviewed</i>	<i>Interview channel</i>
1.	UNDP	KII
2.	FAO	KII
3.	UNEP	KII
4.	NEPA	FGD / KII
5.	MRRD, & MAIL	FGD / KII

3.2. Data Analysis and Evaluation Framework

Qualitative data collected was analyzed to establish trends while Quantitative data collected was used to measure key performances. The evaluation report is presented in five main chapters, with an executive summary that briefly describes findings from the evaluation.

3.3. Limitations of the Methodology

- Due to limited time for planning, and the challenge of moving around in Afghanistan which has made regional travels a bit difficult, the Consultants used a Non-Probability Sampling method (Convenience sampling) in choosing sites to be visited. The evaluation is limited to SAISEM joint programme interventions from 2008 to 2012.
- Another major limitation of the evaluation was the absence of set targets against which progress and outputs could be measured. At inception in 2008, no Strategic Plan document was prepared articulating the programme's planned targets, as well as providing a monitoring plan. The project document would have included any available baseline data on social and economic conditions in the programme districts. The absence of this information (baseline data and targets) makes the evaluation problematic because there is nothing against which the programme outputs and their impacts can be measured in a "before and after" context. It was therefore not possible to quantify the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries due to lack of an appropriate data collection framework.
- Also, the evaluation arises from the diversity and geographical spread of the JP activities across different districts. It was not possible to visit all the activity sites and meet with all stakeholders (including beneficiary communities) in the limited time that was available for the field data collection and the insecurity that pervades the country. Thus, while this evaluation report is derived from only a partial assessment of the programme, the consultant is however, confident that the findings and conclusions were based on information that was both objective and representative of reality. Triangulation during data collection, together with the de-briefing sessions held in Kabul, Parwan and Herat for the partner UN organizations, the government partners and other stakeholders, were used to ensure that information and data were cross-checked and validated wherever possible.

3.4. Guiding Principles of the Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group "Norms and standards for Evaluation in the UN System" and OECD/DAC Evaluation criteria.

4.0. Evaluation Findings

The findings from the evaluation are described based on the criteria given in the Consultant's Terms of Reference.

4.1. Design Level

Programme Relevance:

The Strengthened Approach for the Integration of Sustainable Environmental Management in Afghanistan programme was conceived with the aim of moving Afghanistan towards the Millennium Development Goals. The MDG-F funded SAISEM programme directly contributes to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal number seven (MDG 7) by integrating principles of sustainable development into country plans and programmes at national and sub-national levels, it indirectly contributes to the attainment of the remaining MDG goals through its attempt at alleviating poverty among men and women, promotion of Gender equality, and through indirectly reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. It is also in line with Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action⁶ as it harmonizes with government's policy and worked with government by letting take the lead. This brought about a sense of ownership and enthusiasm on from government. Government led meetings and was involved in the programme activities although.

Furthermore, the programme directly contributes to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcome on natural resources management which aims at improving the capacity of the Afghan people to manage their resources and ultimately reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, poverty and disputes. It directly responds to the environment and natural resources benchmarks within Afghanistan National development Strategy (ANDS).

The SAISEM programme directly improved the socio-economic lives of Afghan people, particularly some of the women in Badghis, Ghor and Herat provinces, it provided them with livelihood opportunities in Kitchen gardens, Backyard poultry and establishment of pistachio and fruit garden, it also improved their skills in Rangeland Rehabilitation and Greenery programme. Over 5390 households were reached. The positive impact generated by the Kitchen garden project in the communities has encouraged many other women who were not part of the initial beneficiaries copy the experience and establish their own gardens.

The SAISEM interventions have resulted positively on the institutions and communities. Individuals in the communities are now becoming 'Change Agents' volunteering their time

⁶ Paris declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008)

for environmental policing e.g. Parwan women are now involved in the protection of their environment. The Afghan Women Network (AWG) is an organization of Women that came together voluntarily to raise societal awareness on environmental issues in the communities. In Parwan, they work with the governments and other volunteers including the Mulahs and create public awareness through the use of Media.

The JP supported the marking of World Environment Day (WED) and a youth event at the Kabul Agriculture University. Radio spots on climate change and adaptation were aired nationwide. Women and religious leaders (Mullahs) were sensitized through workshops, reaching about 25 women and 70 Mullahs.

Government also benefitted from the programme through several trainings of officials, farmers and Women on the Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) intervention, a deep well was built in Zendajan District in a research farm belonging to the District of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) in Herat, to provide a permanent source of irrigation for the 40 hectares farm land. Four additional wells were rehabilitated in the University of Herat research farm. A lot of capacity development activities were also carried out under the JP with full participation of government partners, this was to develop required capacity needed for managing environmental concerns in Afghanistan, for example, there were trainings of trainers (TOT) and trainings like Environmental Integration, Conservation and Awareness, Climate Change, Water quality Monitoring, GPS use and application and Environment and Gender. Most importantly, to mainstream environmental issue into all ministries, the project carefully selected and trained focal persons from all government ministries in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the programme supported the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in developing their capacity to continue Rangeland rehabilitation, Kitchen gardens, Backyard poultry and establishment of Pistachio and Fruit gardens, based on MAIL's five year Strategic plan.

The SAISEM project supported NEPA in developing National Environmental Mainstreaming Guidelines which contains recommendations and tools for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) thereby integrating environmental issues into sectoral strategies and plans. As a follow up to the Rio+20 conference, the project supported a concept for sustainable development strategy roadmap, for integrating environmental concerns in the national education system, It supported NEPA to institutionalize the State of Environment Reporting Process. It also supported the government to develop a framework for comprehensive climate change strategy. Furthermore, the project developed Provincial Environmental Advisory Councils (PEACs) guidelines for the use of NEPA provincial offices, Districts and Community Development Councils, and supported the establishment of the Provincial Environmental Advisory Committees in twenty two (22) provinces in accordance with article number 12 of the Afghanistan Environment Law.

The Advocacy and Communication strategy used on the programme was relevant and highly effective. The JP was able to coordinate all government partners and appoint environment focal persons in all ministries. Women, Community and Religious leaders were sensitized and trained on environmental issues, and the programme was able to establish Provincial Environmental Advisory Committees (PEAC) in 22 provinces. Furthermore, the programme was able to reach a large number of people through its radio messages and other informative materials. Through this information, a lot of environment focused Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) were registered in the country. There were also volunteer groups as communities offered their time for re-seeding and weeding rangelands.

However, the M & E indicator of the programme was not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) enough to capture all the activities that took place or were carried out on the project, for example it is not clear how many university students were reached during the media project or how many women actually started their own kitchen garden etc. It was also difficult to assess some of the accomplished tasks, due to time constraint and insecurity in the Country. The joint field visit to places like Herat and Ghor did not hold as indicated in the M & E plan. However, it is clear that the JP made an attempt to reduce poverty, increase gender equality and improve maternal and child health, this is beside its main goal of ensuring environmental sustainability.

The programme was designed jointly by the UN organizations namely UNDP, UNEP and FAO along with their Government partners NEPA, MoAIL and MRRD. It was implemented together with all partners but it cannot be said to have been jointly monitored. A mid-term evaluation of the programme was conducted in 2010 and some of its recommendations which was adopted and carried out include social awareness strategy and review of the community based intervention strategy.

FAO is experienced in addressing natural resource management and conservation issues, UNEP is active in the post conflict and disaster management area while UNDP is known to have experience programming in community based environmental awareness raising. The combined efforts of UNDP, UNEP and FAO was needed to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan people in Environmental and natural resource management.

4.2. Process Level

Efficiency:

The efficiency criterion is a concept that can go beyond costs, for example to include issues like capacity utilization, disbursement rate and the timeliness of implementation of a project. At the initial stage of the Programme though, the delay in the transfer of funds especially from Headquarter of the UN agencies was very likely to have affected programme efficiency. Activities in the work-plan could not be carried out on time due initial delay in funding. This

is because fund for activities had to go through headquarters of the different agencies, before being remitted into their country account.

Total Amount given by MDG-F	UNDP	FAO	UNEP
USD 5, 000,000	USD 2,254,428	USD 2, 673,857	0

Efficiency also answers questions relating to total resources utilized, the relationship between output and cost and the contributions to JP outcomes. As total financial information of the programme is not readily available and in the absence of comparable figures (on similar programmes), it is difficult to say if the budget is a reasonably efficient one or not. Similarly, as a cost benefit analysis has not been carried out on similar programmes, it may be difficult also to say whether or not the recorded outputs justify their cost. Moreover, Programming in crises area itself is expensive, especially in Afghanistan where you need between four to eight security escorts (DPU), to move around. However the resources expended have contributed to the achievements of the recorded JP programme outputs.

It should be mentioned though that the JP programme was likely to increase transactions costs initially but as processes are put in place and organizations progressively learn lessons, transaction costs are more likely to be reduced for all projects. This is one of the Paris Declarations on Aid effectiveness this was also noted in analyzing the financial expenditure of the programme.

A number of criteria may be used to measure the resources used / cost efficiency of the programme. Consequently, a programme which spent 20% of its total fund on Administration and 80% on programming is said to be cost effective according to international standard. Unfortunately, it was difficult to analyse this aspect of the evaluation fully, as the detailed report needed was not provided.

The units of dollars spent per activity and per the number of people reached under the specific interventions can be a measure of resource use efficiency; where the lowest cost would reflect higher cost efficiency in the resource use. However this cost analysis has nothing to say the programme was cost effective; or about the quality of results achieved but explains inefficiencies such as staffing and managerial waste.

The evaluator could have also assessed the extent to which the fund received by the implementing partners was able to achieve the objectives as initially agreed in the work plan i.e. number of activities carried out and the number of people reached, against the initial planned targets in the log frame of programme document, but unfortunately there is no complete record of the number of people reached on the programme, radio messages were

aired without and information, communication and education (IEC) materials were distributed without a record of how many people benefitted. Based on progress recorded on the work-plan, the SAISEM programme was able to carry out almost all the activities identified on the work plan, thereby achieving about 90% completion rate. Completion rate above 50% especially in an in-secured environment is said to be cost effective by international standard.

Efficiency in this approach is measured as the percentage of resources allocated to administration to the overall budget in the program.

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Amount spent on administration}}{\text{Total programme costs}} \times 100$$

4.2.1. Delivering as One

The Delivering as One initiative was launched by the UN Secretary General in 2007 in response to the need for a paradigm shift in the way the United Nations System (UNS) does its business. This is to reposition the system in a changing world in the development domain, with a growing impact of globalization and a host of emerging challenges. Therefore, the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's 2006 High Level Panel (HLP) on UN System wide coherence established the policy environment for DaO and formed the base for the Pilot of DaO in eight countries namely: - Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Vietnam. The basic pillars are - One empowered Leader and Team working together, One Programme with clear Accounting, One budgetary framework and One UN office, a subsequent addition is that of the UN speaking with one voice.

Changing views in the aid environment also resulted in the 2005 Paris declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which was further endorsed in 2008 by the Accra agenda for Action. Both instruments emphasize the acceleration of national leadership and ownership of programmes and processes and sets priorities for UN support in the context of good governance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Summarily, DaO emphasizes a demand driven process through: -

- National Ownership and Leadership
- National Capacity Development
- Alignment with National Development Plans and priorities
- Joint programming and prioritization to enhance coherence, coordination and effectiveness

Programme harmonization and coordination are presenting opportunities for coherence, interagency synergy, information sharing and complementary, redefining operational capacity, based on agency mandate.

The SAISEM programme was one of the three piloted joint programmes by the UN in Afghanistan with the aim of delivering as one with the Afghanistan government. The Evaluation found that there was very little coordination between the UN agencies on the JP. Though jointly conceived and designed with implementing partners, the different UN organizations on the JP carried on executing their part of the plan solely, activities were sometimes carried out without implementing partners realizing that they are SAISEM activities. Also, there was not much linkage in the work plans and activities of all partners, even at the National level, many officials among implementing partners knew very little about the programme. It is certain that the relationship between the UN agencies and their government partners is more coordinated than the relationship between the UN organizations on the joint programme themselves, this is probably because the organizations worked on different platforms without Harmonizing their activities. For example, while UNDP worked upstream, with government at the National level, FAO was mainly concerned with working downstream, with Provincial and District level governments, also, probably due to the danger involved in moving about in Afghanistan, both organizations do not meet as often as they should to share ideas and complement efforts.

There were very infrequent Programme Management Committee meetings and this affected decision making, vacant positions were not filled on time and a lot of activities could not be carried out initially. Furthermore, transfer of fund from MDG-F to UNDP headquarter then to FAO headquarter before being sent to country office constituted a time wasting procedure, a more efficient method for a JP would have been to pool together all the programme fund for easy disbursement.

However, the last year witnessed tremendous improvement in relationship among all the partners namely NEPA, MoA, MRRD, FaO, UNDP and UNEP. Four TWG meetings were held as well as a Programme Management Committee (PMC) meeting in 2012.

Indeed one of the programme's achievements is the immense support it enjoyed from the Government bodies such as National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA). Through established PEACs, the DDAs and CDC's too are now being linked to National systems.

The UN is strengthened as a result of joint programmes, and its assets and expertise are more evident with its ability to work efficiently both upstream and downstream. Furthermore, the weaknesses of a JP are complemented by its strength whereas in a single agency intervention, it is clearly noticeable. That is to say it is difficult to notice the wrongs of one single organization in a joint setting when others are doing very well. On the JP the weaknesses and the strength were clearly noticeable as the organizations operated singularly. For example the organizations had different ways of keeping records, different financial processes, and different ways of interacting with governments, while government was almost totally in charge on some interventions, same could not be said of others.

4.3. Result Level

Effectiveness

The SAISEM programme was premised on the ‘change theory’ which recognizes that for change to occur and be effective, there is a need to first create an enabling environment through advocacy, development of legal policies and guidelines, this should be followed by institutional development to absorb and develop institutional skills needed for the change to be a change agent, this will now lead to change in the individual. Thus, the figure below explains the process adopted by the SAISEM projects: -

Figure 1. Change Process: -



The SAISEM programme can be divided into three phases, the first phase was the planning phase, between 2008 and 2009, when the JP was designed and programming started the second phase was from 2009 to 2011, this was a period of crises and conflicts within the partners and in Afghanistan generally. It was the period of elections, and international organizations became targets of attacks, with UN guest houses suffering attacks. A lot of insecurity was recorded on the programme with staff attritions and relocations taking place among National and International staff and the delay experienced in replacing these staff also added to the ineffectiveness of the programme. A lot of activities could not be accomplished and several deliverables were not met at the time. The third phase was from 2011 when an additional no fee extension was granted, this phase witnessed a lot of accomplishments with new dimensions coming into the programme. The Partners tried to complement each other and recognize each other's advantage. For example, UNDP noticed that FAO had greater advantage, working downstream with the communities; it therefore transferred some of its activities along with the fund to FAO.

Recognizing SAISEM as a multi-stakeholder programme, the programme advisory committee was formed with the UN RC office, UNDP, FAO and UNEP leaderships being members, also on the membership were the leadership of NEPA, MoAIL and MRRD from

the government side. A lower Technical Working Group was also formed, consisting of representatives of all the above but at the lower and more technical level. Meetings were held with government officials in NEPA, MRRD and MoAIL in three initial provinces, Herat, Badghis and Bamyan in 2009, later Bamyan was dropped and replaced with Ghazni.

Apart from the insecurity in Afghanistan, the initial obstacle the JP faced was the delay in fund transfer, this was said to have affected the programme a lot because programme implementation was delayed due to lack of fund, it was more cumbersome as funds had to 'pass through' the headquarter offices before it could be received for project implementation. The most ideal source of funding for a joint programme is 'Pooled Funding', where fund is pooled together in a joint account for project implementation. Thus there is one main Manager who manages the disbursement, based on agreed activities, this reduces bureaucracy and increases oneness.

Another major problem that the JP experienced is staff attrition, vacant positions were either not quickly replaced or not replaced at all. For example the position of JP Coordinator which was vital and which once existed, has not been filled to date. As a result of this, every UN organization continued to work, oblivious of what the other was doing, which is not ideal for the spirit of 'delivering as one'. Equally, there was problem getting all Stakeholders to agree on tentative dates for meetings as stakeholders claimed to be engaged all the time.

In the context of a country coming out of crises with many challenges and desperately in need of reconstruction, effective strategy of interventions must include networking or partnership. A capacity development/enhancement strategy is also relevant where there are human and institutional capacity constraints to be able to create a system for sustainability. Furthermore, the governments also need to be capacitated in developing policy dialogue, by which is meant the ability of governments to try to change national orientation through the findings of studies carried out (e.g. issues like Rangeland Degradation, Environmental pollution, Poverty etc). Consistent engagement of Government over time has led to the immense support the programme enjoyed from Government. The JP collaborated with other duty bearers to strengthen the integration of sustainable environmental management and through its two outcome areas, contributed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Environmental sustainability was ensured through mainstreaming of issues pertaining to the environment in government plans and framework, through local management of environment and natural resources poverty was reduced in the communities, gender equality was promoted, maternal health was indirectly improved and child mortality reduced.

The principle of Paris declaration on Aid effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action declares that Countries strengthen its governance and improve on its development efforts by aligning and harmonizing its resources through mutual partnership, it supports countries taking over the leadership of its development initiatives. Thus, the UN organisations on the JP were supposed to pool resources together with the Afghan government for the implementation of the programme (matching grant). Unfortunately, this was not the case as government did not contribute financially to the programme as it was said not to have the financial wherewithal to do

so, the UN partners on the other hand, had the duty to allow any fund allocated to them to pass through their headquarters before being remitted into their country account. Furthermore, while the Afghan government could be said to have taken up the leadership role upstream at the national level, the same could not be said at the sub-national level where there were complains of non-involvement of government in certain activities, for example, the selection of female beneficiaries of the Kitchen garden and the Poultry projects were said to have been carried out without governments involvement.

The outputs and outcomes of the JP were in synergy. To achieve outcome number one, the programme developed National Environmental Mainstreaming Guideline and mainstreamed environmental issues in sector plan like the education sector plan, it also integrated environment issues in provincial strategic plans. In outcome number two, local management of environment and natural resources was improved and service delivery was enhanced through communities taking part in gardening and poultry keeping and also volunteering their time to restore degraded rangeland.

Although, there were ample opportunities to harmonise the different activities such as joint visits, joint celebrations like ‘World Environment Day’, carrying out interventions in the same provinces and communities etc. But, while UNDP worked at the national level developing plans and guidelines for implementing environment concerns, FAO focused at the sub-national level to develop the capacity of the community to manage natural resources. Thus the JP effectively supported the development of the National Environmental Mainstreaming Guideline (NEMG) and the Forestry National Management Plan which is now in draft form, this guideline and the draft plan was used to introduce environment and natural resource management at the community level.

The inability of the PMC to meet as frequently as it should affected decision making initially, funds were not approved on time and vacant positions were not promptly filled because of delay in getting approval. Very little oversight functions were performed by either the TWG or the PMC, there were no joint project visit to particular project sites like Badghis and Ghor although the life of the Project, the reason given for this is the insecurity of these sites. It is then a wonder how the Project staff were able to carry out their activities in those areas.

In any case, the JP activities upstream had more attention from management in terms of communication, supervision and general coordination unlike downstream activities. There were more free flow of information and more joint decision-making.

Though government took part in decision making including recruitment of staff, but it could not be said to own the programme, even at some partner ministries, the programme is not well known, it is also the same at the community level. Some government partners spoken to in Kabul, knew very little about the JP and its activities, particularly in Herat, some of the key officials said they were not involved in managing the programme, they argued that they should have been involved from the designing stage to selection of beneficiaries, for transparency and sustainability, which the consultant also shares. The JP’s response is that

government is constantly changing its staff and that all the officials that were involved in the project at the beginning, have all been removed. The consultant felt this was not a good excuse, as the new officials could have been given an orientation course and intimated on the progress of the programme, the activities were not properly handed over to government.

However, several interventions were carried out by the programme downstream including rangeland restoration, communication within and outside schools, kitchen gardening and poultry farming. Interventions carried out upstream include institutional capacity development of government in Environmental integration, Climate change, Water quality Monitoring, Global Positioning System (GPS) use and Application among others. NEPA was provided with 100 sets of Water Quality Monitoring toolkits and 40 sets of GPS. Concepts notes, ToRs and Guidelines have been developed. Training of trainers and on the job training and involvement of the government staff in planning and implementation of the activities were the main focus of JP for future sustainability.

The JP promoted the integration of environmental concerns in the national education system and supported the promotion of environmental awareness through the use of Media, Billboards, Stickers etc. Women and Religious leaders were also not left out as the Programme held workshops for some women and men in relevant ministries to mainstream Gender in environment issues. It also held environmental awareness workshop for the Mullahs with at least 70 of them benefitting.

Under the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), the JP supported local communities in Herat, Ghor and Badghis restoration of degraded Rangeland, rehabilitating 159 hectares of degraded land, It supported over 400 women in establishing small backyard Poultry in the three provinces and trained some farmers in Pistachio farming and establishment of fruit gardens. Furthermore, to reduce pressure on natural resources and desertification, the project distributed over 40,000 of firewood trees for planting in the three provinces. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to measure how effective these projects are based on the absence of previous data but, the projects along with the various capacity development interventions contributed in environmental awareness and socio-economic development of the communities. They are contributing to the achievement of the environment and natural resources benchmark of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), it contributes to the UNDAF (2008) and the MDGs (particularly goal 7).

Table 4: - Output and Outcome Effectiveness

Almost all the project outcomes and outputs were achieved as illustrated in the table below: -

Outcome 1: Environmental issues mainstreamed in national and sub-national policy, planning and investment framework	
Output 1.1: National Environmental concerns reflected in the ANDS and select sectoral plans and institutional capacity strengthened to operationalize them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated environmental issues into sectoral strategies and plans by supporting NEPA in development of National Environmental Mainstreaming Guideline which contains tools for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA was also supported in institutionalizing of the State of Environment Reporting process, following the Rio+20 conference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental concern integrated in 7 provincial strategic plans of (Herat, Balkh, Bamayan, Laghman, Nangrahar, Helamad and Takhar), which has been approved and endorsed by the government.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported government in mainstreaming environmental concerns into National education system
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the development of the National Forestry Management Plan for MAIL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a concept for Sustainable Development Vision, a Roadmap for integrating environmental concerns in the national education system, and a framework document for Climate Change Strategy.
Output 1.2: Environmental concerns are fully reflected in provincial and district development plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditing, monitoring and evaluation guideline developed for NEPA and MRRD.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported government in establishing PEAC in 22 of 34 provinces in Afghanistan with the integration of environmental concern in 7 Provincial Strategic Plan

- Supported NEPA in the development of the Provincial environmental mainstreaming guidelines
- Supported the piloting of Environmental sub-committees (ESC) in District 22 Development Assemblies (DDAs) and in three districts of Bamyan. Environmental consideration has been integrated in the updating process of district development plans

Result: The JP developed environmental mainstreaming guideline for integrating environment issues into other sectors, the programme was able to entrench environment issues in education sector and into provincial strategic plans.

Outcome 2: Local Management of environment and natural resources improved and service delivery enhanced

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

- Nurseries for reforestation established in Herat province, and seed multiplication initiatives established in 3 provinces for rangeland restoration i.e. Pistachio restoration (The programme supported farmers in establishment of 756 new pistachio gardens and also supported farmers to establish 236 new pistachio gardens in Badghis Province). Fruit Gardens (The programme supported 520 farmers in Ghor Province established their own new fruit gardens) Firewood and ornamental trees (distributed and planted 34,359 saplings of firewood trees in Badghis Province and distributed 16,000 saplings of firewood trees to farmers in Ghor Province). The programme also contributed 19000 sampling to NEPA in Herat, 10000 to DAIL in Ghor and 12000 to DAIL in Badghis provinces.
- The programme supported establishment of 847 Kitchen gardens in Herat, Badghis and Ghor provinces. Supported 484 women beneficiaries in establishing small backyard poultry projects in Herat and Badghis Provinces. The programme also supported DAIL constructing deep well in Zendajan District in Herat Province and equipped it with a 24 KW water pump to provide water for the research farm area of 40 hectares.

Output 2.2: Institutional Knowledge management improved in relation with community-based field initiatives

- Rangeland restoration plan in the three provinces developed including plan to restore pistachio forests.
- 566 individuals from community development councils (CDC), MoAIL, MRRD and NEPA personnel, and B.Sc. and Masters University students, received training in management of natural resources, community mobilization and community-based interventions.

Result: Service Delivery to the communities improved through capacity building and management of natural resources, and Gender mainstreaming and livelihood development increased through participation of women in production.

Another major achievement of SAISEM programme is in the area of institutional support, the support given to NEPA to establish Provincial Advisory Committees, based on Article 12 of the Afghanistan Environment Law; Twenty two (22) PEACS were established for environmental integration at sub-national level. Environmental sub-committees are now being established in the DDAs and CDCs to advocate and raise awareness about environmental issues in their communities.

Furthermore, the National Environmental Mainstreaming Guideline is now being used by government to integrate environment issues in their plan, though it was not very well publicized. Staff of NEPA, MRRD and other relevant ministries benefitted from on the job trainings and Training of trainers in different subjects as Environmental Integration, Water Quality Monitoring, Climate change, Environment and gender, Environmental Conservation and Awareness and GPS use and Application.

In Herat, a Senior Government Director expressed his fear that the project may not be sustainable because beneficiaries were scattered all over the place instead of making them form a cooperative and monitoring them, he said government's opinion was not sought and they were not carried along. The government does not have record of the beneficiaries and there is no Community Based Organization working with them, therefore, monitoring or supervising these women for continuity may not be feasible. Projects of this type usually fizzle out without leaving a record. Right now it is difficult to identify half of the beneficiaries of the Poultry and Kitchen garden interventions. Another, problem the women may face is, getting access to drugs and vaccination for the chickens now that SAISEM has ended, the JP's response was that government was always changing its personnel and each

comes with different opinion. In any case, the project could have helped the women to establish a Cooperative Association or partnerships with a community based organization and develop the organization's capacity before finally handing over the project.



The evaluation found that most of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review have been implemented, in the remaining part of its implementation period, the SAISEM laid emphasis on targeting environment issues in Urban areas, reviewed its strategy to include an increase in

social awareness interventions and also developed a community based natural resource management plan, the JP worked in schools and carried out a lot of media activities with the aim of mobilizing the people to support environmental management.

4.3.1. Sustainability of Programme Outputs and Outcomes

Sustainability is the likelihood that the achievements recorded so far will be sustained beyond the programme life and it is also the resilience of the achievements to financial, political, systemic and other risks. It deals with questions such as the likelihood of the sustenance of the achievements after the withdrawal of external support, the extent to which counterparts are able to continue erstwhile with JP supported activities, and the extent to which the JP programme has built human and institutional capacities, the continued commitment of stakeholders, including government (at all levels) and civil society to the programme in terms of sustaining the momentum that has been generated. The sustainability of the JP outputs will also depend on the type of exit strategy adopted by the UN agencies.

The programme has made substantial attempt and obtained mixed results in enhancing ownership, capacity development and mainstreaming as basis for sustainability of introduced systems and practice. Like most responses received on some of the criteria on this evaluation, sustaining some of the outputs may not be possible.

A lot of capacity development activities targeting governments and the communities were carried out along with social awareness among several groups – Government Officials, Religious Leaders, Women, and University Youths. The media was utilized to reach the general populace, realizing that the radio is the best medium of getting to people especially at the grass root level. Also, farmers and vulnerable women in the communities were provided with livelihood opportunities. This is a very effective strategy, more likely to be sustained as both public and private sectors are reached, and the people are mobilized to manage their environment. An example is the establishment of the Provincial Environmental Advisory Councils (composed of government, civil societies, community's elders, religious scholars etc.), who have taken environmental concerns as part of their programmes and also advise the local government for integration the environmental concern in their planning process at sub-national level.

Similarly, the different capacity building exercises yielded result, as the government now embarked on the rehabilitation of Rangelands and the protection of Forestry. In its five-year strategic plan developed in 2012, the Afghan government planned to rehabilitate 5 million hectares of rangeland and protect 300,000 hectares of forest.⁷

As part of environmental awareness and education promotion the Joint Programme supported NEPA in drafting of a roadmap for integrating environmental concerns in the national education system, the Sustainable Development Unit of UNDP in close collaboration with

⁷Source: MAIL-5 year strategic plan

UNESCO and Ministry of Education is now working to finalize this document. To incorporate environmental issues in the education curriculum at formal and informal level would require further support.

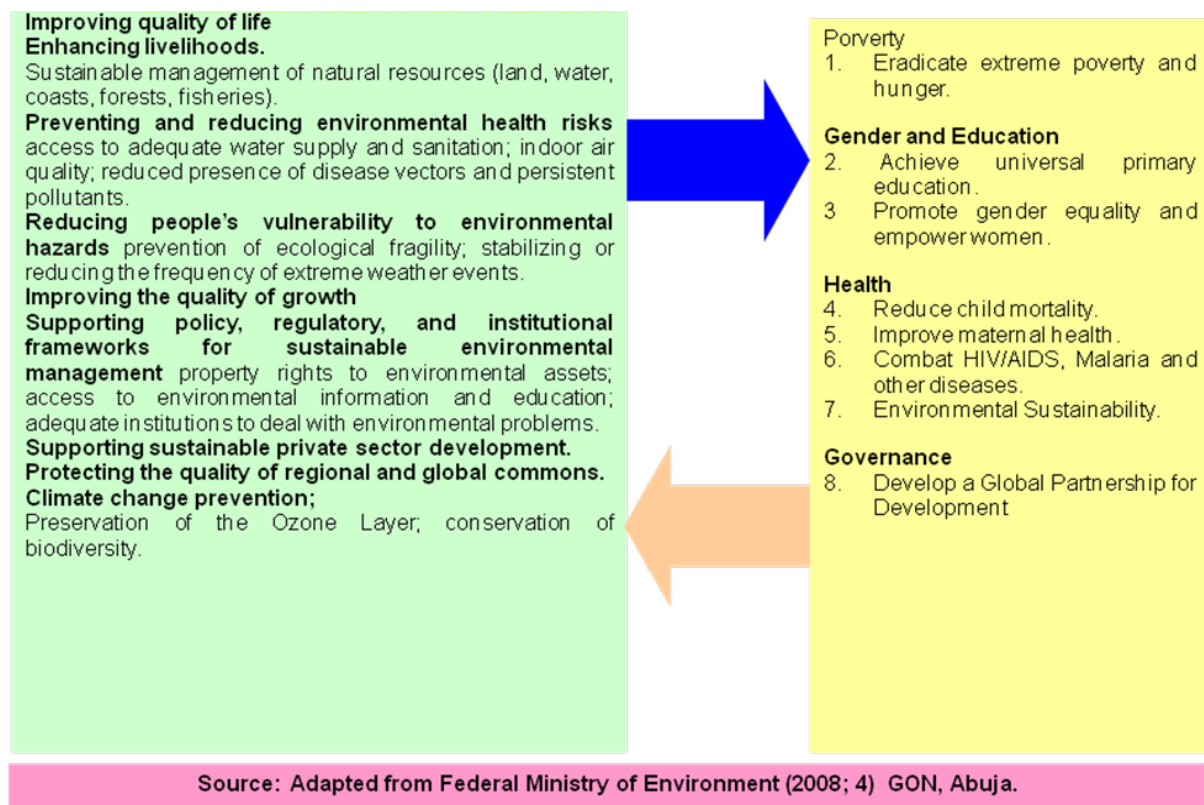
Summarily, in almost all its interventions, the SAISEM programme involved its government partners and handed over the activities to them for continuity, the evaluator therefore conclude that JP programme is more likely to be sustained.

4.3.2. Cross-cutting Issues (Gender & Human Rights)

The JP addressed almost all the cross-cutting issues that the UN incorporates in the design of its programmes, namely (i) Gender Equality, (ii) Human Rights-based approach, (iii) environmental sustainability, (iv) Result based management and (v) Capacity building except HIV/AIDS and inclusion of Persons with disability. These cross-cutting issues were addressed in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programme activities within the joint programme. The programme consistently and successfully introduced gender representation and empowerment across its activities. Women and Men who are highly skilled are employed as facilitators. They were also hired to manage the cultural sensitivity issues attached to project activities. Some interventions like the Kitchen gardens and Backyard poultry were solely reserved for women.

The involvement of the communities in the selection of beneficiaries based on household vulnerability, conformed with human rights based approach, the rights based approach (HRBA) argues for fair and equitable development and that the state or duty bearers have an obligation to intervene on behalf of poor and vulnerable groups (rights holders), recognizing that participation in, and enjoyment of the benefits of, development is a right of every individual in society.

The main focus of the programme is to achieve a viable and sustainable environment, while result based management forms the design of the programme with specified output and outcomes. Most of the programme objectives are achieved through capacity building as a strategy.

Table 5: Environmental linkages to the MDGs⁸

⁸ Federal Ministry of environment (MDG office) Abuja, 2008

5.0. Conclusions

The overall objective of the SAISEM Joint Programme was to support national and local communities to attain development results necessary for sustainable environmental management. The outputs of the programme were both needed and timely. The JP was a complex programme that should have had a wide range of players and partners. The results though impressive, could be better.

A strong positive for the programme is that it worked closely with governments especially at the top. Some gaps and missed opportunities were noted, such as the by-passing of the DDAs and CDCs from their mandatory supervisory roles over development activities in the districts and communities.

With regard to efficiency and effectiveness, a lot has been achieved by a relatively small team of staff on the JP. The main question now is whether these positive impacts will be continued after the end of the programme. This raises the issue of sustainability of the outputs and achievements of the programme.

The overall conclusion is that despite insecurity, conflict, severe weather and climate change which brought about delays during implementation, the programme has made significant contributions in supporting the Afghan government to address the pressing needs for effecting development change in environmental management.

5.1. Challenges

1. **Security:**

The major challenges the SAISEM programme faced was that of insecurity, crises and harsh weather. It was very difficult moving about to inspect projects within and outside Kabul. As a matter of fact, there were two suicide bombings in Kabul within the first three weeks of the Consultant's arrival in the capital city, Programme staff had tough time moving about to implement and monitor activities. The weather at times went as low as a negative -15. This obviously brought about delays in implementation of projects and holding of meetings.

11. **Monitoring and Evaluation of Activities:**

This is a very important area that was not fully considered on the SAISEM programme. This area should have been more operationalized. There was no baseline for most activities, No set target, No SMART indicators to measure results, No common reporting framework, therefore

it is not quite clear how many people (Men & Women) in Urban and Rural areas where reached on the Programme and how many oversight functions were carried out jointly by the team. Future programmes should integrate this component in their M & E plans.

iii. **Involvement of vulnerable group:**

Gender mainstreaming is still a challenge in governance, especially at the grass root level, there was also no recorded involvement of people living with disability, moreover, HIV/AIDS was not mainstream on the programme.

5.2. Lessons Learnt/Best Practices

Identification of lessons learned during the planning, implementation and monitoring of a programme is indicative of a learning organization. The lessons learned can then be replicated or avoided in future programmes or transferred to other regions and countries as appropriate. The following lessons learned descend from the analysis: -

- **Institutional Development**

The most crucial determinant of sustainable results is the establishment of appropriate institutional capacities. This proved particularly critical at all levels, where there is now a strong link between the acquisition of skills and their actual use by government officials and community members (Twenty two Provincial environment councils have been formed and eight of them functioning very effectively), this heavily improved up-stream and downstream linkages, coordination and harmonisation. It is important in this respect to develop awareness and capacities, and to introduce improved practices in line with the functions they perform.

- **Community Involvement**

Winning the trust of the community is very important for successful interventions, this is a key lesson learnt. It is also very crucial to involve civil society organisations and/or an association of religious/opinion leaders in programme implementation, particularly at the grass root level, to ensure sustainability especially as this was a pilot programme. Implementing such multitude of components and activities during a relatively short period in crises areas without involving community based organizations in implementation and monitoring poses a risk of fragmentation which can affect the consolidation of results and prospects for integration with the local settings. This can act as a constraint to sustainable impact at the local level.

- **Reconciling Planning Cycle**

Reconciliation of planning cycle with that of the government is a good opportunity and a best practice for coordinated planning. This is in line with the Paris Principle.

- **Technical Support to government**

Technical assistance to government and emphasis on strengthening institutional frameworks has led to Government buy-in on use of evidence based decision making leading to gradual availability, plans, databases and reports and needed skills very crucial for sustainability of development impact.

5.3. Recommendations

1. **Guidance Note on DaO in Afghanistan:**

The evaluation noted that there is need to develop a concept or guidance note on delivering as one in Afghanistan. All partners inclusive of the UN do not seem to have assimilated the idea of a one programme. An integrated communication strategy is needed for intra UN collaboration. The evaluation found that there was not much communication between the UN organizations on the joint programme, communication among them was limited to what was reported and some of their activities could be more synergised. FAO could have worked with the PEAC set up by UNDP etc.

2. **Sustainability Strategy:**

When designing any programme, Exit strategy should be topmost on the list of what to include. This is to ensure that programmes are sustained and continues, even after funding has ended. There is no indicator that the interventions carried out by FAO will be supervised or taken-over by government, because government was not carried along on the implementation.

3. **Deviation in Programme Strategy:**

The framework on which the SAISEM was implemented is Paris declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. This specifically states that Countries should take ownership of programmes. Governments should be involved in all interventions and take the lead role. In future, the UN should ensure that the statutory coordination and supervisory role of the Provincial, District and Community Administrative structures are appropriately recognized, their inclusion will contribute to ownership and sustainability.

4. **Pre-Condition for Socio-economic projects:**

Gender mainstreaming is still an issue, in planning a Gender based project, it is important to involve Women and Opinion Leaders from the community where the project is going to take place in the needs assessment, designing and planning stages. A socio-economic project like Kitchen garden, Poultry etc should have been carried out with through a CBO or a Community Cooperative Society beside Government. By making the women form cooperatives, they will have a common voice in committees, they may be able to access services including loan from micro-financing banks, they will have a saving scheme, and a revolving loan. This is a 'Best Practice' everywhere in the World, because sustainability is assured and the project lives years after it might have ended.

5. Adequate Planning:

Joint Programming and Implementation mechanisms can be an effective and value adding practice, but require the existence of a clear and well structured design (e.g. intervention logic, components and relation between them) and implementation framework (durations, resources, participating agencies and partners) adequate resource allocation and monitoring mechanisms. at the outset of the programme is a key factor for successful implementation. (e.g. multi-year programming, allocation based on integration of Partners plans and aligned with performance evaluation, actual results-based monitoring and evaluation).

6. Value of Diverse Approach:

Since Environment is a cross-cutting area, increasing the involvement of more Government Ministries and Civil Society Organizations especially national/community based organizations to leverage progress in the implementation of Environment/Climate Change vulnerability/Poverty/Water/Food Security interventions is strategic to sustainable livelihood and development. Future JPs should network with other development partners e.g. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), German & Asia foundations etc. for sharing of ideas, lessons learnt, good coordination and harmonization for more effective programming.

7. Reducing Staff Attrition:

Reducing attrition of trained and experienced UN staff is imperative for retaining institutional memory needed for continuity and improved programme performance. Many vacant positions were not readily filled.

8. Longer implementation Cycle:

Environment Programming in an area of high insecurity need long term funding modalities to yield desirable results, the consultant recommends that all partners in future joint programmes pool funds together, this is even better now that government have reconciled their planning cycle with that of the UN, a minimum time-frame exceeding four years is required as a pre-condition for impact of such complex and multi-faceted interventions in an unsecured environment.

9. Data Management:

Obtaining data to measure most of the outputs on this programme has been very difficult due to lack of data management information system (DMIS) for documentation of important information from regional and local level. For example, information on the programme, people reached and the trainings conducted are not easily available. The environmental management information system and NEPA website should be made functional, furthermore, continuation of awareness raising and capacity development of government at all levels in the use of gender sensitive and sectorally disaggregated data in evidenced based decision making is important.

10. Alternative Source of Energy:

Future programmes can look into an alternative way of providing energy for the Afghan people, particularly in rural areas. Afghans in rural areas an estimate of about 10 million rely

on the use of firewood for cooking and heating their homes⁹. This is a massive threat to forest cover.

11. Other Issues:

There are several issues that could be looked into in Afghanistan, for example Issue of Portable Water, Review of Land use Act to demarcate land for housing from farmland, Finalization of the National Forestry Management Plan and development of a National Policy on Environment and climate change and reducing environmental pollution.

12. Looking Beyond Individual Identity:

Efforts should be made to improve and to look beyond individual identity and see the advantages of being one UN, only then can the one programme be conceived and developed, there were more joined work plans than one programme.

13. Growing Deeper:

Though the JP has done relatively well, but environment problems in Afghanistan is so huge that the programme can only make noticeable impact by concentrating on doing a few projects very well rather than spreading limited resources on lots of projects (spreading thinly). There is need to focus on a more manageable high-impact set of interventions in fewer communities.

14. Review Approach to Capacity Development:

There is a need to review approach to capacity development for Implementing Partners with less emphasis on workshops and seminars, there is worldwide concern that workshops and seminars inhibits internalization of the newly acquired skills through learning by doing. New approaches such as Mentoring by technical experts or facilitators provided for short periods e.g. for reviewing development plans, budgets for environmental and gender mainstreaming with a provincial planning officer over a couple of days at their work place.

15. Accountability for Results:

Finally, stronger emphasis should be laid on accountability for results, all disbursements should be associated with specific deliverables, under the direct supervision of a managing or administrative agent.

⁹ Source: Afghanistan Millennium Development Goal 7, (UNDP).

Appendix

Evaluation Matrix

The key analytical framework for collecting and processing the information will be an evaluation matrix, which includes (i) Core evaluation questions (ii) a number of more specific judgement/analytical criteria for each of them, and (iii) a set of possible indicators and sources of information. The evaluation questions will be formulated to reflect a synthetic and coherent tool for interpreting programme rational and implementation set-up.

Below is the Evaluation matrix: -

Table 4: Evaluation Matrix

<u>Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance/appropriateness of the programme - The extent to which Objectives of the intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and the Millennium Development Goals.</u>		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data Sources and collection Methods
1. How much and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to solve the (socio-economical) needs and problems identified in the design phase?	-Different capacity building carried out - National environmental concerns reflected in the sectoral plans. -No of People/organisations whose capacity were developed -Types and No of socio-economic activities created and on-going	Programme Document, Progress report, ANDS, MTR, Interviews & FGD
2. To what extent were partners involved in the designing, implementation and evaluation of the JP	-Minutes of Meetings held at the different stages -M & E reports	Programme Document, MDG-F programme guidelines, Minutes of Reports, MTR, Interviews & FGD
3. To what extent is JP the best option to respond to the development challenges stated in the programme document?	-Outputs and Outcomes address development challenges	-M & E report -Progress report -Interviews & FGD

4. To what extent the implementing partners participating in the joint programme had an added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?	-Evidence of full utilization of the comparative advantages of the different JP organizations	-M & E report -Progress report -Interviews with Partners
5. To what extent did the joint programme have a useful and reliable M&E strategy that contributed to measure development results?	-M & E strategy developed base on assessment -Indicators SMART enough to measure challenges	-M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews with Partners
6. To what extent did the joint programme have a useful and reliable C&A strategy?	-Development and Implementation of C&A strategy	-C & A reports -M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews with Partners

Evaluation Criterion 2: Efficiency - Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data sources and collection methods
1. To what extent did the JP's management model (i.e. instruments; economic, human and technical resources; organizational structure; information flows; decision-making in management) efficient in comparison to the development results attained?	-Management structure was defined in the Programme documents with job descriptions/responsibilities -Human and technical resources available and positions filled throughout duration of the programme -information flows easily and decision making channels flows without hindrance	-M & E report -Progress report -Financial report -MTR reports -Interviews & FGDs
2. To what extent was the implementation of a JP intervention (group of agencies) more efficient in comparison to what could have been through a single agency's intervention?	-% of planned activities carried out by JP agencies -% of planned budget actually spent on JP activities	-M & E report -Progress report -Interviews & FGD
3. To what extent did the governance of the fund at both programme (PMC) and National level (NSC) contribute to efficiency and	-Time taken to transfer fund at both levels -No of coordination meetings at both levels	-Financial Report -M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews & FGD

effectiveness of the joint programme?		
4. To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme increase or reduce efficiency in delivering outputs and attaining outcomes?	-Training in Financial Management, auditing etc -Fund Sourcing	-Financial management Training Report -M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews & FGD
5. What type of work methodologies, financial instruments, and business practices have the implementing partners used to increase efficiency in delivering as one?	-Types of financial strategy in place (Pooled fund etc) -Time taken to access funds and retire funds	-Financial Report -M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews & FGD
6. What type of (administrative, financial and managerial) obstacles did the joint programme face and to what extent have this affected its efficiency?	-Financial management documents, audits reports in place -Time taken to transfer fund for implementation	-Financial Report -M & E reports -Progress report -Interviews & FGD
Evaluation Criterion 3: Effectiveness – Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved, the extent to which the joint programme contributed to the attainment of development		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data sources and collection methods
1. To what extent and in what ways did the JP contribute to the MDGs at the local and national levels?	-% of activities implemented, addressing the MDG indicators at the local and national levels	-MDG Indicators -M & E report -Progress report -Interviews with Partners
2. To what extent and in what ways did the JP contribute to the goals set in the thematic window?	-Outputs/Outcomes aligned with the set goals in the thematic window	M & E report -Progress reports -Interviews with Partners
3. To what extent (policy, budgets, design, and implementation) and in what ways did the JP contribute to improve the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action?	-Alignment with Paris declaration and Accra agenda for action	-Financial report -M & E report -Progress report -Interviews with Partners
4. To what extent and in what	-Indications of a one house,	-Reporting of monitoring

ways did the JP contribute to the goals of delivering as one at country level?	one programme, one leadership and one fund/budget framework	-Progress reports -Interviews with Partners
5. To what extent were joint programme's outputs and outcomes synergistic and coherent to produce development results? `What kinds of results were reached?	-Analysis of outputs and outcomes -Positive & Negative results reached	-Review of Documents, Progress reports, Interviews & FGDs
6. Major factors for achievement or non achievement of key results?	-% of stakeholders mainstreaming JP activities within their plans and budgets -% of communities, women, children practicing new methods of farming	Interviews, MTR, Quarterly/Annual Reports, FGD, M & E reports
7. To what extent has the JP contributed to the advancement and the progress of fostering national ownership processes and outcomes (the design and implementation of National Development Plans, Public Policies, UNDAF, etc)?	-Stakeholders reporting participation in the design and implementation of the JP -Coordination meetings at national and field levels -Monitoring and progress reports shared between clusters and JP	-Reports, Interviews & FGD
8. To what extent did the JP help to increase stakeholder / citizen dialogue and or engagement on development issues and policies?	-No of meetings held with stakeholders and government -minutes of meetings and capacity building workshops/trainings held on development issues and policies - Evidence of environmental concerns fully reflected in provincial and district development plans.	-Minutes of meetings with stakeholders, -District/Provincial plans -Progress Reports -Work plans, Reports, Interviews & FGD

Evaluation Criterion 4: Programme Outcome/Impact – Positive and Negative impact generated by the Joint Programme

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data sources and collection methods
1. What results (outputs and outcomes) has the JP achieved since its	-Proportion of communities reporting improved incomes -Proportion of communities	-Interviews with Stakeholders -Focus group discussions and

commencement?	reporting improved food security -Number of groups trained in small scale agro-food processing -Proportion of stakeholders reporting improved capacity to manage environmental issues -Proportion of Stakeholders reporting improved management of natural resources	interviews with communities Progress reports
2. To what extent and in what ways did the mid-term evaluation have an impact on the joint programme? Was it useful? Did the joint programme implement the improvement plan?	-Evidence of subsequent plans and activities addressing MTR recommendations	-Work plans, Progress Reports & Interview
3. Has the programme made a difference to the lives of host communities?	-No of stakeholders and communities expressing satisfaction or improved quality of life or dissatisfaction	-Progress reports Focus group discussions and interviews with communities
4. How are impacts different according to gender, age and other vulnerability category (e.g. Women, Disabled etc)?	-% of women, children and the disabled reporting improved quality of life -% of women, children and the disabled reporting participation in training activities	-Progress reports -Interviews with stakeholders Focus group discussions and interviews with communities
Evaluation Criterion 5: Sustainability – Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term. Extent to which the joint programme decision making bodies and implementing partners have undertaken necessary decisions and course of actions to ensure sustainability of the effects of the joint programme?		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data sources and collection methods
1. To what extent did national and/or local institutions support the joint programme?	-Reports of meetings and evidences of National and Local institutions support	MoU, Minutes of meetings, Progress reports, interviews and FGD
2. Did these institutions show technical capacity and	-Evidence of Organisational & technical assessments of	Reports, Interviews & FGDs

leadership commitment to keep working with the programme or to scale it up?	institutions	
3. Have operating capacities been created and/or reinforced in national partners?	-Trainings, Workshops and seminars conducted	Training reports, Progress reports, Interviews & FGDs
4. Did the partners have sufficient financial capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the programme?	-Evidence of sustainability plan developed -Evidence of capacity building of partners	Training reports, Progress reports, Interviews & FGD
5. To what extent will the joint programme be replicable or scaled up at national or local levels?	-Evidence of capacity building in Proposal development and Fund sourcing among IPs	-Reports, Interviews and FGD
6. To what extent did the joint programme align itself with the National Development Strategies and/or the UNDAF?	-Evidence of alignment and harmonization with ANDS	-UNDAF Document -National Development Strategy document -Programme Document and Interviews

Evaluation Criterion 6: Ownership, Partnership and Coordination – Effective exercise of leadership by the country’s national/local partners in development interventions and effect of coordination or lack of coordination on the Joint Programme

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data sources and collection methods
1. What are the key lessons learned from the JP and how can they inform future UN and GoA programmes	-Lessons Learnt and Success stories	-M & E reports -MTR report -Progress reports -Interviews with JP partners
2. To what extent were the governance structures useful for development purposes, ownership, for working together as one? Did they enable management delivery of outputs and results? What factors favorably or adversely affected the spirit of Delivering as One?	-Number of Partners reporting participation in coordination meetings at national and field levels -Monitoring and progress reports shared between clusters and Partners	-M & E Reports -Progress reports -Interviews with Partners
3. Are there critical technical gaps in the coordination structures?	-Technical staff turnover within the UN and GoA	-Interviews with JP staff, GoA, and other partners
4. To what extent did the programme involve the host communities and other stakeholders in programme	-Number of planning and progress review meetings	-Reports of meetings

design and implementation	held with communities	
5. Were the capacity development activities informed by capacity assessment at different levels?	-Capacity needs assessments conducted	-Reports of capacity needs assessments undertaken
6. To what extent were cross-cutting issues with respect to Gender Equality, Human Rights Based Approach, HIV/AIDS and Results Based Management mainstreamed in JP activities?	-Cross-cutting issues recognised and mainstreamed in project design documents	-Project design document and Reports

3.1. Expert Rating Key

The Expert rating table is a brief summary analysis of the Programme's performance within the evaluation criteria. Achievement beneath or amounting to 24.5% of the indicator's requirement gets the lowest rating; between 25% and 49.5% (inclusive) gets the next level score. The third level score gets anything between 50% and 74.5% while the highest rating is reserved for any change that meets the 75% to 100% (inclusive) threshold of the indicator's requirement.

Table 5: Expert Rating Table

Lowest - - -to - - - Highest					
00	Numerical weight	1	2	3	4
01	Relevance/Appropriateness: The design and focus of the JP in achieving of Afghanistan's National Development Goals	Highly Not Relevant	Not Relevant	Relevant X	Highly Relevant
02	Efficiency: Extent to which the Programme is a mechanism to achieve coherent response that minimizes transactions costs	Highly Non Efficient	Non Efficient	Efficient X	Highly Efficient
03	Effectiveness: Extent to which the Programme is a means of achieving key results	Highly Not Effective	Not Effective	Effective X	Highly Effective
04	Programme Outcome/Impact: The	Highly No Impact	No Impact	Impact	Very High Impact

	extent to which the results of the interventions affect or has brought changes to the lives of individuals, communities and institutions (Gender, Age, Key populations, Disabled etc.)			X	
05	Sustainability: (Extent to which results achieved by the JP during the period under Evaluation are likely to be sustained (i) Likely to contribute to National development and (ii) Likely to be replicated and adapted	Highly Not Sustainable	Not Sustainable	Sustainable X	Highly Sustainable
06	Partnership & Coordination : Effect of coordination or lack of coordination between UN, GoA, and other IPs	Highly Not Coordinated	Not Coordinated X	Coordinated	Highly Coordinated
Comment: Tremendous Improvement in coordination noticed within the last year of the Programme					

List of People Interviewed on SAISEM Final Evaluation

S/N	Name of Person	Designation/Organization	Date of Interview	Email/Phone No
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24.	Samandar Sakandari	District Governor, Jabalu Seraj District, Parwan	15/01/13	

25.	Mulavi Abdulrahim Hanifi	Head of Ulama Council, Parwan	15/01/13	
26.	Mohammad R. Sitamzada	Provincial Director of Culture & Information	15/01/13	
27.	Nazifa Mujadidi	Provincial Representative Afghan Women Network	15/01/13	
28.	Aziza Ishani	Representative of women rights.	15/01/13	
29.	AbdulKarim Farzam	Provincial Director Agriculture	15/01/13	
30.	Haji Abdul Shakoor Qudosi	District Governor of Bagram District	15/01/13	
31.	Eng. Abdul Qadir Zahin	Director of Sectoral Services Governor Office	15/01/13	
32.	Abdul Munib	Agriculture Specialist	15/01/13	
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38.	Abdul Aziz Shagari	Natural Resources Manager, MAIL, Herat	21/01/13	
39.	Ms. Geti	Programme Manager, MAIL, Herat	21/01/13	
40.	Habib Hemat		21/01/13	0799454431
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42.	Ms. Paula Pelaez	Portfolio Manager, UNDP, New York	22/01/13	Paula.pelaez@undp.org

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT (FOR SAISEM FINAL EVALUATION)

Location: Kabul, AFGHANISTAN Application Deadline: 13-Nov-12 Additional Category Environment and Energy Type of Contract: Individual Contract Post Level: International Consultant Languages Required:

English Duration of Initial Contract: 30 Days Expected Duration of Assignment: 30 Days

Background

UNDP supports stabilization, state building, governance and development priorities in Afghanistan. UNDP support, in partnership with the Government, the United Nations system, the donor community and other development stakeholders, has contributed to institutional development efforts leading to positive impact on the lives of Afghan citizens. Over the years UNDP support has spanned such milestone efforts as the adoption of the Constitution; Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections; institutional development through capacity-building to the legislative, the judicial and executive arms of the state, and key ministries, Government agencies and commissions at the national and sub-national levels. UNDP has played a key role in the management of the Law and Order Trust Fund, which supports the Government in developing and maintaining the national police force and in efforts to stabilize the internal security environment. Major demobilization, disarmament and rehabilitation and area-based livelihoods and reconstruction programmes have taken place nationwide. UNDP Programmes in Afghanistan have benefited from the very active support of donors. UNDP Afghanistan is committed to the highest standards of transparency and accountability and works in close coordination with the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and the UN system as a whole to maximize the impact of its development efforts on the ground.

In December 2006, UNDP and the Government of Spain signed a major partnership agreement for the amount of \$528 million with the aim of contributing to progress on the MDGs and other development goals through the United Nations System. In addition, on 24 September 2008 Spain pledged \$90 million towards the launch of a thematic window on Childhood and Nutrition. The MDG-F supports joint programmes that seek replication of successful pilot experiences and impact in shaping public policies and improving peoples' life in 49 countries by accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other key development goals.

The MDG-F operates through the UN teams in each country, promoting increased coherence and effectiveness in development interventions through collaboration among UN agencies. The Fund uses a joint programme mode of intervention and has currently approved 128 joint programmes in 49 countries. These reflect eight thematic windows that contribute in various ways towards progress on the MDGs, National Ownership and UN reform.

The MDG-F M&E Strategy

A result oriented monitoring and evaluation strategy is under implementation in order to track and measure the overall impact of this historic contribution to the MDGs and to multilateralism. The MDG-F M&E strategy is based on the principles and standards of UNEG and OECD/DAC regarding evaluation quality and independence. The strategy builds on the information needs and interests of the different stakeholders while pursuing a balance between their accountability and learning purposes.

The strategy's main objectives are:

- To support joint programmes to attain development results;
- To determine the worth and merit of joint programmes and measure their contribution to the 3 MDG-F objectives, MDGS, Paris Declaration and Delivering as one; and

- To obtain and compile evidence based knowledge and lessons learned to scale up and replicate successful development interventions.

Under the MDG-F M&E strategy and Programme Implementation Guidelines, each programme team is responsible for designing an M&E system, establishing baselines for (quantitative and qualitative) indicators and conducting a final evaluation with a summative focus.

The MDG-F Secretariat also commissioned mid-term evaluations for all joint programmes with a formative focus. Additionally, a total of nine-focus country evaluations (Ethiopia, Mauritania, Morocco, Timor-Leste, Philippines, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Honduras and Ecuador) are planned to study more in depth the effects of joint programmes in a country context.

FAO-UNDP-UNEP Joint Programme, SAISEM is designed to promote a strengthened approach for the integration of sustainable environmental management into national sectoral strategies; promote capacity and institutional building of relevant government counterparts to operationalise and implement the environmental concerns reflected in the national strategies; and support demonstration activities in the field, the lessons from which will feed into strengthening the national and sub-national planning and community-level engagement for environmentally sustainable development of Afghanistan.

As such this Joint Programme directly contributes to the achievement of Environment and Natural Resource goals of in the 2006-2008 UNDAF, as well as Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also directly responds to the environment and natural resources benchmarks as articulated in the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

The Programme is promoting the formulation of suitable policy / strategic frameworks, implementation guidelines with due consideration of the environment-poverty linkage, ensure institutional capacity building towards the effective implementation of the strategies and projects, integrate environmental considerations in the national and sub-national planning process; and raise awareness on the topic at all levels. The programme is also piloting and upscales several Community-Based Natural Resources Management interventions in selected provinces. These projects will specifically focus on integrated approaches for rangeland management given that rangeland degradation is a significant issue in the country. By working closely with the relevant government counterparts both at the national and sub-national levels, the lessons from the CBNRM activities are intended to inform the emerging environmental and natural resource legal and regulatory framework of the country.

UNDP is the Administrative Agent (AA) of this joint programme and the other main partner UN organizations are FAO and UNEP. FAO and UNDP are direct implementing partners, while UNEP is playing an advisory role in the implementation of the programme including through coordination and harmonization of activities of the Joint Programme with those of UNEP. The main government partners are the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MoAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), and the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

Objective of the Assignment:

- Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase.
- To measure joint programme's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.
- Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.
- To measure the joint programme contribution to the objectives set in their respective specific thematic windows as well as the overall MDG fund objectives at local and national level. (MDGs, Paris Declaration and Accra Principles and UN reform).
- To identify and document substantive lessons learned and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic window, MDGs, Paris Declaration, Accra Principles and UN reform with the aim to support the sustainability of the joint programme or some of its components.
- The final evaluation will focus on measuring development results and potential impacts generated by the joint programme, based on the scope and criteria included in this term of reference.
- The unit of analysis or object of study for this evaluation is the joint programme, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.

Duties and Responsibilities

Scope of Work:

Scope of the evaluation and specific objectives

The final evaluation will focus on measuring development results and potential impacts generated by the **joint** programme, based on the scope and criteria included in this term of reference. This will enable conclusions and recommendations for the joint programme to be formed within a period between four and six months.

The unit of analysis or object of study for this evaluation is the joint programme, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.

This final evaluation has the following specific objectives:

- Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase.
- To measure joint programme's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.
- Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.

- To measure the joint programme contribution to the objectives set in their respective specific thematic windows as well as the overall MDG fund objectives at local and national level. (MDGs, Paris Declaration and Accra Principles and UN reform).
- To identify and document substantive lessons learned and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic window, MDGs, Paris Declaration, Accra Principles and UN reform with the aim to support the sustainability of the joint programme or some of its components.

Evaluation questions, levels of analysis and evaluation criteria

The evaluation questions define the information that must be generated as a result of the evaluation process. The questions are grouped according to the criteria to be used in assessing and answering them. These criteria are, in turn, grouped according to the three levels of the programme.

Design level:

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and the Millennium Development Goals.

- How much and in what ways did the joint programme contributed to solve the (socio-economical) needs and problems identified in the design phase?
- To what extent this programme was designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated jointly? (See MDG-F joint programme guidelines.)
- To what extent joint programming was the best option to respond to development challenges stated in the programme document?
- To what extent the implementing partners participating in the joint programme had an added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?
- To what extent did the joint programme have a useful and reliable M&E strategy that contributed to measure development results?
- To what extent did the joint programme have a useful and reliable C&A strategy?
- If the programme was revised, did it reflect the changes that were needed?

Process level

Efficiency: Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results

- To what extent did the joint programme's management model (i.e. instruments; economic, human and technical resources; organizational structure; information flows; decision-making in management) was efficient in comparison to the development results attained?
- To what extent was the implementation of a joint programme intervention (group of agencies) more efficient in comparison to what could have been through a single agency's intervention?
- To what extent the governance of the fund at programme level (PMC) and at national level (NSC) contributed to efficiency and effectiveness of the joint programme? To what extent

these governance structures were useful for development purposes, ownership, for working together as one? Did they enable management and delivery of outputs and results?

- To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme increase or reduce efficiency in delivering outputs and attaining outcomes?
- What type of work methodologies, financial instruments, and business practices have the implementing partners used to increase efficiency in delivering as one?
- What type of (administrative, financial and managerial) obstacles did the joint programme face and to what extent have this affected its efficiency?
- To what extent and in what ways did the mid-term evaluation have an impact on the joint programme? Was it useful? Did the joint programme implement the improvement plan?

Ownership in the process: Effective exercise of leadership by the country's national/local partners in development interventions

- To what extent did the targeted population, citizens, participants, local and national authorities made the programme their own, taking an active role in it? What modes of participation (leadership) have driven the process?
- To what extent and in what ways has ownership or the lack of it, impacted in the efficiency and effectiveness of the joint programme?

Results level

Effectiveness: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved.

To what extent did the joint programme contribute to the attainment of the development outputs and outcomes initially expected /stipulated in the programme document?

- To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the Millennium Development Goals at the local and national levels?
- To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the goals set in the thematic window?
- To what extent (policy, budgets, design, and implementation) and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to improve the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action?
- To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the goals of delivering as one at country level?
- To what extent were joint programme's outputs and outcomes synergistic and coherent to produce development results? What kinds of results were reached?
- To what extent did the joint programme had an impact on the targeted citizens?
- Have any good practices, success stories, lessons learned or transferable examples been identified? Please describe and document them.
- What types of differentiated effects are resulting from the joint programme in accordance with the sex, race, ethnic group, rural or urban setting of the beneficiary population, and to what extent?

- To what extent has the joint programme contributed to the advancement and the progress of fostering national ownership processes and outcomes (the design and implementation of National Development Plans, Public Policies, UNDAF, etc)
- To what extent did the joint programme help to increase stakeholder/citizen dialogue and or engagement on development issues and policies?

Sustainability: Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.

To what extent the joint programme decision making bodies and implementing partners have undertaken the necessary decisions and course of actions to ensure the sustainability of the effects of the joint programme?

At local and national level:

- To what extent did national and/or local institutions support the joint programme?
- Did these institutions show technical capacity and leadership commitment to keep working with the programme or to scale it up?
- Have operating capacities been created and/or reinforced in national partners?
- Did the partners have sufficient financial capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the programme?
- To what extent will the joint programme be replicable or scaled up at national or local levels?
- To what extent did the joint programme align itself with the National Development Strategies and/or the UNDAF?

Methodological approach

This final evaluation will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR and the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, consultants are expected to analyse all relevant information sources, such as reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents, mid-term evaluations and any other documents that may provide evidence on which to form judgments. Consultants are also expected to use interviews, surveys or any other relevant quantitative and/or qualitative tool as a means to collect relevant data for the final evaluation. The evaluation team will make sure that the voices, opinions and information of targeted citizens/participants of the joint programme are taken into account.

The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in detail in the desk study report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at minimum, information on the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory techniques.

Key roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process

There will be 3 main actors involved in the implementation of MDG-F final evaluations:

The Resident Coordinator Office as commissioner of the final evaluation will have the following functions:

- Lead the evaluation process throughout the 3 main phases of a final evaluation (design, implementation and dissemination)
- Convene the evaluation reference group
- Lead the finalization of the evaluation ToR
- Coordinate the selection and recruitment of the evaluation team by making sure the lead agency undertakes the necessary procurement processes and contractual arrangements required to hire the evaluation team
- Ensure the evaluation products meet quality standards (in collaboration with the MDG-F Secretariat)
- Provide clear specific advice and support to the evaluation manager and the evaluation team throughout the whole evaluation process
- Connect the evaluation team with the wider programme unit, senior management and key evaluation stakeholders, and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation
- Take responsibility for disseminating and learning across evaluations on the various joint programme areas as well as the liaison with the National Steering Committee
- Safeguard the independence of the exercise, including the selection of the evaluation team

The programme coordinator as evaluation manager will have the following functions:

- Contribute to the finalization of the evaluation TOR
- Provide executive and coordination support to the reference group
- Provide the evaluators with administrative support and required data
- Liaise with and respond to the commissioners of evaluation
- Connect the evaluation team with the wider programme unit, senior management and key evaluation stakeholders, and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation
- Review the inception report and the draft evaluation report(s);
- Ensure that adequate funding and human resources are allocated for the evaluation

The Programme Management Committee that will function as the evaluation reference group, this group will comprise the representatives of the major stakeholders in the joint programme

- Review the draft evaluation report and ensure final draft meets the required quality standards.
- Facilitating the participation of those involved in the evaluation design
- Identifying information needs, defining objectives and delimiting the scope of the evaluation.
- Providing input and participating in finalizing the evaluation Terms of Reference
- Facilitating the evaluation team's access to all information and documentation relevant to the intervention, as well as to key actors and informants who should participate in interviews, focus groups or other information-gathering methods
- Oversee progress and conduct of the evaluation the quality of the process and the products

- Disseminating the results of the evaluation

The MDG-F Secretariat that will function as a quality assurance member of the evaluation in cooperation with the commissioner of the evaluation

- Review and provide advice on the quality the evaluation process as well as on the evaluation products (comments and suggestions on the adapted TOR, draft reports, final report of the evaluation) and options for improvement.

The Consultant will conduct the evaluation study by:

- Fulfilling the contractual arrangements in line with the TOR, UNEG/OECD norms and standards and ethical guidelines; this includes developing an evaluation matrix as part of the inception report, drafting reports, and briefing the commissioner and stakeholders on the progress and key findings and recommendations, as needed

Use and utility of the evaluation

Final evaluations are summative exercises that are oriented to gather data and information to measure to what extent development results were attained. However, the utility of the evaluation process and the products goes far beyond what was said during the field visit by programme stakeholders or what the evaluation team wrote in the evaluation report.

The momentum created by the evaluations process (meetings with government, donors, beneficiaries, civil society, etc) it's the ideal opportunity to set an agenda on the future of the programme or some of their components (sustainability). It is also excellent platforms to communicate lessons learnt and convey key messages on good practices, share products that can be replicated or scale up in the country as well as at international level.

The commissioner of the evaluation, the reference group, the evaluation manager and any other stakeholders relevant for the joint programme will jointly design and implement a complete plan of dissemination of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations with the aim to advocate for sustainability, replicability, scaling up or to share good practices and lessons learnt at local, national or/and international level.

Ethical principles and premises of the evaluation

The final evaluation of the joint programme is to be carried out according to ethical principles and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

- **Anonymity and confidentiality.** The evaluation must respect the rights of individuals who provide information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality.
- **Responsibility.** The report must mention any dispute or difference of opinion that may have arisen among the consultants or between the consultant and the heads of the Joint Programme in connection with the findings and/or recommendations. The team must corroborate all assertions, or disagreement with them noted.

- **Integrity.** The evaluator will be responsible for highlighting issues not specifically mentioned in the TOR, if this is needed to obtain a more complete analysis of the intervention.
- **Independence.** The consultant should ensure his or her independence from the intervention under review, and he or she must not be associated with its management or any element thereof.
- **Incidents.** If problems arise during the fieldwork, or at any other stage of the evaluation, they must be reported immediately to the Secretariat of the MDGF. If this is not done, the existence of such problems may in no case be used to justify the failure to obtain the results stipulated by the Secretariat of the MDGF in these terms of reference.
- **Validation of information.** The consultant will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected while preparing the reports and will be ultimately responsible for the information presented in the evaluation report.
- **Intellectual property.** In handling information sources, the consultant shall respect the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities that are under review.
- **Delivery of reports.** If delivery of the reports is delayed, or in the event that the quality of the reports delivered is clearly lower than what was agreed, the penalties stipulated in these terms of reference will be applicable.

Documents to be reviewed:

MDG-F Context

MDGF Framework Document

- Summary of the M&E frameworks and common indicators
- General thematic indicators
- M&E strategy
- Communication and Advocacy Strategy
- MDG-F Joint Implementation Guidelines

Specific Joint Programme Documents

- Joint Programme Document: results framework and monitoring and evaluation framework
- Mission reports from the Secretariat
- Quarterly reports
- Mini-monitoring reports
- Biannual monitoring reports
- Annual reports
- Annual work plan
- Financial information (MDTF)

Other in-country documents or information

- Joint Program Mid-Term Evaluation Report 2010
- National Environment Sector Strategy

- Afghanistan National Development Strategy
- Environment Law
- State of Environment Report
- Relevant documents or reports on the Millennium Development Goals at the local and national levels
- Relevant documents or reports on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action in the country
- Relevant documents or reports on One UN, Delivering as One