



NSS Project Afghanistan



“Provision of Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development for further development of a national poverty, vulnerability and food security surveillance system, Kabul and provinces, Afghanistan”

**INTERIM REPORT
August 2006**



**Submitted by:
The ICON-Consortium**

ASA

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DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



NSS Project Afghanistan



“Provision of Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development for further development of a national poverty, vulnerability and food security surveillance system, Kabul and provinces, Afghanistan”

INTERIM REPORT

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Reporting Period March 2006 to August 2006
Report submitted by The ICON Consortium

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**PROJECT KEY DATA SHEET**

Name of Project:	“Provision of Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development for further development of a national poverty, vulnerability and food security surveillance system, Kabul and provinces, Afghanistan”
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Key Events to Date:	
1 st March 2005	Project Start and Mobilisation of Team Leader, National VAU Director and national staff within VAU/ MRRD
6 th to 11 th March 2005	Initial Meetings of Team Leader and Project Director with Government, Stakeholders and EC-Commission.
12 th March 2005	First Project Stakeholder Coordination Meeting (SCM), in Kabul
May 2005	Start of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment survey 2005 in the field
June 2005	- CSO-NSS office operational: personnel recruitment and set up - Mobilisation of the second Technical Assistant
July 2005	Memorandum of Understanding, EC-MRRD-CSO
2 nd August 2005	Workshop for the update of Project’s Logical Framework
17 th Nov. 2005	1 st Project Steering Committee Meeting
23 November - 04 December 2005	Short-term mission from Theo Writz to initiate design and discussion of potential of mounting interactive Web based database for NRVA 2005 data.
January 2006	Team building and activation of staff toward achievement of NSS objectives
January 2006	Five Afghan staff sent to Germany for training on programming databases for Web access.
February 2006	Second short-term mission from Theo Writz to further develop interface for Web-based database.
February 2006	Short-term mission from Jan Bartlema to review data quality issues arising from NRVA 2005 and preliminary child mortality analysis.



February 2006	Hiring new government staff to be trained during the life of the NSS project (4 analysts in CSO and 2 analysts in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit)
February 2006	Finalising the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment on District Market Prices
Since March 2006	Attainment of full support of CSO and MRRD in the implementation of NSS Project
Since March 2006	Continuation of data cleaning and data analysis of NRVA-2005 nationwide assessment (started in January 2006)
Since March 2006	Follow up and strengthening of the established Food Security Monitoring assessment, data analysis and its use as a component of early warning information system (started December 2005)
March 2006	Approval of Mrs Gillian Green to replace Dr Thomas Hartmanshenn
March 2006	Establishment of coordination lines with other stakeholders like Ministry of Agriculture, FEWS NET, Ministry of Public Health for enrichment of early warning information system and data sharing
March 2006	Request for a new assignment to finalise the Interactive Website for the dissemination of NRVA 2005 data and the Consumer Price Index and to hand over the developed source code and databases to CSO.
March 2006	Establishment of NSS unit within the new official organogram of CSO
April 2006	Finalising the CPI component, third Mission of Theo Wirtz to Kabul, 5-12 April
May 2006	Schedule for the CSO millennium development goal Genstat training course starting Monday 8th May. It is of course that we will run for six days here in CSO. All CSO NSS staff and Vulnerability Analysis Unit MRRD staff attended.
May 2006	List of Indicators MDG
May 2006	Contracting all hardware procurement and software for MRRD GIS section
June 2006	Second steering committee meeting for the National Surveillance System project. This meeting was held on Wednesday 13th June, 2006
June 2006	Short Term Expert Mr. Aiso Vos, Period of Assignment: 14 June -26 June 2006
July 2006	New assignment for Mr Wirtz to ensure the finalisation and extension of the coverage and the Interactive Website for the dissemination of NRVA 2005, CPI.
July 2006	MDG 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 written in short leaflet form
July 2006	Approval of Mr Aiso Vos long-term key expert
July 2006	Dev Info Version 5 Training of Tariq Wardak
July 2006	Final version of Kabul Energy & Water Survey Questionnaire designed in Teleform for the World Bank
July 2006	NRVA presentation at the NSDI Workshop
August 2006	Clarification of new team roles and internal co-ordination procedures
August 2006	Request from the MRRD Deputy Minister Programs for implementing a survey within the Food Security Monitoring System to monitor changes in highly food insecure households food security
August 2006	Appointment of CSO director, Mr Abdullah Fakhri

**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

Recipient	Copies (English)	Copies (Dari- Summary)	Format
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WFP	1	1	Electronic & hardcopy

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Phase 2 of the NSS project has continued with strong support from MRRD, Minister, deputy ministers and key staff. We are thankful for the active support in our ambition to increase implementation effectiveness and impacts.

Many thanks must go to the numerous colleagues and associates who have been involved in the design and implementation of NRVA 2005, the most significant activity in the annual work cycle of this project.

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**NSS Project
- National Surveillance System -**

(“Provision of Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development for further development of a national poverty, vulnerability, and food security surveillance system, Kabul and provinces, Afghanistan“)

Cris Number: FOOD/ 2005/ 099-886

**Interim Report
March 2006 – August 2006**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANFS	Afghan Network for Food Security
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DMIS	Disaster Management Information System
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EW(IS)	Early Warning (Information) System
FAAHM	Food Security, Agriculture & Information & Policy Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEWS Net	Famine Early Warning System Network
IDP	Internal Displaced People
MAAHF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MOWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
MOWE	Ministry of Water and Energy
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
NABDP	National Area Base Development Programme
NEEP/NRAP	National Emergency Employment Programme/ National Rural Access Programme.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Program
NSS Project	National Surveillance System Project
NSS PMT	NSS Project Management Team
PRR	Priority Restructuring and Reform (Afghan name for civil service reform)
RRD	Provincial offices of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Department
SMP	Statistical Master Plan (Multi-donor plan for reforming government statistics)
WATSAN	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme
WFP	World Food Program
WFP VAM	WFP Vulnerability Assessment Mapping
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Cooperation
VAU	Vulnerability Analysis Unit



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Surveillance System (NSS) Project was designed to assist the Government of Afghanistan in addressing its acute and multiple data needs to inform and prioritise the reconstruction and development efforts; in order to contribute to data collection in the area of poverty alleviation, food security, livelihood and vulnerability. Phase 1 was implemented from September 2003 up to February 2005. The project's second phase has been designed by the European Commission and defined from March 2005 to August 2008. This report covers the period March 2006 to August 2006.

The NSS Project is implemented within the MRRD Vulnerability Analysis Unit (VAU) and the NSS Unit within the CSO. The NSS unit within CSO is responsible for the design and implementation of regular data collection, data processing, standard data analysis, as well as public data dissemination. There have been significant advances in the institutionalization of the NSS unit within CSO, and now the project enjoys good working relationships with other senior staff members of the Central Statistics Office and is recognised as a key unit within CSO.

The Vulnerability Analysis Unit within MRRD is responsible for the addressing of the needs for data, analysis and interpretation according to the specific needs of the MRRD senior management, its advisors as well as the MRRD's programmes. The Vulnerability Analysis Unit worked closely with the CSO-NSS unit to ensure their data needs are being incorporated into NRVA instruments.

One of the major achievements of the Project has been its strong responsiveness to a range of government and partner agencies' data needs and analysis, including headcount poverty rate, food security monitoring, and emergency assessments. All of these require different methodologies and skills, and institutional partners to be able to respond. One weakness has been the ability to respond to government's information needs immediately after an acute shock such as a flooding or heavy snowfall. To this end, further discussions and collaborations with the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) initiative of the UNDP/AIMS, based within MRRD are ongoing. The objective of DMIS is to ensure that MRRD is able to call upon a range of data products from annual assessments through to satellite imagery on which it can base regular planning and policy development as well as emergency responses, should the need arise. To this end the regular undertaking of the food security monitoring survey is essential.

The Project aims to impact two specific target groups:

1. Government staff whose roles and responsibilities are to participate in the production of poverty/livelihood statistics for Afghanistan.
2. Programme managers, senior civil servants and decision-makers within the government (and key persons in international organisations).

The NSS Project, during the first year of implantation of its second phase, concentrated on:

1. Design and implementation of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment – NRVA 2005.
2. Institutionalization of the NSS Project within the Central Statistics Office.
3. Piloting of a light Household Food Security Monitoring system instead of the sentinel site system.
4. Improvement of the network with Project's stakeholders, focused on MRRD.



5. Design and start preparing an interactive Website for the dissemination of NRVA 2005 data and other CSO data products especially the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

During the first half of the 2nd (March–August 2006), year the following activities were in the focus.

- Establishment of the NSS unit within the new official organigram of CSO.
- Hiring new government staff to be trained during the life of the NSS project (4 analysts in CSO and 2 analysts in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit).
- Attained full support of CSO and MRRD in the implementation of the NSS project.
- Data cleaning and data analysis of NRVA-2005 nationwide assessment.
- Follow up and strengthening of the established Food Security Monitoring assessment, data analysis and its use as a component of early warning information system.
- Initiating coordination with other stakeholders like Ministry of Agriculture, FEWS NET, Ministry of Public Health for enrichment of early warning information system and data sharing.
- Team building and activation of staff toward achievement of NSS goal and objectives.
- Supporting MRRD decision makers with analytical papers on actual issues of rural livelihood.

The Project has increased the number of full-time analysts within the NSS/ CSO unit as well as within the VAU-Unit. The position of NSS/ CSO Director has been put in and the position of the administrator became vacant. This increases the impact of all the capacity building and assures the Project from serious setbacks if key individuals leave during, or soon after the Project ends. As related CSO and MRRD staff did not benefit from PRR salary increases, the project will continue to provide additional interim allowances to the NSS-Unit and VAU-Unit staff. A clear signal from the project side to MRRD and CSO leadership was launched requesting the insurance that government staff involved in the project will be entitled to PRR salary increases after the project ends.

In summary, the NSS Project is proceeding well, having established products that are clearly in demand. Training between March 2006 and August 2006 had focused on data analysis and interpretation using GENSTAT. Further training on other regularly used packages such as MS-Excel, MS-Access and ArcView are planned for the August 2006-March 2007 period. Specific training on STATA and poverty line analysis and Teleform are planned for November 2006. Other areas of capacity building such as report writing (statistical and policy) will be undertaken by regular mentoring of staff. CSO and MRRD capacities will be further enhanced by the development of an enumerators database and a manual of procedures and protocols these products can be maintained after the Project's end and will be essential to ensure that CSO and MRRD operate to good statistical practises.



1 Introduction

After more than two decades of war, conflict and ensuing physical and institutional devastation, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan together with its development partners is attempting to rebuild and rehabilitate the nation and its institutions. To enable an evidence-based approach to make far-reaching decisions covering the entire span of economic and social dimensions, the Government and its partners need reliable, comprehensive and timely data. Most government agencies and institutions in Afghanistan have suffered significant decay and destruction of both physical infrastructure and human capital during the decades of war. There has been little or no meaningful government data collection during this period. In the current context in Afghanistan the data needs are acute and multiple. The need for good data on poverty, food security, livelihood, and vulnerability was exacerbated by a severe protracted drought in recent years.

At the London conference on Afghanistan (31st January-1st February 2006), the Afghan government outlined its political and economic goals over the coming years. Three major publications were presented at this conference. These were:

1. Millennium Development Goal Report (MDG) - the first Afghan Government report on progress against millennium development goals. The MDG report provides a long-term (15 year) set of output and outcome goals and targets.
2. The Afghan Compact: the post agreement agenda for the international donor and assistance community in partnership with the Afghan government. Afghanistan Compact consists of both high level outcome and output indicators to be achieved by the end of 2010.
3. The Interim Afghan National Development Strategy is effectively an Afghanistan's first Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, which is named Afghanistan National Development Strategy, ANDS), where the Government's vision for Afghanistan are translated into specific development targets over the next 5-years.

All of these documents have goals on outputs from government and outcomes for the Afghan people that will need monitoring to inform both the government and the assistance community of progress against these goals. Before this, the demand for data and statistics came from the large programs within the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, United Nations partners and the rest of the non-government development community. Now there is a broader demand from within government for improved Ministry reporting and data gathering that will require:

- Monitoring framework(s) for monitoring the MDGs, the Afghanistan Compact and ANDS.
- The development of a harmonized national programme of data collection and surveys and a division of responsibilities among different agencies for data collection/ analysis.
- The formation of a National Statistics Council has been achieved. This council will ensure a rational schedule of surveys covering a range of agreed indicators that are standardised for Afghanistan, that address the MDGs, the ANDS and the Afghanistan Compact. It is essential that the NSS project continues its close relationship with the President-General of CSO to ensure the continued development of the NRVA, so that it may help to address some of these issues.



There are various ways in which the NSS project can contribute to these needs

- Statistical support on the design of surveys
- Design of questionnaires in Teleform and use of the scanning Teleform system installed within CSO
- Inclusion of questions (design, size and priorities permitting)

To assist Afghanistan with its reconstruction and development efforts, the rehabilitation of government's data collection and analytical capacity has been identified as a key priority by the EC and the MRRD. The work has been included in the European Commission's Food Security Programme. Of the total budget allocation of EURO 25 million an amount of EURO 3.5 million has been allocated for the NSS Support (there of € 2.540.000 contracted for the TA).

The National Surveillance System (NSS) Project is implemented in two phases (the evolutionary process from Phase 1 to Phase 2 can be seen in the table below):

- NSS Phase 1: September 2003- February 2005,
- NSS Phase 2: March 2005 – August 2008.

S/N	NRVA-2003 (First Phase)	NRVA-2005 (Second Phase)
1	<p>Sampled villages the same as WFP/VAM assessments in previous years. This was because there was no sample frame available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Urban areas were not sampled at all. ✓ Kuchi were sampled. ✓ 32 provinces and kuchi word the analytical domains. ✓ Household selection was not random (Based on wealth groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Used CSO pre-census household listing data as best available sample frame. ✓ 45 analytical domains, 34 provinces, 10 major urban centres and nomadic kuchi population. ✓ Higher sampling intensity in smaller provinces and urban areas to ensure minimum of 350 households per analytical domain. Individual household and village weights reflect this. ✓ Primary sample unit (rural village or urban block) selection was based on random start method to have better geographical distribution of sample. ✓ Household selection was based on random start method within village, with interval depending upon the village population
2	<p>4 level of data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ District level ✓ Community Shura level ✓ Wealth group level ✓ Household level 	<p>2 level of data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community shura level ✓ Household level <p>Only market price data is collected at district level</p>
3	Covered only Rural and Kuchi	Covered Rural, Kuchi and Urban
4	Used common questionnaire and after completion of the field work the data is transcribed in to Teleform, for shura and wealth groups, whereas household questionnaire was manually entered into database.	Teleform format used for all of the questionnaires in the field.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Covered 32 province ✓ Covered 368 districts ✓ Covered 1853 village ✓ 5,559 wealth group ✓ 11,757 Rural household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Covered 34 province ✓ Covered 392 districts ✓ Covered 2597clusters/ communities ✓ No wealth group ✓ 30822 rural, Urban and Kuchi household
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No women enumerators' participation in the assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Women enumerators' participation in the whole assessment in all provinces except Zabul (poor



	and women information from southern and most of the eastern zone. (Poor female coverage)	security). (Much better coverage of households with female enumerators than 2003)
7	✓ Managed by WFP/VAM	✓ Managed by Government (CSO-MRRD) with support from the NSS-project.
8	✓ Partially stakeholder participation for questionnaire designing.	✓ Full stakeholder participation in the questionnaire design.
9	✓ Used several trainers for training.	✓ Used unique training (Just 2 trainer who was fully in the picture from design to implementation for the whole country) to avoid risk of several trainers.
10	✓ Household food consumption but no household non-food consumption - food poverty calculation only possible at household level.	✓ Household food consumption and about 25 items of non-food consumption that household level. Provide spaces food poverty and poverty analysis.

- The mode of using NGOs as implementing partners for data collection activities (2003/2004) has been abandoned in favour of a national system using primarily government surveyors and staff, wherever possible and only recruiting from international agencies or private surveyors, when there are not enough government workers of sufficient quality to conduct a specific assessment. This means that NGOs, who were originally conceived as implementing partners in the sentinel site system, have moved from being data generators (Project's first phase) to data users (Project's second phase).
- While it is clear that the original concept of sentinel site food security monitoring has proven itself to be too cumbersome to provide a useful and timely data product, it is still worthwhile piloting a lighter more representative Household Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) with the support of WFP. NSS together with WFP started this approach and it is recommended that an evaluation of the effectiveness of this household monitoring system is made once sufficient rounds of data are available. While it seems unlikely that the FSMS is able to replace all the data needs of an annual assessment, a combination of a biennial NRVA with interim Household Food Security Monitoring may meet the need for regular updates on welfare, while a biennial NRVA would produce updates on all the indicators currently collected in the NRVA 2005. A two-year cycle for many of these types of indicators is considered sufficient for most data clients.
- The information originally anticipated to be provided by the sentinel site system, have been largely met by NRVA 2003 and 2005, both of which have attracted multi-stakeholder funding, and because of its national coverage, and addressing indicating needs from a range of disciplines from various ministries, the NRVA has become the project most important data product.
- In assessing the demand for various indicators in the planning and design processes of both 2003 and 2005 NRVA, it was clear that government ministries and departments with decision-making powers are keen and demanding clients of data and analytical products.

MRRD became the lead agency in the system, and the Vulnerability Analysis Unit within the central level of the ministry became the physical home of the NSS Project for phase 1. The National Surveillance System Project in its second phase concentrates on institutionalising a bi-annual assessment (NRVA 2005 and NRVA 2007) and building up a lighter monitoring system (in collaboration with WFP) instead of the sentinel site system. These systems in conjunction



with market prices, agro-meteorological and hydrological data would aid decision making in disaster management.

Phase 1 was intended to develop methodologies and institutional arrangements to ensure effective delivery of data and analytical products during phase 2. All lessons learned from phase 1 of the NSS Project are fully documented in the final report for that phase presented to EC in August 2005 (Establishment of the Livelihood Based National Food Security & Nutritional Surveillance System (NSS) as well as in Project's Inception Report, Kabul, October 2005. They are summarised in the following:

- A hallmark of the Project phases 1 and 2 has been an openness and transparency around data sharing and methodological development. This has facilitated the participation of UN and other international organisations, both in the methodological development as well as in funding and analytical support.
- NRVA 2003 represented a methodological compromise between the World Bank and WFP, brokered by the Vulnerability Analysis Unit. This kept both major stakeholders on board with the survey, and while perhaps being a little complex, facilitated methodological development. The result is that the welfare measures used in NRVA 2005 are all based on household consumption rather than income, after WFP then agreed that it would use food consumption as the basis for its food security assessments.
- Attitudes to women in many parts of Afghanistan make access to women through the instrument of a household survey difficult. In most areas of Afghanistan it is imperative to include women surveyors, to ensure access to households. The use of women surveyors has to be in a culturally acceptable manner, i.e. accompanied by a male chaperone – known locally as Maharam.

In NRVA 2003, most of the southern and eastern Pashtun provinces were not enumerated by women, because it was not possible to find women surveyors prepared to go to this area. With the planning of NRVA 2005 the requirement for surveyors was that they have to present themselves as male-female teams only. If male surveyors presented themselves without accompanying female, they could not be offered employment or unless there was single male with another single woman ready to do the assessment together. This worked remarkably well in removing whatever constraints there were during the enumeration of NRVA 2003 (cultural or security) in ensuring that women were available to work as enumerators. As a result, NRVA 2005 only has 12 out of 398 districts where women were not able to go due to very poor security conditions.

The law creating a National Statistics Council was passed on the first of January 2006 and it is hoped that the effective operation of this committee will produce a rational programme and scheduling for a comprehensive set of government data collection activities that will also facilitate data sharing and data access and utilisation.



2 Project's Vision for 2nd Phase: March 2005 to August 2008

2.1 Objectives and Target Groups

The main elements of Project's concept are defined within the Terms of Reference, presented by the EC in 2004. They concern the overall objective, two specific objectives, five expected results as well as the definition of the target groups.

Overall objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghan poverty levels are reduced
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is generated by NSS and contributes to improved policy development and programming. • Relevant government institutions have the capacity to implement NSS activities in the future.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable government to provide credible and timely information to all agencies (government and non-governmental) wishing to develop policies and programmes addressing social protection, poverty and livelihoods.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government staff whose roles and responsibilities are to participate in the production of poverty statistics for Afghanistan. The personnel should receive the appropriate capacity building, on-the-job training and mentoring, ensuring that they are capable to perform these tasks essential to regular production of credible statistics. Above all, the target group contains the technical staff of the NSS team in VAU/ MRRD and NSS/ CSO. • Programme managers, senior civil servants and decision-makers within the government (and key persons in international organisations). An extensive effort should be made towards this target group to ensure that they are informed of these poverty related data, have immediate and easy access to the data, as well as support building capacity on how to incorporate analysis from these data into the planning and policy processes

Accordingly with EC's Terms of Reference and the Consultant's Project proposal, incorporating the lessons learnt from the first year of implementation of the second phase, the NSS Project will continue to focus its mandate on two essential components:

2.2 Project Focus on Capacity Building and in Data Collection and Analysis

The project is focussing on two components. The first one is related to capacity building the second one is data collection and analysis.

Project Focus 1: Capacity Building

1. Implement and monitor agreed training programmes in a manner to maximise MRRD and CSO staff ownership of the Project.



2. Provide continuous on-the-job training in areas of all stages of formal and informal survey design, survey implementation, data cleaning and analysis, interpretation of analysis, policy oriented report writing and information dissemination. In addition, the Technical Assistants need to provide training to key staff within the project on staff management skills.
3. Maintain existing and establish new, with global leaders in the fields of methodological development for the assessment of poverty, food security and social risk management to ensure that the technical support and training delivered during this Project reflect current “state of the art” methodologies.
4. The Project is going to play a more pro-active role in policy and programme advice, particularly within the MRRD. At this level, capacity building aims to improve the ability to transfer NSS outcomes into poverty and food security oriented policies and programmes – if possible and demanded: at national and provincial level.

Project Focus 2: Data Collection and Data Analysis:

1. The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) is the Project’s most important data collection activity. Additionally to the NRVA 2005 survey, there will be one further NRVA enumerated within the project lifetime, scheduled for summer 2007.
2. An essential part of the NRVA surveys is the provision of user friendly analysis and information on the survey’s main findings.
3. The Project continues to contribute to a National Early Warning Information System.
4. In close cooperation with MRRD departments and programmes, the Project continues to play a key role in emergency assessments. Based on demand for information from the Ministry, the Project provides information for an improved winter emergency assessment as well as the management of potentially following natural disasters.

2.3 Role & Responsibility of CSO

During late 2003, with the help of an inter-ministerial commission, the CSO developed a Statistical Master Plan (SMP) for Afghanistan¹ outlining the role that CSO would play relative to line-ministries with respect to collection, analysis and dissemination of government statistics. This plan delegates the role of design, collection, and some analysis of household income and expenditure surveys and other social statistics to CSO.

Following the experiences from phase 1 of the Project the need to put CSO at the centre of the data collection activities was recognised within the Terms of Reference for this Project’s second phase. CSO has the responsibility to coordinate statistical activities, set standards, and act as a clearing house for data collected by other agencies, while not attempting to assume a role as the sole collector of data, an approach that was adopted in the past when central planning was the norm. The new statistical law signed in the first of January 2006 clearly spells out the range of functions CSO is mandated to perform. In its coordinating role, the CSO should be guided by the National Statistical Council, brought into legal existence by the statistical law, and there are ongoing meetings and discussions on its membership. Such far-reaching proposed change restructuring and reform in an established government agency needs commitment in terms of technical assistance on the ground rather than a series of high-level missions. Without this commitment to full-time support to the reforms outlined by the Statistical Master Plan, the process will lose momentum, direction and donor commitment. It can be seen that the first

¹ Afghanistan: A Statistical Master Plan: Report prepared by joint inter-agency mission, November 2003.



launch of the Statistical Master Plan into November 2003 represented a supply-driven agenda for change within the Afghan Government. Despite this, recent progress has been made on key pre-requisites to the reform of the Afghan government statistical system:

- Implementation of PPR in some ministries & CSO
- New statistical law – signed 1st January 2006, which:
 - Granted independence to Central Statistics Office
 - Mandated the formation of a National Statistics Council.

The National Statistics Council has taken a central coordinating role for setting statistical policy, work priorities, statistical standards and coordinating the entire statistical system. While National Surveillance System project staff will not be represented on the National Statistics Council, CSO is requested to adequately represent the activities of the NSS project, and the data that it produces, so to include these in the review of current government data collection activities and scheduling of future surveys.

With the return to independence of CSO, there has been a restructuring of the organisation. NSS has been included within the CSO organigram that has been published at the beginning of 1385 (21 March 2006). With the announcement of the new President General of CSO that was made by the new cabinet, CSO is now an independent government department.

2.4 National Surveillance System Project within CSO and MRRD

The NSS Project has two institutional loci:

1. Vulnerability Analysis Unit within MRRD
2. National Surveillance System Unit within CSO.

2.4.1 Vulnerability Analysis Unit in MRRD

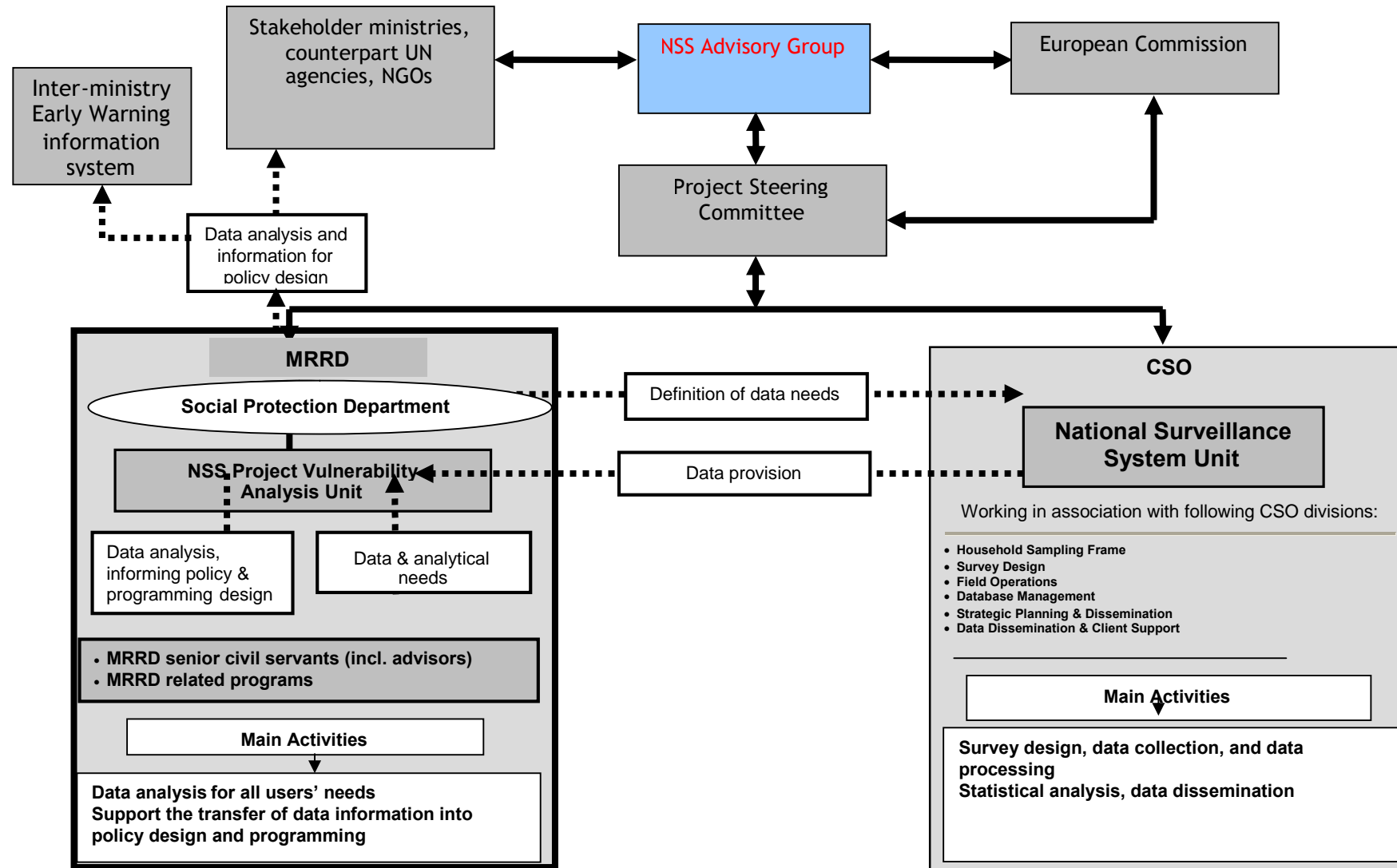
The Vulnerability Analysis Unit within MRRD is responsible for data analysis and information defined by MRRD's data requirements in order to meet the specific needs of the MRRD programmes and policy decision-makers. Appropriate policies and programmes will be based on data, as such the data presented should be as objective and as actual as possible.

The following diagram (Figure 1) gives an overview for Project's organisational structure within different network. The Vulnerability Analysis Unit will work closely with the CSO-NSS unit to ensure their data needs are being incorporated into national level data collection work.

With regard to the aspect mentioned above the Project intends to strengthen the analysis and distribution capacities within the VAU in the second phase.



Figure 1: NSS' Set-Up within MRRD and CSO, and relationships to other Stakeholders





2.4.2 National Surveillance System Unit in CSO

The NSS unit within CSO is responsible for the design and implementation of regular data collection, data processing, general data analysis, as well as public data dissemination.

Improving access to existing data within Government is a crucial step to increasing policy makers and program planners' use of empirical data in their decisions. To this end the project has begun to play a pivotal role in updating and improving the CSO website (www.cso.gov.af). This opportunity was created by the project initiative to construct web-based interactive databases for NRVA 2005 data and the CSO consumer price index (CPI). The decision to include the consumer price index in the first version of the interactive Web-based databases came from senior staff of CSO after seeing a presentation on the plans for mounting NRVA 2005 data. This will be an important innovation for CSO, and is the first time that CSO has presented on data electronically at all, and the fact that it will be available in an interactive website enabling users to define their own queries, represents a huge improvement in data accessibility. This development is extremely important for the CSO, as it will increase the electronic availability of key data sets in both English and Dari, and go a long way to improving the reputation of the CSO as an effective provider of data to the government and rest of the development community.

If this web data platform is deemed successful for both the CPI and NRVA 2005 data, it is hoped that this will encourage CSO to present other data sets on a similar platform. In particular, the village facility surveys data from the pre-census and the household listing data. To achieve this new Web platform for data, five Afghans, 4 from CSO, went to Germany in January 2006 for training on the software packages MySQL and PHP4 (open source database software and web publication software). Subsequently there has been a follow-up visit to Afghanistan to help define the data query interface. Two of the staff trained in Germany formed part of a staff of three in CSO responsible for the CSO website maintenance and development. CSO senior management has already come to the project to help with a serious updates that they currently wish to publish on the website. Training is currently ongoing with this team of three CSO staff (which fall outside of the NSS unit staff) but represents some of the larger impact that the project in having on data access on skills development within CSO.

Initial talks have taken place with UNPFA, the UN agency responsible for the implementation of the pre-census household listing and the full census. They installed a server and network within the CSO, and this included ArcIMS, a solution for delivering dynamic maps and GIS data and services via the Web. This can provide the software solution to map the queries generated from the CSO interactive Web-based databases. If the CSO web-based interactive databases successfully link with the CSO/UNPFA ArcIMS server, it represents good collaboration between projects working within CSO and an efficient use of resources, obviating the need for the NSS project to develop its stand-alone mapping solution for database queries.

National Surveillance System project staff contributes, with other senior CSO staff, in discussions currently taking place concerning the architecture and structure of monitoring of the MDGs, Afghan Compact and the interim I-ANDS. This initiative is promoting common geographical standards for databases to ensure that different databases can be summarised to the same geographical unit and common standard definitions wherever applicable. This is seen as essential before effective data sharing can be achieved across the databases currently existing within government and anymore that need to be created to cover the range of indicators to report on the commitments made at the London Conference.



Prior to the formation of an effective National Statistics Council, there have been *ad hoc* surveys launched by donors. Whenever the NSS unit is aware of these ad hoc surveys, it has encouraged the third party to collaborate with CSO and has facilitated discussions and the development of memoranda of understanding. One example is the World Bank Kabul energy and water use survey conducted in collaboration with the University of Kabul and the CSO. NSS Project staff was involved in facilitating meetings and agreement on terms of reference between the World Bank and the CSO as well as undertaking Teleform coding of the questionnaire, data management and database normalisation. Similarly, DFID wishes to undertake a long-term study on the impact of rural development on patterns of opium cultivation. NSS Project staff has been in discussion with DFID on the design of this study, and a facilitating collaboration with CSO. Collaboration of this type with CSO is formalised through memoranda of understanding signed by all parties. Collaboration with the health survey conducted by Ministry of public Health and Johns Hopkins University in questionnaire design, sampling, Teleform forms and database designing, supporting them through provision of expert enumerators is another example. There are a number of benefits from these activities.

- Ensures that the CSO remains involved in all important household surveys in Afghanistan.
- Provides CSO an opportunity for gaining more experience of negotiations with donors, proposal of budgets and work plans, and implementing a programme of work collaboratively.

2.5 NSS Project's Relationship to Other Ministries

Because of multi-sector character of NRVA and data demands from other ministries and stakeholders, the NRVA design process is based on extensive consultation, collaboration and networking. The NSS Project in its second phase has to date focused on the enumeration of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) survey. The NSS Project is a data and analysis provider for a large group of stakeholders. Regarding Project's data and analysis outcomes (NRVA, contributions to the EWIS, emergency assessments et al.), the most active and demanding clients and partners are from within the MRRD, including the policy decision-makers (Ministry's senior management, Ministry's departments) as well as the staff of the MRRD associated programmes, such as: the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), National Rural Access Programme (NRAP), the Rural Water and Sanitation Programme, the Micro-Finance Facility Programme for Afghanistan, the National Area Based Development Project (NABDP) as well as the publisher of the Afghan National Food Security (ANFS) bulletins, FEWS-Net. Further client ministries and partner organizations are: Agriculture (MAAHF) together with FAO, Health (MOPH) together with UNICEF, Women's Affaires (MOWA) together with UNIFEM and UNDP, Education (MOE) together with UNICEF, Water and Energy (MOWE), Urban Development (MUDH) together with UN Habitat – as well as donor agencies, such as the EC, World Bank, DFID *et al.*

2.6 Project's Steering Committee/ Advisory Group

The Project Steering Committee is constituted by the following members:

- An authorised representative, of Ministry of Economy,
- President General of CSO as chairman;
- Minister or deputy minister for MRRD



- Head of Delegation of the European Commission in Kabul, or authorised representative as co-chairman;
- Representative from the Ministry of Finance;
- Representative of the CSO;
- Representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food;
- Representative from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development;
- Representative from the Ministry of Water & Energy;
- Representative from the Ministry of Health;
- President general CSO is on the national statistical council
- Team Leader of the Technical Assistance team.

The second steering committee was held on June, 13th. Discussion and agreements were based on the following agenda:

Agenda

Introduction

Hardware procurement update and software for MRRD GIS section.

WFP contribution to NRVA 2005 and how these funds may be used.

Update on NRVA 2005 Analysis

Progress of household food security monitoring system

Final approval of biennial scheduling of future NRVAs

Increased demand for analytical products in support in the ANDS process

Approval of continuation of interim allowances for Analysts and VAU director

NRVA 2007 and ANDS special implications of the timing

Update on provincial planning support within MRRD

Recruitment of Analysts to NSS-CSO unit and promotion of 4 analysts to senior analyst.

Micro data distribution for NRVA 2005

NRVA 2005 and its contribution to the CSO yearbook.

Special studies component of the NSS project

Consideration of the possibility of charging third parties who collaborate with CSO.

Advocate for provision of funds for conducting NRVA 2009

Progress of interactive Web sites for NRVA 2005 and CPI data

Approval of interim report



2.7 Household food security monitoring system

Household food security is one of the indicators that are most urgently required when drought conditions are within Afghanistan (Afghanistan returned to drought in 2006). To cover the need for regular updates on food security household information, the most demanded humanitarian indicator, the food security household monitoring system is under way, with funds from EC, WFP and ECHO. Two rounds of data collection have been completed, and there are preparations currently underway for the third round of data collection in November 2006. This household monitoring system is a light questionnaire following up on selected districts, enumerating the same households sampled in NRVA 2005. The districts selected are those most likely to be impacted by covariate shocks (based on past data on impact of (drought, floods, and snow blockages). Its objectives are to understand seasonal dimensions to aspects of employment and food security, as well as act as an early warning indicator of seriously deteriorating livelihoods. This would trigger further and more extensive surveys should the trends in these simple indicators suggest concern. Conducting a series of interviews in the same household throughout the year will add the dimension of seasonality that is not currently present with NRVA data alone. This will give a very important empirical base for contextualising data collected in one-time of the year in a country where seasonality is a very important factor in determining livelihoods patterns. If the data resulting from the pilot produces useful and demanded data products and information, the project should consider making a budget line to ensure its continuation. It may be possible to reduce the household sample size after an initial round of observations, thereby further reducing the resources required to maintain this household food security monitoring system.

During the steering committee meeting the members agreed that the NSS team would make an evaluation of the household food security monitoring system with WFP and make a recommendation to the steering committee as soon as that is completed. There are potential funding implications for the NSS project, if it is decided that this is a useful component of the food security monitoring system for Afghanistan. Therefore decisions about future funding of such a monitoring system would need to be discussed and decided upon at an extra steering committee meeting.



3 Project's Progress: Activities by expected results and status of attainment

3.1 Start-up Activities

During the 2nd year of phase 2 of the NSS Project (March–August 2006), the following activities have taken place.

- Establishment of NSS unit within the new official organigram of CSO.
- Hiring new government staff to be trained during the life of the NSS project (4 analysts in CSO and 2 analysts in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit).
- Attained full support of CSO and MRRD in the implementation of NSS project.
- Data cleaning and data analysis of NRVA-2005 nationwide assessment.
- Follow up and strengthening of the established Food Security Monitoring assessment, data analysis and its use as a component of early warning information system.
- Initiating coordination with other stakeholders like Ministry of Agriculture, FEWS NET, Ministry of Public Health for enrichment of early warning information system and data sharing.
- Team building and activation of staff toward achievement of NSS goal and objectives.
- Supporting MRRD decision makers with analytical papers on actual issues of rural livelihood.

The second year of Phase 2 of the NSS Project (March 2006 to August 2006) has started with managing the huge dataset to be cleaned, analysed, interpreted and utilised for policy decision preparation and programming for governmental and non governmental organizations implementing programmes for poverty reduction. The second year of project phase 2 did put significant focus on setting up an efficient NSS Unit at CSO. CSO recognised the essential role the NSS Unit has within its structure and included the unit into its official organigram. Therefore one of the main project goals of institutionalization of NSS activities within the government of Afghanistan has already been achieved to a large extent.

3.2 Result A: Institutionalisation of NSS activities within Government structures are finalised

Both, the VAU Unit at MRRD and the NSS Unit at CSO are well recognised within the respective institutions and with other government and non-government institutions in Afghanistan. This proves the high acceptance the EC-TA input within this project receives from the Afghan government counterparts.

To what extent the Project needs to engage in institutional building at provincial level (developing linkages and capacity with provincial MRRD and CSO staff) – foreseen within the Project's TOR, is still not clear. Currently, it is not an essential prerequisite necessary for carrying out and for implementing the NSS project in its second phase. The Project's provincial approach should be focused on data and information dissemination through the provincial rural development councils (PDC) and provincial rural development and planning



(PDP), pilots for PDC started by MRRD in Kandahar². Planning activities have just started (February 2006 for this pilot exercise) and PDC is almost complete for most provinces, while the PDP is in the phase of planning to start the pilot in Kandahar. The NSS units in CSO and MRRD is currently providing data and analytical support for this process

Anyhow, the deteriorating of the security situation may avoid effective policy support on a provincial level. Furthermore the 2007 NRVA requires full attention of project staff and does not leave sufficient room to add significant regionalisation of analytical work within the project.

3.2.1 Activities regarding Institutionalisation of NSS activities: Result A

During the second year of this Project, the institutionalisation of the NSS activities within MRRD (VAU) and CSO was the main focus. The related logistical, organisational and institutional operations and measures concerned the following components:

Establishing the NSS unit within the structure of the CSO (the unit is part of the official organogram of CSO). At the same time the MRRD unit as well received significant strengthening from the project as well. Related activities covered:

- Recruitment of international and national staff and NSS team mobilising in both MRRD and CSO.
- Installation of the CSO office (started in June 2005), including a Teleform data scanning unit.
- The project steering committee agreed to the promotion of 3 analysts to senior analysts, which took place in September 2006 (one of NSS-MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit-Team and 2 from CSO/NSS unit). All three candidates were required to pass a test and probationary period. The selection process was done with full involvement of government (CSO-MRRD)
- Ongoing team building process.
- Regular participation of project staff at the MRRD Programme Coordination Meetings and MIS meetings.
- Regular participation in CSO decision making process in survey design asked by other organizations for CSO support.
- After the departure of the previous team leader Andrew Pinney, the project was fundamentally redesigned (see graph below) in summer 2006.
- Appointment of government director in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and recruitment of government director for CSO/NSS unit. The government (CSO-MRRD) was fully involved in the process.
- Continuation of the technical steering committee established. Attained their full support in NSS related activities and other issues related to NRVA 2005.

² See steering committee meeting minutes November 17, 2005



Meetings with MRRD and CSO senior management to sustain a good working environment and regular provision of information to MRRD and CSO about the planning of surveys like FSMS and involve them in decision making process.

- The 2nd NSS Steering Committee was held (in order to guarantee that NSS outcomes meet the expectations of MRRD, CSO and other primary stakeholders); the project 1st interim report was presented to the meeting and approved.
- Participation in the current (2006) government drought assessment and contribution to that based on NRVA-2005 and the two round FSMS data.
- Continuation of close cooperation with the FAAHM unit of MAAHF, WFP/VAM and FEWS NET for improvement of the early warning information system..
- Coordination of inputs and joint activities with other organizations like The World Bank, ADB, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to conduct training for government staff in data analysis. A World Bank Training- course on poverty line assessment will be carried out in November 2006
- The project attracted donor attention for supporting NRVA-2005 data analysis and design of NRVA-2007. In any case both activities will clearly continue to be driven by the NSS-project.

Comment:

MOH and MAAHF are stakeholders as well as clients of the Project, and there is more than one department within the Ministry of Health that are interacting with the NSS project in terms of data provision, and the same is true for the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture in particular is improving its data gathering and dissemination activities, and plans for an agricultural census are under way. Recently there is a joint work environment created among MAAHF, WFP and MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit. The government of Afghanistan presented a drought appeal to the donors. MAAHF, WFP presented updates to the government, the MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis and FEWS NET were able to produce evidence on the real dimension of the problem, thereby bringing the required amount of food aid down to a manageable amount.

Problems:

- Loss of two key NSS CSO unit analysts, which were seen as strong analysts. Replacements, capable of taking on the roles and responsibilities required, were difficult to find. Re-announcement of analysts; positions and repetition of whole recruitment process has taken place successfully (Dec. 2005/Jan. 2006); where only five have been recruited within CSO and agreed to have 5 analysts and an additional government director as the contract director have been promoted to co-team leader position, but still he will manage database related issues and train the analyst to manage database related issues in the future.
- Resignation of the former team leader of the project, Dr Andrew Pinney, who was seen as a key person of the project, familiar with all developments of the project.
- Recruitment of new international experts. The recruitment of 2 new international experts along with the restructuring of the project was a time consuming process. Anyhow, the project staff analysed and undertook most of the analysis foreseen in the work plan.. MDGs were reported (translation was carried out). FSMS survey design and implantation took place and analyzed information is been feed to the government



drought appeal in 2006, analytical products of NRVA-2005 is disseminated to relevant stakeholders, and staff have taken place in each stage.

- The instable electricity supply to the NSS unit in CSO (January – August. 2006) delayed the Teleform designing and scanning process of FSMS assessment forms and during designing of Kabul Energy survey Teleform designing and printing of questionnaires.
- As part of the EU procurement (2/5/2006) a backup generator was purchased, which was installed in August 2006.
- The NSS unit moved from a provisional room to two offices on the first floor of the CSO main building. A third room is located on the second floor.
- After deliberation with the EC, CSO and MRRD the appointment of two project directors (One in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and one for CSO/NSS unit) were undertaken, while the past (project members) directors were made team leaders. This was to facilitate government regulations and will facilitate a speedier capacity building regarding senior management.

3.2.2 Project's progress against Institutionalisation of NSS activities: Result A

Indicator A1: NSS department's organisation's chart and staff job description available for MRRD and CSO form 1385.

- The project made good progress in ensuring the continued employment of actual government staff after the end of the project. NSS government staffs will continue to be trained to the extent that after the end of the project they will be able to apply for super skill payment.
- A set of clear Terms of Reference were prepared for the project team leadership, administrative assistant and technical advisors. The ToR of the government staffs have been revised and update with the new demands from NSS project.
- The institutionalisation of the NSS Project units becomes visible as both units were integrated in the new organisational charts of both MRRD (Vulnerability Analysis Unit) and CSO (NSS unit):
- The new organisational structure of MRRD puts the Vulnerability Analysis Unit under the deputy minister for organisational development along with provincial relations, monitoring and evaluation and the Institute for Rural Development. This new MRRD organigram came into effect at the beginning of 1385 (21st March 2006). The advantage of this location is that it takes it out of an individual programme pillar (before the Vulnerability Analysis Unit was located within the Social Protection Pillar for no particularly clear reason). The only potential drawback is that staff of the vulnerability Analysis unit may be less likely to be involved with meetings with other departments of the planning pillar of the Ministry, and therefore may have less opportunity to become aware of data needs on request. Staff must continue to guard against loss of interaction with key MRRD program data clients.
- CSO incorporated the NSS unit in its own new organisational structure with effect from March 2006.



Indicator A2: Regular meetings of Project Steering Committee

- Second Project’s Steering Committee, June, 2006.
- Regular attending programme management meetings, MIS meeting, government drought appeal (2006) meetings in MRRD and meetings with other organizations for conduction of surveys in CSO. MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit continues meetings with NRVA-2005 data clients.
- The next steering committee meeting is foreseen to be held in January 2007 to review this report and discuss on NRVA 07 planning.

3.2.3 Status of Attainment of Result A: Institutionalisation of NSS activities

Status of attainment									
							80%		
<p>Comment: in line with concept and time schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institutionalisation of the NSS Project within MRRD has been based on the established position created during Project’s first phase; this position has been stable and the Project contributes to the development of Ministry’s organisation chart • Institutionalization of NSS unit within CSO official organigram under the operation department. 									

3.2.4 Planned activities for result A: September 2006-February 2007

- Further 2 meetings of Project’s Steering Committee.
- The NSS MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit will move with the MRRD leadership to Darulaman in November 2006.
- Continued activities by NSS CSO unit to support mounting of CSO data in an interactive Web-based database on the CSO website.
- To promote and support other forms of electronic (web-based) distribution of all of CSO’s data.
- Supporting a small team of CSO staff to maintain and improve the CSO web site.
- Liaise with CSO, MRRD and other related stakeholders for designing of NRVA-2007 questionnaires.
- CSO will be supported in census preparation.
- Will have regular meetings with AIRD for preparation of Rural Development report.



- Liaise with donor community for further support to CSO/NSS unit and design and implementing NRVA-2007.
- Capacity building will continue with training on Excel functions, ArcView and Access, statistical and mathematical procedures. The inclusion of a procedures manual and a database for enumerators is also proposed.
- External capacity building will be undertaken by the World Bank in poverty line assessment and training in STATA. Teleform training as part of the NSS/EC recent huge procurement with Liwal company will take place in Nov-Dec 2006.

3.3 Result B: The information collected under the NSS meets the needs of stakeholders and is utilised by MRRD and other relevant ministries' departments to inform and advocate for policies and programmes

Result B is focused on the 1st target group: key persons in ministries and international organisations, responsible for policy and programme decision making process.

The NSS Project is mandated to provide both: development related data and its analysis. User friendly and policy and programme related analysis aims to improve the capacities of the decision-makers for an adapted and target group oriented policy and programme development.

The technical support given by the NSS Project should ensure that the information needed by stakeholder ministries is incorporated into relevant NSS assessment work. Furthermore, the technical assistance regarding MRRD should ensure that the analysis of poverty and vulnerability is used to advocate for appropriate policies and programmes within the Ministry.

The NRVA-2005 analyzed data will be a baseline for achievement of ANDS benchmark for MRRD, other governmental and non governmental organizations as well as for UN MDGs.

3.3.1 Activities regarding Result B: NSS meets the needs of stakeholders

During the 2nd year of Project's 2nd phase, the following activities have been implemented:

- NRVA-2005 data was cleaned and the database was normalized for analysis.
- Short information notes have been sent to stakeholders on their demand.
- The data analysis process started based on the priority list.
- After approval of the CSO technical committee the database is shared with about 20 governmental and non governmental stakeholders who wanted to analyse the data by themselves.
- Conduction of 2nd round of Food Security Monitoring System survey with financial support from WFP.
- Analysis of 1st and 2nd round of FSMS survey data and the result has been fed to the government drought appeal of year 2006.
- Established a system of data sharing for monthly food security update with WFP, MAAHF, FEWS NET, USGS and will extend with other governmental and non governmental organization such as MoPH and others.
- Analysed NRVA-2005 market price data and is been shared with the stakeholders.



- Analysis of NRVA-2005 data for more than 30 governmental and non governmental organizations for policy and programming.
- Preparation for conduction of the 3rd round of FSMS.
- Analysed UN MDG information from NRVA-2005 data.
- Contribution to the information demand of Afghan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD), for writing rural development report. The process is on going.
- Analyzed ANDS monitoring indicators data for MRRD report.
- Analyzed NRVA-2005 data for CSO year book.
- Contributed to MRRD strategic plan development.
- Contributed to ANDS' benchmark and indicators development.
- Responded to many e-mails asking about the NRVA data and NSS project structure, goal, objectives and activities.
- Due to playing a significant role in terms of information provision, NSS became a major source of information for start up of each programme before starting their activities.
- Support in the design, implementation of other surveys like Kabul Energy survey with World Bank, Johns Hopkins University and MoPH health survey, Questionnaire design of DFID livelihood survey.

Discussions about NSS' role as information provider within MRRD and contributions to MRRD's (and other stakeholders) strategic development:

- Project's participation in the discussions about the conceptualisation of an MRRD Rural Development Policy and Training/ Learning Centre.
- Contributions to the Interim-Afghan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS): poverty profile (based on first findings of NRVA 2005 and data from NRVA 2003) and to the Section 8.5, 'Agriculture and Rural Development', Dec. 2005/ Jan. 2006.
- Contributions to planning of the structures to monitor the MDGs, Afghan Compact and I-ANDS indicators post London conference
- Participation in the WOL project review committee meetings.
- Contact with MRRD related programmes; identification of priorities for NRVA 2005 analysis, Jan./ Feb. 2006

Lessons learned

Good personal contacts with stakeholder community (visits of key persons in Ministries) helps to create a high interest and inquires for NRVA data and analysis (= pro-active networking).



3.3.2 Project's Progress against Indicators for Result B: NSS meets the needs of stakeholders

Indicator B1: Group of stakeholder/ NSS advisory group has been created and meets regularly; ongoing demand for NSS data and information

- Significant contributions from international agencies achieved for data analysis of NRVA-2005 and support to the design of NRVA-2007.
- World Bank and ADB promised to hire a consultant for training NSS, CSO and MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff on poverty line analysis. They also will have significant contribution to NRVA-2007 design and financial support.
- Johns Hopkin University working with MoPH will provide support to NRVA-2007 health section design and training.
- In collaboration of WFP/VAM unit improved 2nd round of FSMS and analysed 1st and 2nd round data. This data is used in 2006 government drought appeal.

Indicator B2: Different forums of data dissemination created: adapted to different user groups

- Due to severe demand of information most of the analysis of data is disseminated through e-mails, Vulnerability Analysis Unit Yahoo group and direct contacts.
- Printed copies of the analysed data are also distributed to relevant stakeholders.
- Some of the analysed data is also disseminated through Vulnerability Analysis Unit website.

Indicator B3: Strategy for the transfer of NSS outcomes into policy and programmes is developed (together with MRRD key persons)

- This strategy (together with an updated survey about key persons within partner ministries) had been developed during September/ October 2005 and has been followed up in the year 2006.

Indicator B4: Policy-makers are satisfied with the provided NSS information

- WFP have used NRVA-2005 food security analysis for their programming. Feb 2006.
- UNICEF has used analyzed iodised salt information for their policy and programming.
- NRVA-2005 data is analyzed for 8 UN MDG compact indicators and the report will be published soon.
- MRRD used NRVA-2005 data for development of its strategy for achievement of ANDS indicators.
- MRRD Water and Sanitation department has used NRVA-2005 data.
- About 20 clients who were able to do the analysis of NRVA-2005 data by themselves have received NRVA-2005 raw data.
- More than 30 governmental and non governmental organizations have received information from NRVA-2005 analyzed data.



- A consumer satisfaction survey will be held in the month of December, 2006 to review use of data and inform the stakeholders about their information demand based on I-ANDS indicators monitoring.

Indicator B5: Workshops for promotion and awareness for NSS analysis realized (both at national and provincial level)

- Presentations have been given in different workshops to inform clients about NRVA-2005 data and the status of analysis.
- Special meeting with different programmes working within MRRD have been held and they been informed about NSS, NRVA-2005 data, method used.
- A workshop will be held in December, 2006 and related stakeholders and donor communities will be invited for presenting NRVA-2005 results.
- The final report of NRVA-2005 will also be available by January/February, 2006 and will be posted in MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and CSO websites.

3.3.3 Status of Attainment, Result B: NSS meets the needs of stakeholders

Status of attainment									
						70%			
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Progress on NRVA 2005 final report is delayed due to huge demand for specific analysis demand of different governmental and non governmental organizations.</p> <p>So far the analysis of the data is continued and the project government staffs have been trained in the process of data cleaning and analysis, so it took more time.</p>									

3.3.4 Planned activities for September 2006 - February 2007

- Web-based interactive database of NRVA2005 will be published.
- Providing of good analysis products in a user friendly form: need oriented presentations of NSS outcomes and exchanges within workshops and meetings with key persons: programme manager, ministries’ senior management, at both, national and provincial level
- Conduction of 3rd round of FSMS assessment, and analysis of data.
- Starting the design of NRVA-2007 questionnaire based on client demand for their policy and programming and ANDS benchmark.
- Publishing NRVA-2005 report and its dissemination through website and hard copies.



3.4 Result C: Capacity of government staff developed so that they can carryout credible, timely and regular production of poverty/ livelihood data and analysis.

Result C is focused on the 2nd target group: the technical staff in CSO and MRRD.

Capacity building will target key staff in the major NSS survey implementing government bodies (CSO and MRRD) so that they have the capacity to carryout the data collection and analysis activities independently by the end of Project 2nd phase.

3.4.1 Activities regarding Result C (March 2006 – August 2006)

The 2nd year of the 2nd phase of the project started with extensive training to MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff who was already familiar to some extent with data analysis and CSO/NSS staff who were newly engaged with data analysis. Project's activities during the second year of the project included ongoing capacity building for MRRD-VAU staff: on-the-job and formal training for:

- Analyzed NRVA-2005 data for clients using Genstat, Adati and SPSS software. The government staffs have been supported by international and national experts through one week training on Genstat and continuous on job training. March until August, 2006.
- Training on application developed by WFP/HQ for analysis of FSMS.
- Training in the areas questionnaire design and sampling up to analysis of Food Security Monitoring System survey jointly with WFP/VAM staff in December, 2005 and March, 2006.
- Trained MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit government staff on writing of FSMS bulletin.
- Training on statistics, Genstat advance commands and analysis of data.
- On-the-job-training for better understanding of questionnaire design of NRVA-2007 during the analysis of the NRVA-2005 data.
- One staff member MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit received training in Management.
- Non-formal training for staff members within CSO and MRRD: mathematics, January 2006 and on the job training of mathematics and statistics during the analysis of NRVA-2005 data for MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff members from March to August 2006..
- On-the-job training on Project's financial accountant.
- Capacity development within the NSS-CSO staff: formal and on-the-job training related with data processing of the NRVA 2005.
- On-the-job training on Teleform software (questionnaire design, visual basic validation, pre-fill questionnaire printing, scanning questionnaires, data cleaning, data validation and database normalisation).
- Formal training in Nepal on Dev/Info for NSS-staff within CSO (Project manager and government director).
- GENSTAT training for basic analysis based on MDG analysis (May).



- GENSTAT programming for more complicated MDG analysis (May-June).
- One MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff is trained in using Arc GIS software.
- MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff participates in their routine computer and English courses.

3.4.2 Progress against Result C: Capacity of government staff developed

Indicator C1: NSS/ VAU and NSS/ CSO staff is capable to implement the different NSS components without significant external support

- NRVA 2005 data has been successfully analysed by MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff (60%).
- Around 30 government and non government organizations have been satisfied with analysed data of NRVA-2005 which was analyzed jointly with government staff of MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit.
- 2nd round of Food Security Monitoring System design, implementation and analysis has been done by national staff of MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit with active participation of government staff in collaboration of WFP/VAM unit without external support.
- CSO/NSS staff became capable to use Teleform software for designing questionnaire, scanning of the filled forms, verification and analysis by themselves.
- CSO/NSS unit is capable to auto design database.
- Both MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and to some extent CSO/NSS unit staff became able to respond to the clients information demands.

Indicator C2: Monthly Early Warning Information reports prepared (regular data-contribution from NSS)

- MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit started to establish the Food Security Monitoring Bulletin jointly with WFP, without internationals inclusion in the process. The first bulletin is produced. This bulletin will be enriched by inclusion of satellite images, rainfall data, agro metrological data, water table and other available data sources from FEWS NET. This will enable the government staff to proceed with producing reports and joint work with other governmental organizations.

Indicator C3: Training programme designed, implemented and monitored

- The NSS training programme for data collection and management has produced a draft Teleform training manual, developed by the Project staff themselves.
- For the setting up of an interactive database, a training programme had been developed and implemented (5 participants at formal training in Germany, January, 2006).
- On the job training will be continued up to end of the project.
- Special training programmes have been developed to cover and strength weak points of CSO/NSS unit staff and MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff in using Genstat and SPSS software, statistics and mathematics.



Indicator C4: Number of participants at formal and on-the-job training at national and provincial level

- All NSS/ VAU as well as NSS/ CSO staff participated in numerous on-the-job trainings; altogether 16 government staff has been trained in Genstat software, 9 other government staff from different Ministries have trained in using Genstat software.
- During the conduction of FSMS 42 central and provincial governmental and local surveyors have been trained in data collection.
- One of MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit government staff is trained in Arc/GIS software.
- 2 CSO/NSS staff was trained in using Teleform software for designing questionnaires. 5 have been trained in validation and scanning.
- All 11 government staff did receive on job training in understanding method of analysis and questionnaire design considering ease for analysis of the data.
- MRRD’s 3 staff is trained in using analytical application established by WFP head quarter.

Assessment and Estimation of Status of Attainment, Result C

Status of attainment									
						70%			
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Taking into account the status of the NRVA 2005, the Project is fully in line with the capacity building issues, defined in the Project’s logical framework. Parallel with the data analysis of NRVA 2005, future on-the-job training (and should the occasion arise also formal training) has to be focused on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional statistical analysis • Policy oriented report writing as well as • Transfer of data and information into policy and programme relevant guidelines. • Past training will also be reiterated to ensure familiarisation 									

3.4.3 Planed Activities for September 2006 – February 2007 regarding Result C

- Ongoing training of NSS staff in MRRD and CSO on data management and analysis, Excel, ArcView, Access and report writing with view to incorporating recommendations for policy design and programming (focused on MRRD)
- Offer from Project side: training to staff of partner Ministries (statistical departments) tailed to their analytical needs.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the training and the progress made by trainees after training.



- Formal Advanced Teleform training for CSO/NSS unit and MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit staff in Sept-Dec 2006.
- Formal training by World Bank on poverty line analysis and use of STATA.
- Provision of procedures manual and enumerators database

3.5 Result D: All components of NSS are implemented and sequenced so that they meet government planning cycles

The technical support provided by the NSS Project at the level of survey implementations is focused on CSO staff as well as the VAU team. At the same time, both institutions are responsible for ensuring that MRRD and other stakeholder ministries have access to data and information in high quality timely.

3.5.1 Activities regarding Result D: NSS components are implemented and sequenced

Regarding result D, Project's activities have been focused on follow up work regarding the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2005. The NRVA 2005 database has been cleaned and the analysis of data is to be finished soon. More than 30 governmental and non governmental organizations have received data and initial analysis and around 20 organizations had received the preliminary NRVA 2005 database as they wanted to do analysis by themselves. Extensive training on data analysis and designing of nationwide assessment have been given during analysis of NRVA 2005 data as the analysis of the data is the best stage to do training about analysis and design of the questionnaire considering analytical problems related to design of the questionnaires. NRVA 2005 was mainly managed by MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit as the project 2nd phase had been just started and even the MOU of the project was not signed by CSO, while CSO will fully be involved in the design of NRVA 2007.

The draft work plan for conduction of NRVA-2007 is as follows:

1. Seasonality and NRVA 2005 consumption module

NRVA 2005 was conducted in one season, the summer where we expect this to provide the lowest poverty estimate and the highest household consumption of all seasons. To give a reference point for a lower bound on consumption, a repetition of the NRVA consumption module in early spring 2007 along with the a consumer price survey (covering 6 cities for CPI purposes) would provide the basis for making seasonal adjustment to the NRVA 2005 summer consumption. It is agreed that due to time limitation and losing comparability between NRVA 2005 consumption and March, 2007 household consumption to have a separate assessment for updating CPI in spring 2007. This is an explicit requirement put forward by CSO and ANDS.

There are three seasons where it is possible to enumerate a national survey in Afghanistan; early spring, summer, late autumn. Early spring and late autumn are chosen to be able to get information on consumption as winter starts, and begins to limits economic activity in the higher areas. Particularly for those areas that are physically cut off from markets during the winter because of snow. It is believed that early spring is probably a low point of consumption within the year, or as is known, the lean time as people are experiencing lack of access to physical work in the winter time and spending stores if exist during winter months and there is no other harvest or enough physical working opportunities. Therefore, for these



areas, it is suggested that this likely to be the time when consumption is most difficult to smooth. Using the hypothesis that summer is likely to represent a time of Best consumption, and early spring is likely to represent lowest consumption, having information on both these times of the year will provide an upper and lower bound from which estimates of average year-round consumption can be made.

Implementing the NRVA 05 Consumption Module in spring 2007

As mentioned above a consumption survey based on the NRVA 2005 consumption module shall be implemented in spring 07. The sample size shall be limited to the minimum size needed for ensuring representativity on a country level and separately for rural and urban areas and Kuchi’s (Pastoralists or Nomads). The NRVA 2005 consumption module shall see only a limited addition on communication costs (added to the very end of the questionnaire) to ensure full comparability with corresponding 2005 results.

Re-listing and re-weighting of the consumer price index should be achieved through a special survey covering 6 cities for CPI purposes. It is important that the CPI Survey will not be mixed with NRVA. This survey will be held in only the 6 major cities and will cover a maximum of 2,500 households. This survey will be conducted by National Accounts with the support of NSS.

2. NRVA 2007

Primary objective in the design of the NRVA 2007 is to deal with two major issues of improvement over the 2005 survey:

- Devise a scheme that takes some account of the seasonality, despite many areas being inaccessible during winter.
- Implement the adjusted consumption module as outlined above (while maintaining backward compatibility with the 2005 food-consumption module) within NRVA 2007.
- Timing of these improvements should be such that results can be incorporated in the final ANDS document, so analysis available by end 2007.

As the actual NRVA 2005 questionnaire already is of a huge size, the 2007 questionnaire can not increase in size. Any additional questions must see the same number of other questions deleted.

It is foreseen that NRVA 2007 will consist of 3 surveys:

NRVA 05 Consumption	NRVA 2007		
	Summer 2007	Autumn 2007	Spring 2008
March 2007			
About (2 - 5.000) households	10.000 households	10.000 households	10.000 households
NRVA 05 Consumption Module (ANDS demand)	Random sample Based on 2005 NRVA sample	Random sample Based on 2005 NRVA sample	Random sample Based on 2005 NRVA sample



- A small survey will be held (a sample size between 5,000 and 6,000 households). This survey will be the NRVA 2005 consumption module. This will generate comparability with NRVA 2005. The survey will be held in the spring of 2007 and will be nationwide.
- The NRVA 2007 will be split up into three separate surveys. These surveys will include a modified consumption module of both food and non-food items. Each survey will be held among a sample size of some 10,000 households throughout the country. The surveys will be held during the summer and autumn of 2007 and during the spring of 2008.

In terms of security the above approach is seen as being most reasonable, as the summer is traditional most problematic for security, therefore undertaking most of the data collection in the summer would seem to most risky in an unpredictable security situation. The above approach with an equal sample over 3 seasons effectively gives 3 chances to enumerate every primary sampling unit (PSI - village or urban lock). If security prevents some enumeration of some PSIs, then some imputed seasonal effect can be calculated from other PSIs in comparable zones, with 3 rounds of data.

3. Next steps

- Deciding on the limited adjustments of the NRVA 05 consumption module. A work group will meet this week and the World Bank will check the impact of the adjustments regarding comparability with 2005 results,
- The EC-NSS-project team will work out a work plan and budget for implementing the NRVA 05 adjusted consumption module and NRVA 07,
- The NRVA 05 consumption module and the NRVA 2007 questionnaires will be drafted by the EC-NSS-Project team with assistance from the World Bank.

4. Outputs

Products before end 2007

1. Seasonally adjusted poverty headcount rate for NRVA 2005.
2. Determinants of poverty (poverty profile) based on NRVA 2005 data.
3. Comparable headcount poverty rate and determinants based data collected from two seasons in NRVA 2007.

Poverty data after spring 2008

1. Final comparable headcount poverty rate and determinants based on data collected from three seasons in NRVA 2007.
2. Final determinants of poverty (poverty profile) based on NRVA 2007 data.

PRSP document should be living document. Therefore there should be scope for updating after the ANDS document publication in spring 2008, if there are significant changes in either the headcount rate or the poverty profile the result in the inclusion of the final 1/3 sample households from the third and final data collection in early spring 2008. Out of these two, it is possible the headcount rate will change, but remember that 2/3 of the sample will already be available. It is not likely that there will be any significant impact on the poverty profile.



3.5.1.1 Early Warning Information System/ Market price collection

The household Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) of the Early Warning/Monitoring system has been developed and conducted by the Vulnerability Analysis Unit (VAU) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), with support from the Central Statistic Office (CSO) and WFP Headquarter (HQ) with the view to monitor most vulnerable household food security in different seasons and use it as a component of early warning to inform decision makers and advocate them for immediate response to protect deterioration of vulnerable households livelihoods.

FSMS has been implemented in 38 districts interviewing over 2,000 rural and 600 urban households. The Districts identified for the FSMS were selected with the assumption that they will be sensitive to changes in water and food security. The selection of districts were based on 3 data sets- kilocalorie consumption, dietary diversity findings of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2003 (For urban blocks inclusion in to FSMS NRVA-2005 food security findings have been used) and the findings from the 2004 Northern 14 Province drought survey of the Ministries in year 2004.

Within the selected districts, the same villages and households surveyed which were assessed in the NRVA 2005 to track food security changes of the same households (starting from the NRVA 2005 - seasonally over the year). This was the pilot stage of FSMS in Afghanistan to study the food security changes in different seasons. Initially it was decided to conduct the assessment 4 time in a year and based on the result decide about the times needed to conduct FSMS.

A light questionnaire has been designed by MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit team and WFP/VAM unit and the first round of the assessment has been launched in December, 2005. The 2nd round of FSMS was conducted in March 2006. After completion of field work the data is scanned and merged to the initial NRVA-2005 database. The data is cleaned and analyzed. Several update have been given to the government on household food security status of the country. (March - September, 2006).

3.5.1.2 Emergency Needs Assessments

The Household Food Security Monitoring System assessment mentioned in the previous chapter is part of this activity.

Besides the FSMS assessment the NSS MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit contributed to the design of the Emergency assessment (2006 government drought appeal). Update on the current status of food security by using NRVA-2005 Calorie intake and dietary diversity and other data sources such as rainfall data from Ministry of Agriculture/FAO, crop production data Ministry of agriculture and rainfall data of satellite images from FEWS NET have been used for the planning of Emergency Assessment of the drought affected provinces of the country.

Significant contributions (Provision of update data on current household Food Security status) to the current drought appeal have been presented using NRVA-2005 data, FSMS two round data and Ministry of Agriculture crop production data.

3.5.1.3 National Multi-Sectoral Assessment of Kuchi – NMAK 2004

MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit provided a significant contribution to the finalization of the National Multi-Sectoral Assessment of Kuchi (NMAK-2004) report writing and data cleaning in the first year of the project. As NMAK-2004 is the only nationwide dataset about



Kuchis (Nomad Pastoralists) in Afghanistan, so continues demands existed from different stakeholders and these demand of Kuchi information is satisfied by NSS MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit.

3.5.1.4 Other Assessments

The World Bank asked the CSO for support in the Kabul Energy survey, the NSS project facilitated the database design, questionnaire design and preparation of Teleform forms. The training of this assessment is also conducted by NSS/CSO staff. The assessment has been designed in close collaboration of Kabul Economic faculty staff members. The data is scanned by NSS/CSO staff and the database was provided to the World Bank for cleaning and further analysis.

The Ministry of Public health in collaboration with the John Hopkins University asked the CSO-NSS for support to their Nutrition and health survey. Significant contribution such as supporting the design of the questionnaire, Database, Teleform forms designing, budget estimation and provision of surveyors for the assessment have been provided by NSS MRRD/CSO team to this assessment.

Significant support has been provided to DFID opium survey designs, budget estimation and questionnaire design.

NSS has become the main tool for designing database, Teleform format questionnaire, budget estimation in close collaboration with CSO senior management. Each organization who wanted to conduct assessments / surveys is liaising with NSS MRRD and the CSO team. Some organization like ILO used the expertise within the NSS MRRD team for budget estimation of their child labour assessment, some like World Bank planed to conduct NSP impact assessment liaised with the team for better management and success of their assessment.

3.5.1.5 Data and information dissemination - NSS current data and analytical reports & audiences

Additional to the existing formats for disseminating data, the project is currently underway to try and reach new audiences through an interactive Web-based database both in English and Dari. The web-based database system shall be ready before end 2006 and will be launched in January / February 2007.

Current tools for data and information dissemination and audiences:

- Publishes reports - paper and/or web
 - Audience: Those with out skills to handle raw data. Demand existing standard analysis likely to be covered in NRVA analysis tables, maps & outputs.
- Creates specific analytical products on demand of its clients e.g. NEEP Cost benefit model for prioritising rural roads.
 - Audience: Program managers who need specialist data applications. Probably have to work with NSS staff to develop these. Could use other data as well.
- Raw data distribution
 - Audience: High-end users capable of own analysis and mapping, e.g. World Bank. Improved service with data disseminated with international standard



data distribution & documentation through the use of Micro-data Management Toolkit from International household survey network

- Programme planners and ministerial advisers who do not find the information needed in existing NRVA reports (too time consuming to find or not available); are capable of defining their own data query. They do not have particular expertise in statistical analysis and geographic information system software.

Proposed further development: An Interactive NRVA data dissemination website which will:

- Enable the target audiences to access relevant data directly
- Allow the target audience to create their own queries on the available information in a user friendly way
- Helps build the capacities within the target audience understand the existing data, formulate queries and run analysis on their own
- Strengthen the participative process of data integration and analysis.
- Demonstrate and formalise cross references between data originating from different sources e.g. NRVA, CPI & Village facility survey from CSO.
- Add value to the statistical products in Afghanistan.

Therefore, the NSS project will create an interactive Internet Site (www.cso.gov.af) that will:

- Provide a searchable store for all documents produced by NSS.
 - Allow the user to search for the documents by topics, keywords and other criteria. Track document download demand.
 - Provide links to other related websites, especial with other Afghan interactive datasets.
 - Give access to the databases containing the original information, while protecting privacy of individual household information.
 - Enable user to create customised output (data tables) based on the original information.
 - Enable user to directly simply graph or map query results.

3.5.1.6 Problems in conducting the NRVA 2005 assessment

The data scanning process in the first year of project's 2nd phase took longer time as it was the first time that the Teleform system was used in the field, so data cleaning process also took more time than initially planned. The analysis of data also was delayed due to the above and substantial training activities.

By learning more about Teleform designing to restrict mistakes, installing more than one scanner for scanning forms and created capacity of analysis of data within MRRD and CSO this problem is solved for the future. NRVA-2007 data scanning and analysis will not need as much time as NRVA-2005.



During designing of the Teleform format of questionnaires for Kabul Energy survey, John Hopkins University health survey and 2 rounds of FSMS surveys several lessons have been learnt in better designing of questionnaires in Teleform format which will facilitate NRVA-2007.

3.5.2 Project's Progress against Indicators for Result D

Indicator D1: 2 to 3 NRVA assessments implemented (dependent on demanded need from stakeholders)

- The Project is in line with the information demand. About 30 government and non governmental organization who have received the results and about 20 organizations who received the raw data have been recorded. But due to some problem the final report is not published so far. By the month of January/February 2007 the final report will be published.
- The Project is in line with the implementation of the NRVA survey 2005 (but delays in the data scanning process delayed data analysis; a delay of two to three months was experienced).

Indicator D2: Household Food Security and Early Warning Monitoring System is established

- Together with WFP, the NSS Project designed and implemented a first Household Food Security and Early Warning Monitoring System in the month of December, 2005. The 2nd round of FSMS is implemented in March, 2006. The FSMS data is analyzed jointly with WFP and the result is used in 2006 drought appeal. A bulletin is also published from the result of this data and distributed to client. There is a plan to conduct FSMS two other times in the year 2006, but there are two restriction for that: first one is funding as WFP have funded the 1st and 2nd round, but they don't have reserved fund for the 3rd and 4th round and the second problem is time as NSS team is busy with NRVA-2005 data analysis, so hopefully at least on FSMS survey will be conducted in November, 2006 with joint funding support of NSS-WFP.

Indicator D3: Monthly contributions to ANFS

- The Project had contributed monthly to the ANFS bulletin, published by FEWS NET. The responsibility for this kind of monthly market prices assessment was transferred (in September 2005) to FAAHM unit within Ministry of Agriculture. The joint analysis of NRVA-2005 market price data is carried out in collaboration of FEWS NET and the result is disseminated to clients.

Indicator D4: An Emergency Assessment related networking is established

- The project's role in the emergency assessment is not yet clearly defined. It depends in particular on the capacities of MRRD's Emergency Department as well as the further development in the establishment of the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS).
- The project contributed to the design of the government drought assessment in 2006.
- The project tried to more closely cooperate with the MRRD/Emergency department, Disaster Preparedness Department and WFP to develop a joint cooperation in



emergency assessments. Until recently the MRRD Emergency Response department showed only very limited interest in a closer cooperation.

Indicator D5: Special studies (additional to NSS data and/ or in relation to NSS methodologies) are realized

- The repetition of the NRVA 2005 consumption module is foreseen for Spring 2007 in order to cover important aspects of seasonality.

3.5.3 Assessment of Status of Attainment, Result D

Status of attainment									
					60%				
<p>Comment:</p> <p>NRVA-2005 data scanning, cleaning and analysis took more time, but it provided useful lessons which could facilitate NRVA-2007. NSS staffs have worked hard to produce analysis in a timely fashion; however, the different Government Ministries are very demanding clients.</p> <p>Further assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Countrywide Household Food Security and Early Warning Monitoring System (together with WFP). <p>Apart from the mentioned delay, the Project is fully in line with defined and expected components</p>									

3.5.4 Planned activities for result D September 2006-February 2007

- Ongoing Household Food Security and Early Warning Information Monitoring, together with WFP/ VAM unit.
- Contributions to emergency oriented data information and interpretation (Project’s approach and role need to be defined).
- Finalisation and launch of the interactive website on NRVA 2005.
- Repetition of the NRVA 2005 consumption module to address seasonality and provide ANDS on an improved basis for poverty assessments.
- Continued support to other survey initiatives-e.g. World Bank Kabul KG/water use survey in collaboration with the University of Kabul and CSO & DFID impact of rural development on patterns of opium cultivation.



3.6 Result E: The Project is regularly monitored and the different components are supported with sound technical advice.

In July and August 2005, the original Project's logical framework was updated, with all objectives and expected results, defined in Project's basic Terms of References. During this process, main activities as well as impact indicators and process indicators have been specified – see the logical framework in annex A1. Based on these indicators the developed M&E System is able to produce information about Project's progress (indicator oriented system) and will contribute to a more professional Project Cycle Management. The regular analysis of the risks and assumptions (parts of EC's terms of reference and Consultant's proposal) makes part of the M&E outcomes.

Based on the demand to measure the achievement of objectives and results, the Project should make – at least - an annual update and critical review regarding the impact and process indicators. The Interim Report, in hand, is the forum to assess Project's progress and to give updated comments to risks and assumptions.

3.6.1 Activities regarding Result E

In the field of monitoring, during the reporting period, the Project undertook the following activities:

- Monthly monitoring reports to MRRD programme and financial departments and CSO senior management.
- Preparation of weekly reports; presentation and discussion of these reports during MRRD Coordination Meetings and sent to CSO senior management.
- Presentation of this Interim Report – with an estimation of Project's progress and impact – as well as comments to assumptions and risks.
- Development of an enlarged logical framework resulted from EC's terms of reference and developed by ICON - Consortium. Further results of the workshop were the development of Project's work schedule, August to December 2005, a detailed schedule for the ongoing NRVA process until February 2006 and the creation of a common understanding for an enlarged set of process and impact indicators (part of the logical framework).
- Start of a systematically collection of "NRVA 2005 lessons learned". See Annex 9

3.6.2 Project's Progress against Indicators for Result E

Indicator E1: Monitoring reports of project activities and expected results are available

- The Project presents monthly monitoring reports and disseminates these reports to concerned people within the MRRD and (since July 2005) also to CSO senior management and followed up to August, 2006. Starting with the Inception Report (Oct/Nov. 2005) and continuing with this Interim Report, the Project is going to reflect its progress and impact (objectives and expected results) based on an estimation of the progress and impact indicators.

Indicator E2: Monitoring outcomes are used within the Project Cycle Management

- Until now there is one significant use and incorporation of monitoring outcomes into the PCM: the results of the CSO/NSS and MRRD/VAU staff evaluation, Dec. 2005.



- Another evaluation have been done in March in based on the result of that 3 NSS staff members (One of MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and 2 staff of CSO/NSS) After passing probationary period and approval of the NSS 2nd Steering Committee meeting and passing test and evaluation have been promoted to senior analyst position.
- It is recommended to focus the system on two issues:
 - development of lessons learned of NRVA 2005,
 - realizing a consumer satisfaction survey (NRVA 2005).

Indicator E3: Annual work schedules and updated logical frameworks realized

- Project's work schedule as well as the logical framework had been updated in August 2005.
- It is recommended to review Project's logical framework (inclusive enlargement and update of impact and process indicators) in August 2006.

3.6.3 Assessment of Status of Attainment, Result E

Project's Monitoring System is an internal management instrument. It is used in an ongoing operational manner.

3.6.4 Planned activities for result E-September 2006-February 2007

It is recommended to focus Project's Monitoring and Evaluation System on the following main items:

- Annual update of the logical framework (focus on the development of "new" impact and progress indicators), including development of an annual work schedule.
- Arrangement of all lessons learned of the technical aspects of the NRVA 2005 process in order to optimize the next NRVA survey.
- Monitoring of the transfer process of NRVA 2005 data and analysis to policy and programme makers: MRRD's senior management and other stakeholders and clients (among other things: Consumer Satisfaction Survey after NRVA 2005 related information transfer) – the impact has to be evaluated!!!
- Annual staff evaluation with particular emphasis on evaluation of skills acquired to date; next annual staff evaluation scheduled for December 2006.

3.7 Other Project Activities

3.7.1 Project Management

- Presentation of Project's Progress Reports.
- Financial accounting:
 - Producing and presentation of monthly financial reports (to ASA headquarters, Germany as well as MRRD, Kabul).
 - Budgetary planning for Afghan's fiscal year 1385 (2006/ 2007).



- Procurement (regarding EC administered Project budget, following EC regulations) of office equipment, office supplies and GIS and statistical analytical software procurement.
- Participation at MRRD Programme Coordination Meetings.
- According to the agreement with European Commission (finance department): tax payment arrangement, following Afghanistan's new tax reform, but given priority to existing contracts (no tax payment).

3.7.2 Contributions to Inquiries from Project's Stakeholders and other interested parties

- Wrote a chapter in collaboration with WFP /VAM entitled Food security in Afghanistan after 2001: from assessment to analysis and interpretation to response, chapter 6 (Pinney, A & Ronchini S) in Light footprints at the crossroads: Food security and resilience in Afghanistan, Edited Pain A; FAO 2006.
- Advice given to CSO/UNFPA on the structure of provincial data products from the village facility survey and the Prix-centres household listing data.
- Facilitated negotiations between CSO and the World Bank to implement a household energy and water use survey in Kabul with the University of Kabul. The survey was enumerated in May 2006. NSS unit and CSO contributed to sample design construction, questionnaire formatting in Teleform, data processing and database normalisation.
- Facilitation of negotiation between CSO and DFID to develop a survey programme for monitoring the impact of rural development of opium cultivation and selected provinces in Afghanistan. After much technical input this survey has been postponed due to the lack of a up to date village listing. The village listing will be available in December 2006, which would mean a potential delay of one year.
- Contributing to meetings to make recommendations to the office of the first vice president of the composition of the National Statistics Council.
- Contributing to the debate on the monitoring systems needed to track progress against the millennium development goals, the Afghan Compact and the I-ANDS.



4 Project's impact – an assessment

4.1 Impact Assessment regarding the Impact Indicators

The following comments will be given about Project's impact based on the above impact indicators.

The overall objective:

Afghan poverty levels are reduced

- National indicators of poverty indicate a decline
- Positive changes within the Human Development Index (HDI)

Both indicators are not yet completely analysed. Anyhow, initial comparisons between the poverty levels recorded during NRVA Further comments and assessments will be based on data of NRVA 2005 itself as well as UNDP reports.

The two specific objectives:

- 1) "Information is generated by NSS and contributes to improved policy development and programming"
Target group: key persons in ministries and international organisations: policy and programme decision making process.
- 2) "Relevant government institutions have the capacity to implement NSS activities in the future"
Target group: technical staff in CSO and MRRD.
 - Ministries, donors and implementing organisations use NSS outputs for policy design, as well as project and programme planning and monitoring: policies and programmes (at both national and provincial level) are designed targeting the poor.

NSS outputs are in high demand from stakeholders (MRRD and other Ministries) as well as international organisations. There are frequent requests from other stakeholders for the NRVA 2005 data. Since the announcement of the imminent release of the NRVA 2005 data and the distribution of a request form six formal raw data requests have been received already from various institutions such as the US Military & ISAF.

- NSS outcomes form important contributions to the Afghan National Development Framework (ANDF)

The Project has been asked to contribute data about poverty and food insecurity to the development of the Interim – Afghan National Development Strategy, I-ANDS. A preliminary analysis of NRVA 2005 data was used. The project has also been asked to contribute to discussions on structuring of government monitoring and statistical gathering post London Conference.

- State budget prioritise policy and programmes aiming at reducing populations' vulnerability, food insecurity and poverty.
- MRRD, CSO, MAAHF, MOH cooperate for NSS data collection and analysis

All these institutions contributed to the design of the NRVA 2005 questionnaires. A Memorandum of Understanding had been developed and signed between CSO and MoPH/



UNICEF regarding co-financing of the NRVA surveys as well another Memorandum of understanding regarding the collaborative data analysis of the health indicators.

- Timely and appropriate response of government and agencies to early warning information.

Currently there is no crisis to respond to, but there was expected drought in July 2006 this was predicted to reoccur within the life of the project. There has been a decrease in collaboration around the early warning system due to the change in personnel in FEWS Net. Therefore the project has taken proactive action to rectify collaborative links and co-operation across ministries.

4.2 Updated Comments to Project's Risks and Assumptions

Risks and Assumptions at the level of the overall objective:

- The security situation and the political climate in Afghanistan has been stalling. Within the previous reports it was expressed that the security situation and political climate within Afghanistan would allow for improved economic development, at this time things are less clear, indications are that the general public maybe loosing confidence or patients in the speed of development.

Comments

There was limited economic growth during 2006. Investments largely depend on the commitment of the international donor community, but a significant part of this investment is "lost" due to the fact that security measures swallow up so much money. Private investments into the productive sector are still very limited and not yet significant for economic growth. The security situation in Afghanistan is not yet stable enough to create a investment friendly climate, and one that many of the Afghan Diaspora feel willing to return to personally and with their money. There is a high emigration rate of country's manpower abroad, primarily to Iran and Pakistan.

- In year 2006 again drought affect the country, but as most part of the country experienced drought for more than 5 years it was not a new phenomenon and no significant impact on the livelihood of the population as they have adopted their coping mechanisms. North part of the country was to some extent affected as they are mostly relying on agriculture.

Comments:

Drought conditions were reported in July 2006 the north on rain fed lands, however, indications were over exaggerated. NRVA 2005 data was used to minimise this exaggeration. Flooding and loss of harvest was also recorded in areas within the North which are normally at risk of flooding.

Risks and Assumptions at the level of the specific objectives

- The security situation does get worse, so that it become impossible to conduct NSS components in large parts of the country

**Comments:**

In 2005, the security situation in Afghanistan hindered a normal NRVA assessment in several districts in the South, South-East and Eastern Region of the country. But finally, until the end of August 2005, all districts had been covered by the NRVA 2005 survey (subsequently six districts were omitted due to lack of an appropriate sampling frame. These were districts where the household listing data was not available and the sample had to resort to using village lists from the FAO livestock census which was incomplete) Despite this, only 12 districts had to be enumerated with male only teams due to security concerns around taking female surveyors into these highly insecure areas. Again this states 15 on the web. So the security situation did not have a significant negative impact on phase 2 Project implementation activities during NRVA 2005.

During 2006 the security situation in the south west and south east and to some extent in the east of Afghanistan became worse, the issue of security and subsequent reliability of data results will be discussed during the methodology meetings which are due to be held in December 2006

Project's international Technical Assistants are under the security umbrella of MRRD..

- Government Ministries' planning departments do not perceive NSS as a rival and are open to both the cooperation and the use of data for planning and monitoring purposes

Comments:

The project has started an improved partnership with the Ministries (of Agriculture, Health, Education, Urban Development, Women's Affaires and Energy and Water). These stakeholders have been very interested in the data outcomes of NRVA 2005. Project's openness in the development of survey instruments and transparency around data sharing has ensured good inter-ministerial relations. This partnership will be improved at the designing and incorporation of these stakeholders information in an improve manner during implementation of NRVA-2007.

Risks and Assumptions at the level of the expected results:

- Government policy and programming is responsive to credible data on understanding poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity

Comments:

The government policy and programming (particularly within MRRD) show a high interest in NSS outputs. Within the present process of the development of an MRRD 3 year policy strategy, the value and need of NSS' outputs are often emphasised. The senior management within MRRD as well as the directors of the MRRD related programmes inquire regularly of the project's contributions to understand better poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity. MRRD's contributions to the Interim-Afghan National Development Strategy have been based (among other things) on data of NRVA 2003 and first findings of NRVA 2005.

- Good collaboration is maintained between central and provincial government institutions involved in generating data, analysis and dissemination.

**Comments:**

MRRD is in the process of defining its process and structures relationship with the regional/provincial level. The decentralisation and regionalisation process in Afghanistan has just started. It is not yet clear, if this process will have influences (positive or negative) upon the Project's capacity to meet the expected results. Despite the recent provincial elections and the number of new provincial bodies that have been established, decision-making roles and responsibilities have yet to be devolved to provincial level. Once these have been clarified, the Project can respond by producing appropriate data and analysis products to support provincial level decision-making.

- Government provides suitable staff with the potential to respond to training and capacity building initiatives.

Comments:

With the start of Project's second phase, there was no personnel change within the key staff of the Vulnerability Analysis Unit/ MRRD. Therefore, the technical know-how of the VAU staff was conserved and built upon. The staffs provided from CSO and recruited by NSS for the establishment of the NSS-CSO team has the potential to respond to training and capacity building. As of February 2006, the NSS-CSO team consists of five analysts and one Director, the NSS-VAU team within MRRD consists of four analysts, one administrator, one financial accountant and one Director.

- The current statistical legislation is updated so it becomes internationally credible and facilitates inter-ministerial collaboration.

Comments:

New statistical legislation signed into effect on the first of January 2006 (see annex 8 for draft English translation of statistical law) is important for three reasons:

- It granted CSO independent status
- It granted CSO independent budget direct from the Ministry of Finance.
- It produced the legislative framework for the formation of a National Statistics Council that will be responsible for scheduling and prioritising data collection activities for the country across the whole of the Afghan government.
- The steering committee remains a credible and accepted peer review constituency for ensuring methodological excellence and a broad acceptance among the stakeholder community for the methods chosen.

Comments:

Within the Memorandum of Understanding (EC, MRRD, CSO, July 2005) Steering Committee's role and tasks have been defined. For Project's second phase it is the role of the Advisory Group to ensure organizational issues regarding the Project as well as methodological excellence and a broad acceptance among the stakeholder community for approval of the methods chosen. The National Statistics Council will also be an important forum for promoting the data collection activities of the NSS project and making sure that they are well integrated into the government timetable for surveys.



5 Finance, inputs, administration and logistics

The NSS Project (phase 2) is funded by the European Union. Nevertheless, the NSS Units at MRRD and CSO closely cooperate with other international donors (WFP, FEWS NET, etc.) in financing different surveys. This continues the tradition established with NRVA 2003, where WFP, UNDP and FAO all contributed to the costs of the assessment. Below a summary table is provided indicating the budget utilisation within the different budget categories for the reporting period March 2005-August 2006:

A. Fees	Explanation	Total Budget acc. Contract (€)	Expenses (€)	Balance (€)
A.1	Long Term Key Experts	1.058.904,00	390.924,00	667.980,00
A.2	Long Term Non-Key Experts	160.776,00	91.553,00	69.223,00
A.3	Non-Key Short Term Experts	300.281,00	153.198,00	147.083,00
		1.519.961,00	635.675,00	884.286,00
C. Incidental Expenditures	Total Budget Incidental Expenditures			
C.1	Per diem Intern. and nat. Experts (indicative)	35.000,00	11.400,06	23.599,94
C.2	Domestic Flights (indicative)	12.000,00	1.415,75	10.584,25
C.3	Workshops/ trainings (indicative)	50.000,00	34.472,48	15.527,52
C.4	Per Diem for Government Staff	9.000,00	4.447,17	4.552,83
C.5	DSA for Civil Servants	90.000,00	50.963,46	39.036,54
C.6	Survey preparation, Data collection, Survey evaluation			
C.6.1	NRVA	730.000,00	340.223,59	389.776,41
C.6.2	EWIS	25.000,00	786,96	24.213,04
C.6.3	Emergency Assessment.	20.000,00	0,00	20.000,00
C.6.4	Special Studies	20.000,00	0,00	20.000,00
C.7	Others	28.868,00	23.586,23	5.281,77
	Total Incidental Expenditure	1.019.868,00	500.862,70	519.005,30
	Total	2.539.829,00	1.102.970,70	1.436.858,30

* NRVA costs net of WFP and UNICEF contributions

Regarding Incidental Expenditures the biggest part has been utilised for NRVA activities.



6 Conclusions and recommendations

The second phase of the project has successfully maintained the momentum established during phase 1.

Within the Government of Afghanistan and the international donor community it is highly recognised, that the NRVA provides products that are in high demand for monitoring of the actual developments and policy as well as programme design. This instrument will continue to play a very effective role in providing data to government and other agencies especially I-ANDS benchmark related information.

There is widespread agreement that it is cost efficient and appropriate to continue with a bi-annual frequency of NRVA implementation, particularly with an initiation and improvement of early warning information system initiated in year 2005 and continued for year 2006. So far 2 round of FSS assessment (Dec, 2005 and March, 2006) is implemented across the country and the results is been used for drought response. After 2 other planned round in year 2006 it should be evaluated and recommendation for continuation, times to be conducted and ways of improvement should be presented. In summary, a biennial assessment with interim household food security monitoring may meet the need for regular updates on welfare, while a biannual NRVA would produce updates on all the indicators currently collected in the NRVA 2005. It is therefore recommended that the project pursue a biannual schedule for NRVA while strengthening and improving the household food security monitoring aspects to continue to provide data on household food security in the intervening time.

The improved rigour and speed of data entry achieved through the use of scannable paper formats (Teleform software) will be maintained and improved to ensure even higher quality data enumeration in the field and population of database. Not only is it recommended that the Teleform software be used with all further NRVA assessments, but it is being used for other surveys that CSO are collaborating with (World Bank Kabul energy and water use survey, DFID's rural livelihoods and opium production survey), but there is also a possibility that it might be considered for the national census in 2008. Lessons learned from the design and scanning of NRVA 2005 have already been incorporated into the household monitoring form design and data validation procedures.

Successful recent negotiations with the Ministry of Agriculture have clarified roles and responsibilities around market prices, with Ministry of Agriculture/FAO agreeing to increase the range of items for which rural market prices will be collected and distributed regularly. This will allow the Vulnerability Analysis Unit to concentrate on improving analysis and summary products from market price data.

One of the major achievements of the project has been its ability to respond to a range of government and partner agencies' data needs, including poverty headcount, food security monitoring, and emergency assessments. All of these require different methodologies and different skills and institutional partners to be able to respond in all situations. One weakness has been the ability to respond to government's information needs immediately after an acute shock such as an earthquake, flooding or heavy snowfall. To this end, further discussions and collaborations with the Disaster Management Information System initiative of the UNDP/AIMS are required. The latter is based within MRRD and the Disaster Management Information System Unit in MRRD which is the counterpart government agency for this initiative. Currently MRRD are upgrading to ArcGIS 9, which will be part of an organisational collaboration between the disaster management information system unit, the Management Information System Unit and the Vulnerability Analysis Unit. It is recommended that the vulnerability analysis unit maintain close and effective working



relationships with both of these other departments within the Ministry. Benefits from this can include a rational new ARC GIS platform, and an awareness of potential data sources that could be combined with NRVA and other data available from the VAU.

The staff numbers have been increased during this reporting period to insulate the project from the impact of staff turnover and to be able to tackle the volume of work. All new recruitment has been completed,

The creation of four senior analyst posts has ensured that key staff members have remained within the project and that staff are motivated to excel in technical issues. This level is open for other people to aspire to within the project, and has ensured the project from the threat of losing staff to higher paid jobs outside the project. This is an effective solution to securing exceptional government staff while remaining within the super-scale pay ranges and it is recommended to continue with this model.

While a good start to the building of an early warning system has been made in phase 1, the move away from the drought induced humanitarian crisis has resulted in less urgency to share data in a timely fashion among certain stakeholders. It is recommended that project staff work closely with the FEWS NET representative in Afghanistan to reinvigorate this process.

Although highly desirable that the project actively engages in the two provincial support pilots planned in the new future:

1. The MRRD alternative livelihoods support to the provincial development council aiming to bring a dialogue between community development councils, provincial development councils and the new elected provincial councils with regard to developing a rural integrated development plan. This pilot is funded under the antinarcotics alternative livelihoods programme of CIDA.
2. There is also a six province pilot planned, where the government will create dialogue with training at provincial level to develop understanding and input into the development of the full Afghan National Development Strategy.

The inclusion of such activities should be studied to ensure that they do not subtract from the NSS project in time, resources or technical ability.

However, if this form of provincial planning is successful and there is a clear demand for data products from our project, successful activities elaborated in this pilot phase will be expanded to other provinces with agreement from the EU or other donors. Also, should these pilots demonstrate that there is a clear need for a decentralised project structure to ensure regular timely and appropriate delivery of training and data products in response to the demand from provincial administrations, it is recommended that the project should be expanded so that it is in the position to respond by hiring regional/provincial staff and to ensure support for this staff to operate effectively.

It is strongly recommended that the multi-stakeholder collaborative nature of the project is maintained and encouraged. This has a number of benefits including buy-in from a large number of institutions as well as support in terms of in-kind donations of equipment as well as cash donations to the cost of NRVA. Such institutional support may be very important in continuing the viability of National assessments after the end of this project.

The project is continuously called to provide data and analytical products based on its own primary data and other sources. This is a testimonial to the position that the project has obtained within government. It continuously acts as the storage point of data and as a source base of skills that can support data utilisation for a wide range of planning and programming needs. The project must be allowed to be responsive to real demand from government both of



central and provincial level for assistance with empirically based policy development, planning and programming.

One way in which the project can significantly improve data access for its own data products and those of CSO is through the development of Web-based databases, for which users can form their own queries interrogating the raw data, creating summary tables, graphs and maps in a user-friendly way without having to have these statistical analytical or GIS mapping software on their own home computers or the skills to drive them. Making these Web interfaces available in both English and Dari on the CSO website, will reach new audiences and improve data awareness and analytical skills by facilitating users to interact directly with the data, rather than be mediated through requests to the NSS staff. We hope that this will do much to improve access to the NSS data as well as other CSO data products such as the consumer price index, village facility survey and household listing data, and improve NSS's and CSO's image as a provider readily accessible of high quality data products.

Another comparative advantage of the project and its staff is that it has been through two rounds of design, implementation, data management and analysis of NRVA. This represents a unique contemporary experience within staff of the government of Afghanistan, and now it is able to contribute effectively to the debate on the structure of monitoring that is currently underway following the London Conference that presented the millennium development goal reports, the Afghan compact and the interim Afghan national developer's strategy. All three of these documents have benchmarks indicators and targets that have to be measured, monitored and reported on. It is recommended that government staff continued to contribute to the post London Conference monitoring debate, as the project's unique experience of implementing two NRVAs, brings real data collection and analytical experience to the table.

Creation and operation of an effective and representative National Statistics Council has been achieved, this will be crucial to improvements in the range of data collected, coordination across government and improved data utilization.

Regarding the time schedule for NRVA 2005 the NSS Project encountered a delay. Above all, the scanning process for more than 1.3 million of data sheets needed much more time than originally estimated. Problems of computer hardware that was not powerful enough to sustain the processing required, (alleviated by the loan of a high-speed server from UNOPS) and the absence of any reliable electricity supply (alleviated by the loan of the generator from WFP). While during the 2nd year of phase 2 of the NSS project these problems is solved through procuring high power generator and high speed server for CSO/NSS unit. The improved rigour and speed of data entry achieved through the use of scan able paper formats has been maintained as it has enabled rapid and high-quality data entry. The Teleform and scanning facilities have been used by the World Bank to facilitate its water and energy survey. The EC procured a further scanner bringing the scanning capabilities up to 140 sheets per minute. It's effective use by staff adds to meet the needs of future NRVA and related other surveys and it is recommended that the system should be maintained for all further NRVA assessments and Household Food Security Monitoring surveys and that it is made available to other activities that CSO and MRRD undertake.

Dissemination of the NRVA 2005 data will be improved by mounting the database on a Web-based platform, ensuring that users without statistical analytical and mapping skills can easily define their own queries, create graphs and map query results. CSO was encouraged by this approach and asked the project to include the consumer price index (CPI) data in the first round of web-based database development. It is hoped that if this is successful, this will encourage CSO to mount some of its other valuable databases on the CSO website. To this end, the project has undertaken to support revamping of the CSO website with training and



support to three CSO staff outside of the NSS project that are responsible for maintaining and updating the CSO website.

The Project needs to strengthen its methodology and approach for emergency needs assessments. With good use of remote sensing data for identifying areas of impact from a shock, and with the use of climatic information along with agro-climatic ground data and market prices, it should be possible to identify areas that need further emergency assessment by on ground community/household evaluation. This was the case during the drought of 2004 where satellite images, agro-climatology and market prices were used to provide a national overview, but further survey work was done at a local level to clarify the impact of the return of the drought. These threads need to be combined in a coherent methodology that could obviate the need for household food security monitoring, but be a trigger for emergency household food and water security assessments when the remote data sources indicate that the area in question has been negatively affected by a shock. During 2006 drought was again suspected in June and July. Satellite imagery again played an important role in analysing the threat. NRVA2005 and FSMS data was presented as an indicator of the social impacts and coping strategies which aided in the interpretation of the threat. As a result the third FSMS was applied for and will be carried out in November 2006. However, there is a need to make the application for a food security monitoring survey more timely so that it can gather required data to aid to the estimation of the impact of a shock.

During phase 1 many of the analytical products emanating from the Project were designed to meet the demands of national government and agencies. There were no specific data products produced to support decision-making and planning on a provincial level yet

Extending data support beyond Kabul is potentially desirable for two reasons:

1. Building up a network of data collectors at provincial level, made up of various stakeholder ministries.
2. More importantly, looking to see for greater opportunities of data product dissemination and incorporation into provincial planning processes.

Piloting support at a provincial level for decision-making could be a cost-effective way of developing a better understanding of appropriate provincial data products. Two opportunities have presented themselves for this in the near future:

- A pilot in Kandahar province will take place whereby Provincial Development Councils will be supported and trained to engage with Community Development Councils (an elected village development council produced by the National Solidarity Programme) and the newly elected Provincial Shuras. They will be attempting to develop an integrated development strategy for the province, with funds provided by a CIDA's alternative livelihoods programme. Although at present there is no indication that this pilot will include statistical survey teams, it is possible that the facilities and staff are used for survey purposes.
- Provincial consultations by government with provincial authorities will be piloted in six provinces to further the consultative process needed to develop an Afghan National Development Strategy. These consultations will draw upon both the information developed during the Millennium Development Goal report and further data products from NRVA as soon as they are available.