

National Solidarity Programme (NSP)

Background

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP), established in mid-2003, is the flag-ship, national priority programme of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoA). It was set up with initial support from the World Bank/International Development Association (WB/IDA). The aim is to empower Afghans to reduce poverty through establishing and strengthening a national network of self-governing community institutions. The NSP was conceived, cultivated and developed according to Afghan traditions, especially "Ashar", which is communities working together to build common facilities and making collective decisions to solve problems, as well as the Islamic values of unity, equity and justice.

Rationale

NSP is the primary vehicle used to build social capital by promoting good **local governance**, thereby **empowering rural communities** to make decisions on their own lives and livelihoods. Empowered rural communities collectively contribute to increased human security. The programme is **inclusive**, supporting entire communities including the **poorest and most vulnerable** people.

Objectives

The objectives of NSP are to lay the foundation for community-level **good governance** and support community-managed sub-projects that improve **rural communities' access to social and productive infrastructures and services**.

Implementation Strategies

- NSP is implemented under the guidance of the Steering Committee, which – under the chairmanship of the second Vice-President of Afghanistan – is comprised of the representatives of the concerned line-ministries, donor representatives (as observers). The NSP Management headed by the Executive Director, supervises the programme implementation and financial management. It is supported by an international Management Support Consultant team. Through Facilitating Partners (FPs), NSP mobilizes communities and supports the establishment of a framework for village level, consultative decision making and representative local leadership. Currently, 29 NGOs and one UN agency are working as FPs, covering 34 provinces.
- NSP strongly promotes a unique development paradigm, whereby communities can make important decisions and participate in all stages of their development, contributing their own resources. With support from FPs, communities elect their leaders and representatives to form voluntary Community Development Councils (CDCs) through a transparent and democratic process.
- Assisted by FPs, CDCs identify and prioritise community development needs, develop Community Development Plans and design community initiative projects in consultation with all members of the community.
- CDCs mobilise community resources and receive Block Grants (on average US\$27,000 per community) from NSP to implement community projects based on their Community Development Plans. CDCs are responsible for the management of all stages of project implementation and provide the community lead to implement the projects.

Summary of Achievements to Date

- **Coverage of NSP:** As of 20th November 2008, NSP has covered 351 districts across all 34 provinces.



Carpet weaving project: A source of income for rural women



CDC election: rural residents take part in democratic election process



Canal construction project: Increasing productivity of agriculture

◆ **Election and Training of the CDC:** As of 20th November 2008, 21,706 CDCs have been established through a democratic election process. Both men and women have participated in the CDC election in every village. Training has been delivered to the CDCs on the election process, the importance of people's contribution and the effective planning of development interventions. As of 20th November 2008, 21,465 CDCs have formulated their Community Development Plans.

◆ **Block Grants:** As of 25th December 2008 a total of US\$ 567,556,804 of block grants has been committed, of which US\$ 556,486,167 has been disbursed to 19,088 communities for their projects.

◆ **Implementation of Community Projects:** Addressing the priority needs that the communities themselves have selected, the NSP has been supporting a total of 39,899 community projects as of 25th December 2008. These projects include construction of irrigation facilities, roads and bridges, schools, water supply facilities, clinics, as well as income generation and vocational training projects. The majority of projects concern the following sectors: water supply and sanitation (25%), transport (22%), irrigation (17%), power generation (16%), education (12%) and miscellaneous projects (2%).

◆ **District School Construction and Rehabilitation Window Project (DSCRW):** DSCRW was established to reconstruct/rehabilitate schools through NSP at district level. Through planning meetings, comprising of CDC representatives, education and local authority representatives, 25 District Management Committees (DMCs) have been established and trained to oversee the DSCRW school construction /rehabilitation. As of November 2008, 34 schools have been completed and handed over to the Ministry of Education. Civil work is ongoing for another 38 schools.



CDC conference: Developing coordinated approaches



Drinking water project: Giving rural residents access to safe drinking water



Toileting project: Developing women's skills for a better future