

**Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development
(AIRD)**

Strategic Plan 2008 – 2010

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Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD) Strategic Plan (2008-2010)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief history

The idea for the establishment of Rural Development training Centre in Afghanistan was generated by Indian in 1954 during the establishment of Rural Development Commission¹ (currently MRRD) in Afghanistan. Through support of Indian Government, donors and UN agencies the first Rural Development Training Centre (RDTC) was established in 110 Jerib (55 hectare) land in Chara Siyab District of Kabul. In 1956 this centre was officially opened by Sardar Mohammed Daud, former Prime Minister of Afghanistan and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the first prime Minister of independent India in 1947. The United Nations office for Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (EASCAP) provided furniture, books and farm machinery to the centre.

RDTC (which is also called as *Gulzar Training Centre*) was functioning by Indian and Afghan teachers during 1960s and 70s. In 1975 an Indian rural development advisor (Prof. N. J. Chin) after meeting with UN and rural development stakeholders in Afghanistan prepared a seven-year development plan for RDTC. According to this plan the RDTC transformed into *National Academy of Rural Development* in Afghanistan and provided training and education in various fields of rural development, engaged in evaluation of rural development programs, provided scholarship to Denmark and India for higher study and established five training units in the five regions of Afghanistan. The centre has been renamed as Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD).

The purpose of *Gulzar Training centre* was to provide 3-yrs social workers education program for middle school graduates, 1-yr multi purpose cooperative course for Baccalaureate, basic education and leadership training to community members aimed to create community gathering centres, youth clubs, 4-H clubs as well as short term courses in health education, enterprises development and coordination courses for rural development activities to the staff of key ministries. In 1950s and 60s many donors supported RDTC activities to contribute to the elimination of basic causes of poverty (a) low level of literacy, (b) reduction of diseases, (c) lack of safe drinking water facilities and (d) population growth.

Integrated Rural Development became the core approach of poverty alleviation during 1970s. This approach takes a very comprehensive but integrated view of the basic problems of poverty (unemployment and inequality). IRD seeks to address the physical, economic, social and political bases of these problems to achieve the goals for growth, welfare, and equity and community participation. Due to this change in the global policy the centre developed as Afghanistan National Academy for Rural Development in 1976 aimed to facilitate the implementation of IRD through offering training and education program to the staff of MRRD and key ministries and evaluate IRD projects in Afghanistan.

1.2 Why is AIRD important now?

After the establishment of Islamic Republic Government of Afghanistan in 2003, Comprehensive Rural Development (CRD) has been prioritized as a core approach toward socio-economic development. CRD is

¹ The Rural Development Commission established in 1954 and rename as Rural Development Department in 1972, later as Rural Development Directorate in 1974 and finally as Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in 1988.

a complex process of change in rural sub-systems leading to desired progress in rural welfare and improving rural life. It is a multi-sectoral approach which not only includes economic change, but also requires development of human resources and social structure. Effective implementation of CRD requires intensive research activities and training to wide ranges of institutions from local level to various categories of government and non governmental agencies. MRRD as leading Ministry in executing CRD has realized the importance of a learning institution to provide support in both areas; training and education to stakeholders, as well as research activities and policy inputs in rural development issues to policy makers in Afghanistan. Therefore, in line with MRRD mandate the AIRD has been established to fulfil these gaps.

1.3 AIRD Rationale

Afghanistan is moving from a period of reconstruction into development phase which requires comprehensive and integrated development programs. The agreement between Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and International community is clearly reflected in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and supported by the International Community through Afghanistan Compact.

In term of economic and social development, the objective of the Afghanistan Compact is to achieve measurable results towards the goal of equitable economic growth that reduces poverty, expands employment and enterprise creation, enhances opportunities in the region and improve well-being of all Afghan. Comprehensive Rural Development (CRD) has been identified in the Afghanistan Compact as one of the main approaches towards achieving this objective.

CRD aims at addressing rural development in an integrated and holistic manner and provides a comprehensive framework that is multi-agency, multi-sectoral and operates at multi levels of intervention. This means that the MRRD while being the lead Ministry mandated to undertake CRD has an essential role of ensuring facilitation and coordination among the various agencies involved. It follows then that the conceptualization and implementation of the CRD must be worked out through inter-Ministerial collaboration taking into account stakeholder interests at every possible levels based on participatory approach to rural development.

The task of rebuilding the country needs to be guided by comprehensive policy development based on collecting of reliable data and analysis. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the government including its ministries to review, develop and formulate policies as well as to provide training and capacity building in rural development. This need has been reaffirmed the Afghan Government and stakeholders alike and has led to subsequent calls for the re-establishment of AIRD (previously called as National Institute for Rural Development) to fulfil these functions.

The establishment of AIRD based on the legal documents of Afghanistan Government are as follows:

- Based on terms 2-4 and 2-5 of MRRD Charter-1989 MRRD organizes short / medium term training and education programs, seminars, exposure visit and scholarship for officials in order to develop their professional capacity in rural development fields.
- According to strategic objectives # 30 and 38 of MRRD's Strategic Intents for (2007 - 2009), research and policy; as well as capacity building and training units of MRRD will be established through AIRD. According to objective 40, MRRD will establish an information system that collects and disseminate information about the poverty and vulnerability issues to all relevant stakeholders.



2. AIRD VISION, MISSION, VALUE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Vision

Prosperous and dynamic rural society based on democratic governance, licit economy and self reliability in Afghanistan

2.2 Mission

Support the implementation of comprehensive rural development toward socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Afghanistan through training and education services, provision of research and policy inputs, and dissemination of results and findings to stakeholders.

2.3 Values

- AIRD seeks practical solutions based on the context within which its works. AIRD will consult and respond rather than prescribe and impose. It will ensure that all inputs are built on community strengths and promote sustainable rural development.
- AIRD seeks partnership at all levels and expand cooperation with other similar institutions for the purpose of exchange of experiences, collaborated study and training.
- AIRD seeks to ensure that all its does is done to the highest possible standards.
- AIRD seeks constantly to monitor and evaluate itself at all levels and learns from its experience and mistakes.

2.4 Strategic Goals

The key strategic goals are as follows:

2.4.1 To become a specialist Institute in Afghanistan

Rural development forms the core of AIRD specialisation. To be a specialist training and research institute AIRD therefore has to develop and disseminate a wide range of specialist skills, knowledge and experience in rural development to stakeholders and beneficiaries at national and international levels.

Strategy to achieve this goal:

AIRD strengthen its internal capacity through opportunities exist in MRRD membership treaty in the regional networks such as CIRDAP, SAARC etc. Afghanistan is a member of CIRDAP since December 1995. According to objectives (a) assist national action, b) promote regional cooperation, c) act as a serving Institute for its member countries with respect to IRD through research, training and information dissemination, AIRD seeks CIRDAP and its link institutes support to strengthen its professional capacity to become as specialist institute in Afghanistan.

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2.4.2 To become a dynamic learning institute that will gradually transform to an autonomous entity:

To become a dynamic and learning institute AIRD needs to have

- A significant body of work that includes innovative programmes in policy / action research in rural development issues.
- As a learning culture AIRD establishes and maintains a comprehensive framework based on learning cycle for policy formulation and adult education on rural development.
- A well trained and motivated staff, adequate infrastructures and strong management and governance system.
- Income flow that keeps pace with program development and expansion

Strategy to achieve this goal:

AIRD will be working as a governmental agency and gradually transform into an independent institute by 2013.

To become an autonomous institute AIRD will pass the following phases:

- *Rehabilitation and Operational Phase (2008-2009):*

In 2008 AIRD will be visible to Ministry of Finance and Government of Afghanistan by identify its core mandate and three-year performance indicators in the MRRD's Program Structure. Through World Bank and NABDP approved budget AIRD will recruit its key staff, rent own office and start short/medium training and research projects in Kabul and provinces. AIRD will develop annual plan that includes annual training and research activities and will submit proposals to various donor agencies to fund AIRD projects.

In 2009, AIRD will be fully operational in implementing both policy and action research projects independently and through partnership with other institutions. The undergraduate training program and the construction of AIRD premises will also be started.

- *Development and Transitional Phase (2010-2012):*

This is the phase where AIRD has its own infrastructures and is fully capable to organize and manage its own programs and will start post graduate education program by 2011. An important challenge will be to manage the growth of AIRD to increase its training and research capacity with strong structures and systems to maintain program quality.

The year 2012 will be the transitional period that AIRD will have strengthened capacity to continue its services as an independent entity. This will be evaluated by MRRD and the board of directors and then subject to agreement, AIRD will be an autonomous entity in the year 2013

- *Sustainability Phase (2013 onward):*

AIRD is to fully manage its own activities as an independent entity and will be capable to raise funds through its own devices.

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External evaluation will be done at completion of every phase and based on the results AIRD will move from one phase to the next phase.

2.5 Strategic Objective for 2008 - 2010

To rehabilitate and operationalise AIRD as a well equipped research and training centre for rural development in Afghanistan; with adequate facilities and capacity for deliberating research and training activities in collaboration with similar national and international institutions.

2.6 Program Objectives

- To build a cadre of professionals needed for the implementation of CRD programs.
- To facilitate strategy and policy formulation support and services to Government institutions, Provincial Development Committee, as well as national and international organizations working in the field of rural development.
- To become the main information / data hub and institute of choice for provision of information to all stakeholders as well as organising and/or participating in national, regional and global conferences on CRD.
- To reconstruct AIRD premises and equip them with appropriate international communication Technology.

3. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

3.1 Training and Education

Afghanistan has been facing serious crisis related to qualitative and quantitative professional human capacity to implement rural development initiatives at national and local levels. According to Central Statistic Office (CSO) Yearbook -2007 out of 1334 MRRD employees around 62.53% are high school graduates (12th grade), 6.60% hold a two-year college degree (14th grade), 23.01% have Bachelor degrees and only 6.36% hold master degrees in various majors (not in rural development). The rest are mostly in categories of either old or very young ages, have home schooling or primary education. While other ministries such as Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water and Energy and Ministry of Public Health etc are in a better position in term of professional skills of their employees. This is basically due to operation of education faculties to those sectors but Afghanistan lacks a faculty (even a department within the faculty) dedicated to rural development. It means that there is a need for capacity development in the rural development field and mainly in MRRD.

The **objective** of training and education program is to build human capacity (with special focus on (a) Rural development planning, (b) Rural development and local governance; and (c) Rural development and gender studies) and to build a cadre of professionals needed for the implementation of CRD program in Afghanistan.

Components

- Developing Training/Education delivery capacity within AIRD and MRRD.
- Short and medium term training for MRRD and governmental officials and stakeholders
- Conduct popular education to local communities CDCs and DDAs
- Develop curriculum, syllabus and training manuals for every category of training / education
- Undergraduate education for baccalaureates of 34 provinces (two years)
- Post Graduate education (Postgraduate Certificate (6-months), Postgraduate Diploma (1-yr), Master degree (2-yrs)

3.1.1 Developing AIRD Training team

Formation of training team and building the capacity in training formation and delivery is the first priority. AIRD through its relationship with international institutes will seek specialized training opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills of the training team.

Target groups: MRRD / AIRD staff

3.1.2 Short and Medium Terms Training

This training includes orientation courses on CRD, elements of rural development, skill development courses, in-service courses on various issues of rural development.

Target Groups: Staff of MRRD and key ministries, Social Workers, villages leaders, local activates, villages Mullah Imam and religious leaders, provincial governors.

Implementation Strategy:

Training Capacity within MRRD/AIRD will be developed by appointing experienced and qualified trainers. Training and Planning Review Committee (T&PRC) will be formed from MRRD senior staff and advisors to provide support to AIRD for training needs and coordinating of training programs for MRRD programs (JICA, NSP, NABDP, WATSAN, NRAP, PAL, GRM). AIRD / MRRD annual training plan will be developed based on the result of TNA that will be conducted by Human Resource Department. In-addition, strong relationships will be created with CIRDAP and its link institutions to review CIRDAP curricula (1983) for tailor-made training programs on IRD in close consultation with CIRDAP Training Division. AIRD as the link institution of CIRDAP will also provide scholarships for official staff of MRRD to attend out-of-country rural development training programs.

Major Targets

- A Training Planning and review committee formed
- (15) Core trainer team formed and their capacity built.
- HRD shared the result of Training needs assessment of MRRD central and provincial offices.
- Based on TNA done by HRD, identify training topics and plans for 2008/09
- The training programs of MRRD's national programs and GRM International incorporated in the annual training plan
- Training modules for each level of training program is prepared.
- (20) Short and medium term training for 200 officials conducted annually.
- Training impact evaluated after 3-6 months of every training program

3.1.3 Popular Education

Popular Education is defined as an educational technique designed to raise the consciousness of its participants and allow them to become more aware of how an individual's personal experiences are connected to larger societal problems.

The **objective** of popular education is to make aware and empower community, CDCs member and social workers to actively participate in solving their own problems through better utilizing rural development resources.

Target Groups: Local community members, CDCs and DDCs members and social workers

Implementation Strategy

This is a joint program of AIRD and Community Led Department. AIRD role is to train the core trainer team and through them the (60) trainers. The trainers will then provide training to MRRD social workers. These social workers will work with 30,000 CDCs member based on the plan of the Community Led Department.

Popular education program will be designed by an international consultant (Dr. Jimmy Gitting). Program will be started on a pilot basis in a few villages through seed money and gradually expand to all 38,000 villages.

Major Targets

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- Involvement of an International consultant (Dr. Jimmy Gitting) in design and implement of program.
- MRRD core trainers team (5 Competent Trainers) identified and trained in popular education program.
- 60 persons trained as provincial trainers
- 600 Social workers involved in the popular education
- (30,000) CDCs' members trained by social workers in 9 -12 months PE course

3.1.4 Undergraduate Education Program in Rural / Regional Planning

Social workers are the main actors in facilitating comprehensive rural development programs in rural villages of Afghanistan. The success and failure of rural development depends on the skills and knowledge of social workers.

The **objective** of the undergraduate training is to produce rural development planners, extension agents and social workers through a two-year education program.

Rural development is a dynamic subject and encompasses multi facets of development such as rural and urban settlements, social and economic activities, political economy, natural resource management, engineering, agriculture, forestry, technology, etc. Therefore, the rural development courses are to be based on contemporary theoretical concepts and their application, appropriate techniques and implementation modalities that enable students to handle rural development issues in an efficient, relevant and contextual manner.

Target Groups: Baccalaureates from 34 provinces (3 persons / province / year)

Major Targets and Strategy

- Topics selected and curricula for training is prepared based on Afghanistan's rural context.
- Lecturers assigned. AIRD will utilize the experience of the former teachers of *Gulzar training Centre*.
- Training facility rented.
- Enrollment of 102 baccalaureates (3 person /province /year) who have passed the entrance examination for admission in the university and / or by AIRD. A total of 204 persons enrolled.
- 102 persons graduated

3.1.5 Postgraduates Education Program in Rural Development

This is the activity of AIRD in its development phase. The **objective** of Postgraduates program is to produce academically sound and professionally competent graduates equipped with a wide range of theories, concepts, tools and techniques and research work that may be used in rural development planning practices particularly in the context of Afghanistan

This program will start only after AIRD was given accreditation from an international University. AIRD through this service and cost recovery can be addressed through a system of tuition fees. There are currently a number of private universities operating in Afghanistan, all charging tuition to its students. The AIRD's postgraduate education program would be one such option for students.

AIRD will offer an inter-disciplinary Master program in rural development fields. The program will be conducted via a semester system. Candidates need to successfully complete four semesters for a Master degree. However, provisions of PG Certificate and PG Diploma are also incorporated into the system. Major targets for the postgraduate education program will be developed after AIRD has been given accreditation.

Target Groups: Bachelors of Science and Arts

Implementation Strategy will be based on requirement of affiliated University.

3.2 Research and Policy

One of the main problems in reconstruction and development programs in Afghanistan is lack of resources and capacity for conducting studies and research in the country. Most decisions on projects are taken in the absence of comprehensive analysis, data and documented information and an evaluation of various social, economic and environmental dimensions and effects.

In addition, the rural development and poverty alleviation programs are implemented by several ministries of the government, NGOs, civil society and private sectors. But it is difficult to understand holistically the achievements and issues of this comprehensive mechanism for knowledge generation, policy coordination and political support at national level.

The **objective** of the research and policy program is to plan and execute comprehensive studies and research on rural development issues. AIRD will establish the proper facilities and support structure for the continued development of national Rural Development policies based on sound detailed research from both national and international sources. These policies will in turn guide MRRD to review its mandate and strategy towards the rural rehabilitation and development of Afghanistan.

Components

- Promote research capacity, research culture and learning in MRRD and key ministries.
- Develop research team in MRRD/AIRD
- Producing Afghanistan Rural Development Report (ARDR)
- Conducting policy research on annual basis
- Conducting action research and pilot projects in close consultation with key ministries

3.2.1 Developing research capacity and research culture within MRRD

AIRD priority is to develop a learning culture including research capacity within MRRD. AIRD through its cooperation with link institutions of CIRDAP and others will train 25 staff of MRRD to form a research group. This group will then be involved in both policy research activities and rendering action research projects in rural Afghanistan and also train the staff of other key ministries. AIRD will develop research tools and methodologies for conducting research on priority issues on rural development. AIRD will also promote approaches that will stimulate creativity and ideas which contribute to the social and economic development of rural area of Afghanistan.

Target groups: MRRD Staff (first priority)

Major Targets

- Research and Planning Review committee (R&PRC) formed from the MRRD senior staff and advisors. The committee will assist AIRD in identifying and prioritizing research topics, review research reports and provide recommendations.
- (25) Persons of MRRD and AIRD staff trained as core research team.
- A multi-disciplinary research team formed from professionals within MRRD, and other governmental and academic institutions of Afghanistan.
- Annual research plan developed and approved by research planning and review committee.

3.2.2 Producing Afghanistan Rural Development Report (ARDR):

The National Rural Development Report is a very strong tool in analyzing of rural development issues in South Asian countries. The AIRD mission is the production of the Afghanistan Rural Development Report bi-annually. This report will demonstrate a comprehensive picture of rural life and socio-economic changes and trends in rural Afghanistan. The report will help to fulfil the gaps and discrepancies identified from a comparison between pre-supposed conditions and ground realities, and will make recommendations for policy and program changes and improvements. Experience from regional countries in Asia indicates that producing the National Rural Development Report helps towards coordinated steps for filling gaps and utilizing emerging trends and in rendering development initiatives more effectively. To carry out this work a multi-disciplinary research team of international and national professionals with higher education in the fields of economics, social science and governance will be assigned to work on the development of the ARDR report.

Major Targets

- Advisory boards of international advisors mainly from CIRDAP research division and a multi disciplinary team of national advisors assigned.
- Topics identified for the Afghanistan Rural Development Report (ARDR). These topics will be reviewed in the light of the CIRDAP rural development report and the most important rural development priorities of Afghanistan.
- Research proposals discussed and accepted by the research and planning committee of AIRD and advisory boards.
- The ARDR report released in three languages; Dari, Pashtu and English.

3.2.3 Conducting Policy Research

The purpose of this research is to support a planning and decision making authority within MRRD and other stakeholders in forming policies within the context of political, social and economic realities of rural Afghanistan. The research is based on both the review of existing research studies and the conducting of independent research studies in order to compile and generate data that can be used to better inform policy initiatives. These initiatives, in turn result in a richer picture and deeper understanding of rural development issues fostering greater effectiveness in addressing problems of rural development.

The process involves reviewing secondary level data, integration and analysis of existing data such as the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) and Central Statistic Office-Afghanistan and etc for further studies and in depth analysis on issues related to rural development in Afghanistan.

AIRD will support MRRD and key ministries to identify policy gaps for research on rural development issues through analysis of published data and will plan ten research studies annually on various issues of rural development. ANDS sector strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development has also identified key areas for research on rural development. The CIRDAP research division will help AIRD to find research gaps and support AIRD to conduct policy researches in Afghanistan.

Major Targets

- The CIRDAP advisory team for Afghanistan supported AIRD in research gaps analysis.
- Ten research topics / year identified and proposed to RP&RC approval.
- Research objectives and findings presented to stakeholders.

3.2.4 Conducting Applied/Action Research²

Applied and / or Action research is associated with a specific program/project; and aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem faced by beneficiaries. This research is conducted at any time; as required to solve existing problems. An example of this research according to the MRRD Strategic Intent (2007-2009) is to find a way of *increasing the participation of women in CDCs*. This research will allow the identification of best practices and outline what more could be done in pursuit of strategic as well as program objectives.

AIRD will identify areas for action research projects in close consultation with MRRD program heads and also get support of CIRDAP research division for designing of action research projects in Afghanistan. The AIRD will also identify CIRDAP pilot action research projects to be implemented in Afghanistan. Five action research projects will be planned in close consultation of MRRD national program offices and CIRDAP research division to be implemented yearly in Afghanistan.

Major Targets

- Five research issues / year related to MRRD's Strategic Intent objectives and program priorities identified.
- Research proposal designed and approved by research planning and review committee.
- Pilot project implemented by MRRD / AIRD core research team.
- Research findings compiled in the research reports.
- The best practice in pursuing the objective demonstrated through seminars, training workshops and research reports.
- Research reports circulated to the head of programs and MRRD seniors to review policies and practices.

² Applied research also known as action research and is concerned to the current activity. Applied research discovers what , how and why questions about policies, programs and procedures of actual life.

Publications and Information Dissemination

Information is the key input in the planning of rural development programs. The **objective** is to promote the dissemination of research findings and reports of MRRD programs, CRD and poverty alleviation programs in Afghanistan to wider groups of institutions at national and international levels. The information will be provided in the form of data and reports that can better inform development planners and decision makers to evaluate policy initiatives.

AIRD will play a key role in the provision and dissemination of information to the rural development stakeholders at national, regional and international levels. AIRD will develop and manage multimedia information and communication systems in utilizing the latest technology for presenting, publishing and disseminating of rural development resources.

Components

- Establish network with national and international research institutions.
- Publication and dissemination of reports and research papers
- Organizing workshops, seminars, conferences and policy dialogues for rural development stakeholders.
- Develop in-house database, library of rural development and produce information exchange system with national, regional and international institutions.
- Establishment of Rural Development Technology Park

3.2.5 Establish network with national and international institutions

Networking and reciprocal cooperation with similar national and international institutions aiming at knowledge sharing and undertaking joint research and training projects related to rural development is an important issue in the present Globalization context. AIRD had already established links with similar and well established institutions in CMCs³, United Kingdom, USA and Canada and all of them officially expressed their interest to cooperate and support AIRD. AIRD will get the advantage of MRRD membership in CIRDAP to enhance its relationship through joint research, attending annual conferences and asking CIRDAP consultants for technical support in terms of consultancy, training and joint studies and exposure visits to be transformed into a credible centre of excellence.

Major Targets

- MoU signed between AIRD and National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) Hyderabad, India.
- Relationship with University of Ottawa and International Research Centre based in Canada established.
- A research project '*Listening Project*' in close cooperation with US based research institution "*Collaborative Learning Project (CLD)*" carried out in May 2008.
- A joint research on "*role of CDCs in Peace Building and Security in Afghanistan*" conducted in partnership with Canadian SAT team of MRRD.

³ CIRDAP Member Countries

3.2.6 Publication and dissemination of reports and research papers

AIRD will prepare research reports / papers, policy analysis relevant to the issues of rural development of Afghanistan to be published in the Asia - Pacific Journal and other international journals. Publication of research reports in local and English languages and its dissemination at national and international level will be the core activity of AIRD in order to record best practices and show the lessons learned of Afghanistan rural development programs to the world.

Major Targets

- All research reports published in three languages (Dari, Pashtu and English) and disseminated inside and outside Afghanistan.
- 40 copies of every research reported, published and disseminated.
- 500 copies of each annual ARDR published and disseminated locally and internationally
- 40 copies of publication of every policy dialogues reports prepared and distributed.

3.2.7 Organizing Workshops, Conference and Policy Dialogues

The intention is to share research findings, rural development knowledge and experiences among the stakeholders through organizing workshops, seminars, policy dialogues and exposure visits. AIRD will host the annual meetings of CIRDP governance bodies (governing council, executive committee and technical committee) and also CIRDP training program to be held in Afghanistan.

Major Targets

- Four policy dialogues with MRRD leadership organized
- Four seasonal workshops with senior staff of MRRD (centre & provinces) organized
- Three exposure visits facilitated by AIRD

3.2.8 Develop in-house database, library and information exchange system

AIRD will develop an in-house database to be used as base line data by stakeholders, along with related tools and software for analyzing and managing data/ information. The AIRD library has been established and has collected around 2,000 resources. The AIRD library catalogue will be launched through the AIRD website and will be accessible in English, Dari and Pashtu languages. The AIRD resources will grow to 6,000 resources until the end of the strategic period. The online catalogue will make the AIRD resources available to stakeholders. The stakeholders will be able to download PDFs for important documents they need. The AIRD library will establish a publication exchange program with other institutions and will be placed on an exchange mailing list for the receipt of publications on regular basis.

Major Targets

- In-house database of rural development established.
- AIRD website updated quarterly
- The number of books in AIRD library increased to 6,000.

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- AIRD library catalogue and important document available online in PDFs file to stakeholders
- Rural development stakeholders are informed of new resources at AIRD resource centre
- Publication exchange program with other institutions established

3.2.9 Establish rural development technology park

Afghanistan is lacking various rural technologies which have been used in rural development programs in other Asian Countries. It is important to import these technologies and show them to rural development stakeholders. AIRD will establish a rural technology park and organize special events and exhibition programs for stakeholders.

Major Targets

- Collection of local technologies that have been using in rural Afghanistan
- Importing other technologies from outside Afghanistan
- Selection of an appropriate place for establishing rural technology park
- Organizing events and exhibitions program in Kabul

3.3 Reconstruction of AIRD Premises

AIRD complex was built in 22 hectare (110 Jerib) land in Char Asiyab district of Kabul in 1335 (1956). The complex facilities originally included; offices, library, classrooms, cinema hall, sport grounds, dormitory for students, family houses for teachers, coffee shop, guest house, green houses, laboratory areas and a mosque. All facilities were destroyed during the three decade of war in Afghanistan.

Currently AIRD is functioning in MRRD compound utilizing MRRD facilities comprising of two rooms, a resource centre, and a training room. These facilities are not sufficient for AIRD to offer its quality research and training programs. Therefore, the **objective** is to reconstruct AIRD premises and equip them with appropriate International Communication Technology.

Components

- Technical detail survey, design and cost estimation of AIRD previous premises
- Reconstruction of infrastructure

3.3.1 Technical detail survey, design and cost estimation of AIRD previous premises

Initial survey has been conducted by a group of Thai Engineers. The design will be reviewed and the final design of AIRD building will be approved in consultation with the donor.

Major Target

- The Char Asiyab land ownership document finalized with Ministry of Defence and / or a new land from MRRD property is allotted for AIRD building.
- Layout, design, cost estimation and proposal finalized.
- Proposal submitted to donors.

3.3.2 Reconstruction of infrastructure

The Japanese government through its mid term strategy for Afghanistan agreed to support the construction of the AIRD building through its fund for comprehensive rural development. AIRD will also contact the Indian government with a view to funding the remaining construction work.

Major Targets

- Proposal developed and submitted to Indian Embassy in Afghanistan
- Contractor for construction of building selected based on donor requirements
- Reconstruction work regularly monitored by MRRD.
- ICT infrastructure set up in the AIRD building
- A rural technology park established.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCING

4.1 Organizational Development

AIRD will be established and become operational till end of 2009 and it will mature by 2010. An important strategic issue in the strategic planning period will be to manage the establishment and development of AIRD. The challenges are to support the organizational growth and increase its training and research capacity with strengthened structures and systems to maintain program quality, and strengthen the capacity of AIRD to continue its services as an independent entity.

The strategy toward organizational establishment and development are as follows:

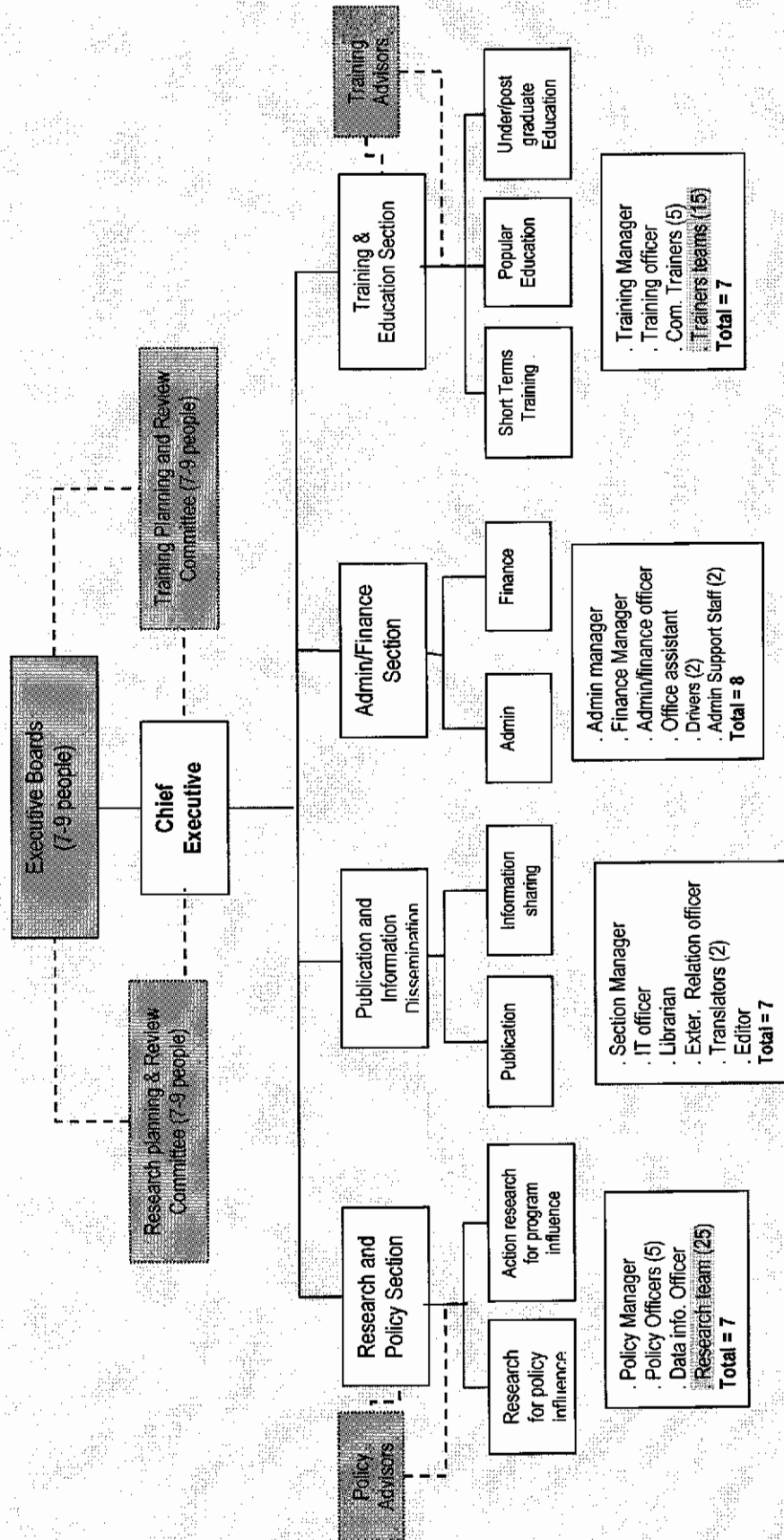
- Building the capacity of Afghan staff; mainly the training and research teams as the first priority. AIRD through its relationship with international institutes will develop the knowledge and skills of its staff through involvement in research projects and specialized training program opportunities.
- Formation of three committees; **(a) Board of Directors**, **(b) Policy Planning & Review Committee** and **(c) Training Planning & Review Committee**. The members of the above committees are from the senior staff of MRRD and six national programs offices. These committees support AIRD in institutional development and governance, planning and coordination of research and training activities and finally monitor and evaluate AIRD performances.
- AIRD will be managed by Chief Executive and section managers. The Chief Executive will be recruited by AIRD Executive Board; responsible to oversee all AIRD achievements. Two advisory teams will be working with the section managers to provide support in program planning, implementation and evaluation. AIRD will review and update its strategic plan and prepare an annual plan. The AIRD activities and performances will be monitored based on the AIRD annual plan.
- It is extremely challenging to find capable staff mainly with strong research and rural development training skills and knowledge. This will make AIRD depend on the CIRDAF advisory committee for Afghanistan and its link institutions to support AIRD staff on designing research projects and training programs on rural development issues. AIRD will review its office culture to ensure that it attracts and retains excellent staff through competitive remuneration packages, professional development opportunities and a positive working environment. During the first year of the strategic planning period and as result of annual employee appraisals, AIRD will develop staff capacity-building plan.

Major Targets

- Executive boards and two planning and review committees formed.
- International advisors assigned.
- CIRDAF advisory Committee established.
- TOR for all (30) staff developed, positions advertised and interview conducted.
- (30) Staff recruited
- Staff appraisal conducted
- Staff capacity building plan prepared.

The following diagram indicates the AIRD staff structure for year 2008. This structure will be reviewed annually.

AIRD structure for 2008



Total number = National staff = 30 Oversight advisors = 2 Short-term advisors = Based on needs

The recruitment of extra staff is depending on approving of external budget

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4.2 FINANCING

AIRD currently has only one grant from UNDP / NABDP that will be used as seed money to cover the administration costs. World Bank / IDA and ARTF agreed to fund AIRD establishment and development costs from the capacity building budget line of NSP-II program. The Japanese Government has shown interest to fund AIRD. However most of these funds are designated for training and research activities. They are relatively short-term in duration and will be channelled to MRRD through Ministry of Finance. A major strategic issue for AIRD is the need to raise multi-year funding (mainly for the reconstruction of the AIRD building). AIRD intends to raise external funds and also explore the opportunities to raise funds through its quality services in training, consultancy, selling of reports etc. All income generated funds will be deposited in the AIRD bank account that will be operating under the authority of the three members of AIRD and MRRD. Therefore, AIRD will be financed through three sources:

- a) Core budget will be approved by Ministry of Finance and will be channelled through MRRD. Approved by the Ministry of Finance and channelled through MRRD. AIRD targeted US\$ 14.56 million to be raised through the core budget
- b) External budget will be directly provided to AIRD and spend according to donors procedure. AIRD target for external budget US\$ 4.5 million.
- c) Income generating from consultancy, training and selling of reports etc. The target is to raise \$300,000 over the next three years,

The AIRD estimated budget for the next three years is shown in the following table:

Years	Core Budget In US\$	External Budget In US\$	Consultancy Income In US\$
2008	3,990,730	1,000,000	0
2009	5,064,180	1,500,000	100,000
2010	5,508,480	2,000,000	200,000
Total	14,563,390	4,500,000	300,000

Many donor agencies mainly academic institutions have shown interest to fund AIRD activities and directly transfer funds to the AIRD bank account. So, it will be important to strengthen financial management systems of AIRD and to ensure that strong financial procedures are in place in which to ensure accountability to MRRD for the expenditure of the core budget and donors external fund. An annual external audit will be conducted during the first quarter of 2009 and 2010 and the report will be shared with donors and MRRD.

Budget detail for 1388

AIRD Core Budget for 1388	=	USD 3,990,730
AIRD budget for IDA and ARTF through NSP-II	=	USD 1,521,413
AIRD budget committed by Japanese Government	=	USD 2,469,317

Out of the total AIRD budget required; US\$ 3.99 million; the amount of US\$ 1.52 million has already been included in NSP-II budget (under capacity development budget line) and an amount of US\$ 2.47 million has been committed by the Japanese Government according to its mid term strategy under Comprehensive Rural Development sector. With Japanese approval of the above amount there will not be a budget shortfall for 2008. AIRD will prepare a separate budget for external budget based on donor requirements.