



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

March 2006



Submitted by:

The ICON-Consortium

ASA



ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH & Co. KG Consulting Gruppe

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DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



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“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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FOOD/2005/099-886

Reporting Period March 2005 to February 2006

Report submitted by **The ICON Consortium**

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**PROJECT KEY DATA SHEET**

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Secondary Locations:	Provinces of Afghanistan
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 November 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	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.

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**QUALITY ASSURANCE STATEMENT**

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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 2005 – February 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
MOH	Ministry of 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

To assist Afghanistan with its acute and multiple data needs to inform and prioritise the reconstruction and development efforts; the National Surveillance System (NSS) Project was designed 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. Project's second phase has been designed by European Commission and defined from March 2005 to August 2008.

This report in hand covers the first year of Project's second phase, March 2005 to February 2006.

Phase 1 was intended to develop methodologies and institutional arrangements to ensure effective delivery of data and analytical products during phase 2. Starting with Project's second phase, NSS has focused its efforts on the implementation of the nationwide National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA 2005) and the development of a pilot Household Food Security Monitoring System.

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 (HFSM) 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 during 2006, once sufficient rounds of data are available. While it seems unlikely that the HFSM 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.

Mounting national surveys in a post-conflict insecure country, where the traditional role of women makes it difficult to recruit women and to make contact with female household representatives remains a challenge. This challenge is exacerbated in areas of very poor security. Experience in NRVA 2005 of insisting on male/female couples to form teams was very encouraging and enabled all but 11 of the most insecure districts to be jointly surveyed. Those 11 most insecure districts were enumerated by men teams only.



The Project is often called to provide data and data products based on its own primary data and other sources. This is a testament to the position that the Project has obtained within government. It 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. An example of this is the support provided by Project staff to the production of the first Millennium Development Goal report for Afghanistan (June-August 2005) as well as to the production of the Interim – Afghan National Development Strategy (December 2005 to January 2006), presented during the London Conference on Afghanistan (January/ February 2006). This is an indication of how central this Project is and how it increases government's ability to report on the current state of reconstruction and development. This kind of work plays a key role in Project's mandate for the second phase: Provision of statistical information in order to contribute to improved policy development, planning and programming – at both, central and provincial level. This ensures that the Project and its staff maintain a reputation among government as effective deliverers of information and if Project staff shall remain at the centre of government's data collection and reporting activities. The experience of the project gained in implementing the NRVA surveys, and coordinating with other stakeholders, has proved invaluable in contributing to discussions after the London Conference on the monitoring system for the Millennium Development Goals, of Afghan compact and the iANDS, as well as discussions supporting the director-general of CSO to make recommendations on the composition of the National Statistics Council.

One of the major achievements of the Project has been its strong emphasis on the response 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, based within MRRD are ongoing. The objective is to ensure that MRRD is able to call upon a range of data products from annual assessments through to satellite imagery on which to base an oath regular planning and policy development as well as emergency responses, should the need arise.

The National Surveillance System 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).

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).



This impact will be produced through three activities:

1. The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA)
2. National Early Warning Information System.
3. Emergency assessments (none conducted during the second phase of the project so far)

A hallmark of the Project has been an openness and transparency around data sharing and methodological development. Good stakeholder relations produce methodological consensus & data demand. The NRVA has become well established as a credible data source on food insecurity, vulnerability, service access and other livelihood characteristics. These data products are in high demand by government and other agencies. This instrument will continue to play a very effective role in providing data to government and other agencies. The success in producing data that clients demand is demonstrated by the fact that partner UN agencies are consistently prepared to contribute to the funding of national surveys. 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's. Such institutional support may be very important in continuing the viability of national assessments after the end of this Project.

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.

The Vulnerability Analysis Unit within MRRD is responsible for the production of the data, analysis and interpretation needs from all available information to meet 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.

Regarding the time schedule for NRVA 2005 the NSS Project encountered, up to February 2006, a delay of two to three months. Above all, the scanning process for more than 1.3 million of data sheets needed much more time than estimated before. Because of the quality of enumeration of questionnaires in northern region, 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). The improved rigour and speed of data entry achieved through the use of scannable paper formats will be maintained as it has enabled rapid and high-quality data entry. It is recommended that the system will be maintained for all further NRVA assessments and pilot Household Food Security Monitoring systems 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 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 continues to promote and contribute to a National Early Warning Information System. 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. Therefore, rejuvenation of this collaboration is needed, and now that the FEWS-NET has just re-awarded the 5 year contract this revitalisation can take place with renewed confidence. The Vulnerability Analysis Unit has made regular contributions to the monthly Afghan Network and Food Security bulletin including monthly price analysis (until September 2005), results from NRVA 2003, results from Kabul emergency NRVA (Spring 2004), results from NRVA 2004 models/satellite NDVI update, as well as occasional policy briefings. Market price collection, which had been undertaken by MRRD, has been handed back to its rightful home of the Ministry of Agriculture with support from FAO.

The Project needs to strengthen its methodology and approach for emergency needs assessment. 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 imagery, 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.

There are funds to commission specific research to support and reinforce the methodological developments required to ensure an efficient and cost-effective food purity and livelihoods surveillance system during this project phase. Current potential topics for further research include:

- Dietary diversity as effective proxy to food consumption
- Household food security perceptions as effective proxy to food consumption
- Poverty/ food security proxies for inclusion in the national census summer 2007
- Review of farming systems research conducted by EC funded URD Project, AREU.
- Climate change, global warming and Afghanistan
- Opium and food security in Afghanistan
- Coping strategy mechanism index

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 within a province.

Extending data support beyond Kabul is potentially required 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.
- 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.

If this form of provincial planning is successful and there is a clear demand for data products from the NSS Project, successful activities elaborated in this pilot phase will be expanded to other provinces.

During the months of December 2005 up to February 2006, the Project increased the number of full-time analysts within the NSS/ CSO unit as well as within VAU. The position of NSS/ CSO Director has been put in and an administrator has been signed on. This increases the impact of all the capacity building and insulates 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 yet, the project will continue to provide additional interim allowances to the NSS-Unit and VAU-Unit staff.

CSO has a tradition of forming technical oversight committees to garner the experience of senior CSO staff members to support successful implementation of large-scale surveys that take place under the auspices of CSO. It is recommended that such an oversight committee be convened for each of the annual NRVA surveys and that it consists of 3 senior CSO staff experienced in large scale household survey design and implementation

In summary, the NSS Project is proceeding well, having established products that are clearly in demand. Focusing on training and capacity building, particularly area of data analysis, interpretation and report writing is essential to ensure that these products can be maintained after the Project's end. This aspect must not be sold short when responding to demands for urgent production of data and analysis.

The second phase of the Project has successfully maintained the momentum established during phase 1, despite the challenge of maintaining the integrity of the implementation of NRVA 2005 which spanned the end of phase 1 of the beginning of phase 2 of this Project. At the same time the Project started with building a new project unit and relationship with the new government stakeholder, CSO. This relationship has progressed significantly during the first year of the project to a point where NSS project staff are contributing to CSO in many ways beyond the core activity of data generation.

Piloting of the Household Food Security Monitoring system and development of appropriate emergency assessment protocols linked with agro-climatology, satellite data and market prices is an important area of consolidation still to be satisfactorily achieved in Afghanistan.

The Project has time and resources to clarify these areas, but even if the Project is successful in clarifying robust and appropriate methodologies that cover the range of data needs from



emergency assessments to reporting on poverty, overall success will be elusive unless there is continued and sustained collaboration from all data generating stakeholders. Timely and regular collaboration is necessary to ensure that all components of the food security surveillance and early warning system are produced, shared and synthesised into programme and policy friendly products. In this context, to identify and to implement an appropriate approach for the transfer of data and information into policy design and programming remains part of the biggest challenges for ensuring the Project's future impact.



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, which was relieved by the return of reasonable rainfall in 1381 and 1382 (2002 and 2003).

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 upon 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, where the Government's vision for Afghanistan and are translated into specific development targets to be achieved 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:

- A single monitoring framework for monitoring the MDG's, the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS.
- The development of a harmonized national programme of data collection and surveys as well as a division of responsibilities among different agencies for data collection and analysis.
- The formation and effective operation of a National Statistics Council to ensure a rational schedule of surveys covering a range of agreed indicators that are standardised for Afghanistan, that address the MDG's, the ANDS and the Afghanistan Compact. For the purposes of monitoring, the MDG's, the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS should be seen as part of the same continuum rather than as distinct entities.

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 around € 2.540.000 contracted for the Technical Assistance).

The National Surveillance System (NSS) Project is implemented in two phases:

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

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), building up a lighter monitoring system instead of the sentinel site system based on market prices, agro-meteorological and hydrological data. This system will include a very light household monitoring system to be piloted in collaboration with WFP.

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 international organisations both in the methodological development, but also 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. Not only one has to take women surveyors, but these need to go in a culturally acceptable manner, i.e. accompanied by a male chaperone (known locally as Maharam), who is normally a male relative.

In NRVA 2003, most of the southern and eastern Pashtun provinces were not enumerated with 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. This worked remarkably in removing whatever constraints were operating during the enumeration of NRVA 2003 (cultural or security) in ensuring women were available to work as enumerators. As a result, NRVA 2005 only has 11 out of 398 districts where women were not able to go due to very poor security conditions.



The use of chaperones has to be anticipated in planning future household surveys as well. The above mentioned strategy of insisting on workable couples reduces the need of chaperons to a minimum and therefore the costs associated with them.

- The law creating a National Statistics Council was passed on the first of January 2006 (see Annex 8 for unofficial English translation) 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

The main elements of Project's concept are defined within the terms of reference, presented by 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:

Afghan poverty levels are reduced.

Specific objectives:

- 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:

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.

There are **two specific target groups** for this Project:

- 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.

The expected Project **results** will be discussed within Chapter 2.

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:

2.1 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 on project as well as 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 an improved ability to transfer NSS outcomes into poverty and food security oriented policies and programmes (if possible and demanded: at national and provincial level).

2.2 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 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.

2.2.1 Role & Responsibility of CSO in Project’s second phase

During late 2003, with the help of an inter-ministerial commission, the Central Statistic Office (CSO) developed a Statistical Master Plan for Afghanistan (SMP)¹ 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 References for Project’s 2nd 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 on the first of January 2006 clearly spell’s 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 which the team leader of this project is involved in.

During the first phase of NSS, the government ministries were in a period of rapid transition, and institutional structures and organisation charts were still not finalised. The Public Administrative Reform benchmark and timeline from The Afghan Compact States “By end-2010: Government machinery (including the number of ministries) will be restructured and rationalised to ensure a fiscally sustainable public administration; the Civil Service Commission will be strengthened; and civil service functions will be reformed to reflect core functions and responsibilities”.

Therefore, in the intervening years before this timeline the structure of government is likely to evolve further. The current status of participating ministries with regard to setting institutional

¹ Afghanistan: A Statistical Master Plan: Report prepared by joint inter-agency mission, November 2003. The draft plan presented in this document was prepared at the request of the Government of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan by a joint mission made up of representatives from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Kingdom Department for International Development.



priorities, structures and the subsequent relation to the NSS varies. Additionally, the CSO, which in earlier years had the mandate for all data collection activities, was not a member of the original NSS Steering Committee.

2.2.2 Lessons learned from SMP process to date

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 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:
 - Granting independence to Central Statistics Office
 - Mandated the formation of a National Statistics Council.

Currently, meetings are underway to recommend to the office of the First Vice President the composition of the National Statistics Council. It is hoped that the National Statistics Council will take a central coordinating role for setting statistical policy, work priorities, statistical standards and coordinating the entire statistical system. Until an effective National Statistics Council is formed, the implementation of survey work will still largely be supply driven by availability of funds from donors. While National Surveillance System project staff will not be represented on the National Statistics Council, it is hoped that the CSO will 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 ones.

With the return to independence of CSO, there will be a restructuring of the organisation. CSO has committed to including the NSS unit within the organogram that will be published at the beginning of 1385 (21 March 2006). There is a new Cabinet to be announced shortly, and this will include the announcement of President General of the CSO now that it is an independent government department.

2.3 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.

2.3.1 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 objective and as actual as possible.

The following diagram (Figure 1) gives an overview for Project's organisational structure within different network.

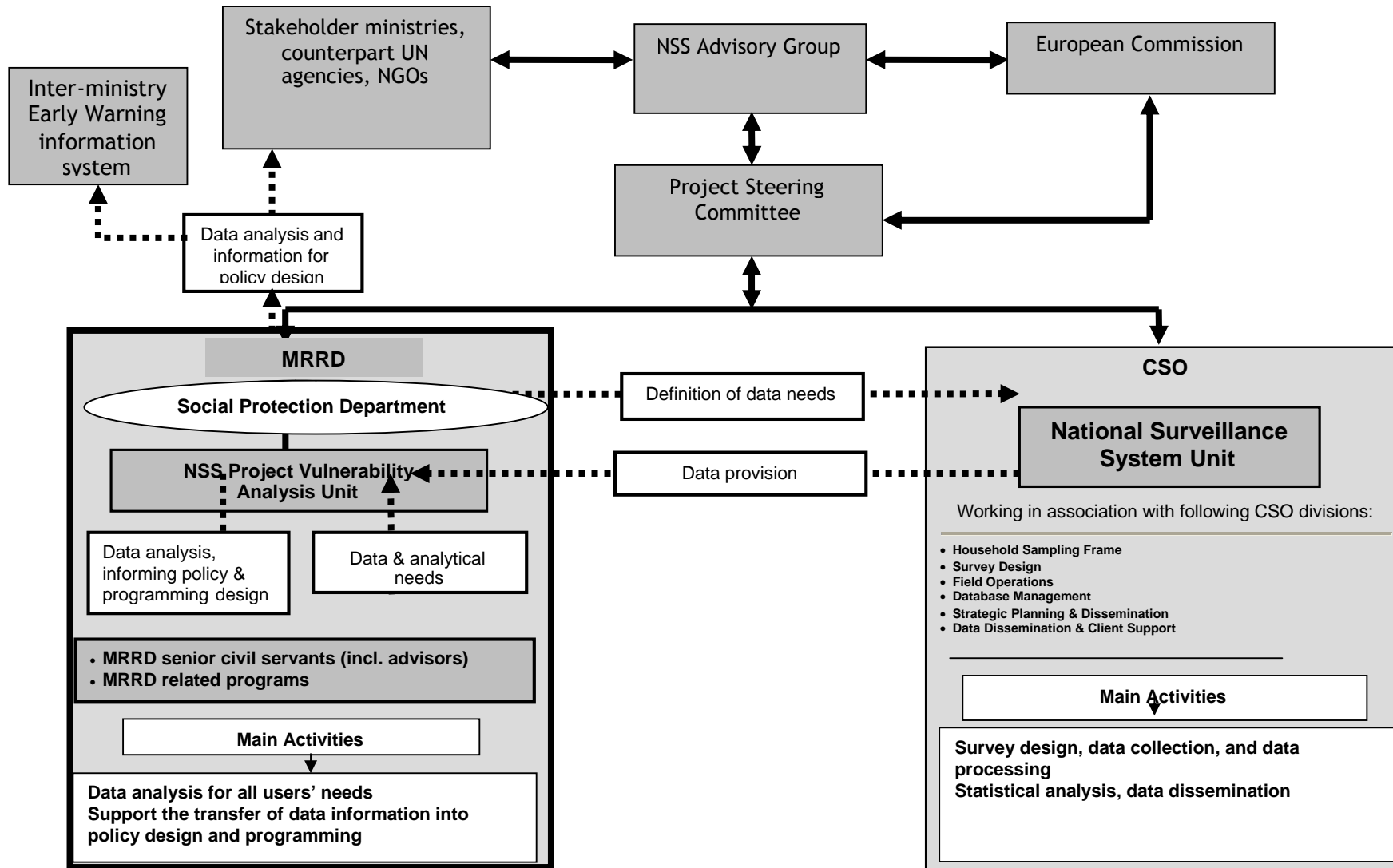


The Vulnerability Analysis Unit will work closely with the CSO-NSS unit to ensure their data needs are being incorporated into national level data collection work.

With regard to the aspect mentioned above the Project intends to strengthen the analysis and distribution capacities within the VAU in the second phase. Therefore an information system is going to be developed to analyse and process the statistical data provided by the Project's unit within the CSO.



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





2.3.2 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 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 Internet to a fashion allowing 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 in a similar platform, in particular, the village facility survey data from the pre-census has a listing exercise and the household listing data. The publication of the household listing population estimates is currently constrained by concerns about the political fallout with regard to the allocation of seats for the parliament if the pre-a-census household listing population data is released. 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, and it is hoped by the end of March 2006 there is a publicly accessible pilot version.

Two of the staff trained in Germany will form 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. There are currently installing a server and network within the CSO, and this will include 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 contribute, with other senior CSO staff, in discussions currently taking place concerning the architecture and structure of monitoring of the MDG's, Afghan Compact and the interim IANDS. 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 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. Recent examples are the World Bank Kabul energy and water use survey currently under preparation to be conducted in collaboration with the University of Kabul and the CSO. NSS Project staff were involved in facilitating meetings and agreement on terms of reference between the World Bank and the CSO and also offered project expertise in 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. 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.

2.4 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, the National Emergency Employment Programme, the Rural Water and Sanitation Programme, the Micro-Finance Facility Programme for Afghanistan, the National Area Based Development Project 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.*

The NSS Project has to play a pro-active role regarding data provision to all these partners. In order to build capacity and to sensitize national institutions and decision-makers to the value of data the project produces, the project should maintain a transparent and collaborative network, focusing particularly on Afghan government partners.

The implementation of the Asian Development Bank funded enterprise survey and household income and expenditure survey has been suspended pending a review by a senior external consultant due to implementation failures with the consultancy company that won the first tender. This review will take place in March/ April 2006. One of the issues to be discussed is the timing of the household income and expenditure survey now that NRVA 2005 has been produced. At the end



of the review period they will recommend one of a number of options including hiring personnel directly or read tendering the whole consultancy.

CSO pointed out in the Steering Committee, the danger of having to government surveys producing estimates on the same indicators in a similar timeframe. Potentially it undermines both surveys' credibility. It is hoped that the rapid formation and effective operation of the National Statistics Council, will ensure that this issue of survey scheduling and coordination between the Asian development bank household income and expenditure surveys and the current proposed schedule for the biennial NRVA can be discussed in that forum.

This report therefore proposes to formalise the agreement that NRVA should be a biennial event with the next survey plan for 2007. This will be subject to ratification or change by the National Statistics Council.

2.5 Project's Steering Committee/ Advisory Group

The Steering Committee structure during phase 1 of the Project was informal and flexible with changing membership, particularly in terms of international agencies and personalities. It was always a challenge to encourage regular and meaningful participation from government ministries. During the design phase of NRVA 2005, the stakeholder group was considerably expanded and required international expertise to further refine the methodology. This represented a shift from the major stakeholders in 2003, NGOs and some UN agencies to the major stakeholders in 2005 which were government departments counter parted by international organisations. These international agencies often are effective advocates of current best practice.

With the advent of phase 2 of the Project, the definition membership, roles, and responsibilities of the Project Steering Committee was defined in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the MRRD, the Ministry of Economy and the European Commission (see annex A3). The Project Steering Committee is constituted by the following members:

- Vice Minister or an authorised representative, of MRRD or Ministry of Economy, as chairman; (Reference to Ministry of Economy now redundant, because of CSO's independence. Therefore suggested that Vice-Minister of Ministry of economy is replaced by President General of CSO.)
- 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;
- Representative of the National Statistics Council (yet to be formed);
- Team Leader of the Technical Assistance team.

There was some concern from project staff on the ability to convene such a group of people from so many different ministries that do not directly relate to this Project. The rationale for the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water and Energy is that they are stakeholders in the Early Warning Information System. Having such representatives on a National Steering Committee may indeed



improve the level of commitment and data sharing in the Early Warning System initiative. This concern was born out of by the attendance of the first steering committee meeting that took place on the 17th of November 2005. Despite repeated phone calls e-mails on conversations to try ashore at tendons from the ministries not directly involved with project implementation, just one representative from the Ministry of Finance attend, other than representatives of the CSO and MRRD. It is not expected that the situation would change dramatically when the second steering committee meeting is called. One potential solution to this dilemma of trying to ensure collaboration across ministries directly related to data collection and utilisation is to ensure that major issues raised at the Steering Committee with representatives of CSO and MRRD that need to be discussed with a broader range of government ministries are taken forward for further discussion at the higher level National Statistics Council. CSO will be a key member of the National Statistics Council, and is likely that MRRD will also be a member, as it represents a major government data user.

2.6 Should the NRVA remain annual or move to biennial?

An outstanding issue to be addressed from the first steering committee meeting was a justification for conducting the NRVA assessment every two years rather than every year.

The NRVA 2005 enumerated 31,412 households, rural, urban and Kuchi, and represented a huge increase from NRVA 2003, which enumerated 11,765 households, only in the rural settled areas. There was need for an update in 2004 on the household food security situation, because of the return to drought conditions in many parts of Afghanistan. Therefore in 2004 when there were no funds for any further survey work, and the updates demanded by MRRD and other government stakeholders on the impact of the returning drought had to be based on a modelled drought shock to the livelihoods profile developed from wealth group data in NRVA 2003. There was not a huge demand for update on other indicators other than household food security, because non-humanitarian programmes were planning using NRVA 2003 results.

It became clear that during 2005 many programs were demanding updated information as they clearly expressed the need for new data to base the current planning and policy development processes on, rather than continuing to resort to two year old data.

Consultation with key government ministries/programmes and international partners confirms that all feel that a biennial schedule for the NRVA would be sufficient. MRRD strongly supported the move from an annual to a biennial schedule for the NRVA assessments. They pointed out that in effect, we already have started a biennial assessment schedule as there was an NRVA in 2003 and now this year 2005. MRRD has now moved from short-term relief operated planning to a 3-5 year planning horizon. This reduces the need for annual updates of data, particularly as the development indicators are unlikely to change significantly from one year to another. It is also suggested that the money for the three surveys could still be used over a six-year timeframe, allowing for some surveys to take place after the period of technical assistance of the project has finished. It was recognized that significant survey fatigue exists in many areas of Afghanistan, and a biennial survey schedule would reduce the potential negative impact of such fatigue.

CSO, among others, have noted that many of the indicators surveyed in NRVA would not be expected to change dramatically within one year, but more likely to see some change within two years, and therefore CSO supported the move to a biennial schedule. Even then many indicators in the survey may not be expected to change significantly to the short-term impact of economic growth and development initiatives. Yet in this period of intensive investment and development and reconstruction, a two year schedule for NRVA's was felt to be an appropriate compromise schedule for allowing time for potential change to take place in important indicators, while



maintaining a relatively current data sets for which people could use for planning and policy development.

There is a clear demand for biennial updates on most of the indicators, and recent consultations confirmed that many stakeholders felt a biennial schedule represented a return of information on survey resources than annual assessments. Therefore, it is proposed that the project move to a biennial scheduling for NRVA and make provision for the 3rd project supported NRVA implementation after the period of technical assistance has finished. One suggestion for consideration of the neck steering committee is all of the monies accrued to the project from WFP and UNICEF for conducting NRVA 2005 could go into a trust fund for conducting further NRVA assessments beyond the life of this project in 2009 and there after.

Also, the NSS team feels that there is literally not enough capacity in the project to implement, analyse and write reports from an annual NRVA in a timely and professional fashion, without significantly sacrificing the capacity building opportunities for Afghan staff. Many of the results from NRVA 2003 were produced in an isolated remote fashion that did nothing to improve capacity building of Afghan team members. Analysing and writing up reports from NRVA 2005 provides an excellent learning by doing experience for team members, but this needs extra time to ensure this process is effective. Remaining with an annual schedule for NRVA would jeopardise and sabotage these very important "learning by doing" opportunities. Afghans already completely manage and implement data collection and automated data entry. The remaining processes for which capacity building has to focus upon is analysis, interpretation and report writing.

2.7 Household food security monitoring system

Household food security is one of the indicators that are most urgently required when drought conditions return to Afghanistan. The recent changing climatic pattern suggests that this is likely to be a much more regular event the previous June 1998. To cover the need for regular update on food security household information, the most demanded humanitarian indicator, a pilot food security household monitoring system is under way, with funds from WFP and ECHO. One round of data collection has been completed in the autumn of 2005, and there are preparations currently underway for the second round of data collection in early spring 2006. This household monitoring system is a light questionnaire following up on selected districts enumerating the same households as 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 survey 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 a 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.



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

3.1 Start-up Activities

During the Inception Phase of the NSS Project (March–August 2005), the following activities have taken place.

- Initial meetings of: Team Leader and Project Director with Government, stakeholders and European Commission, March 2005.
- Start-up Activities in order: to mobilise the team and to establish efficient lines of communication and co-ordination.
- Start of the institutionalisation process of the NSS unit within CSO.
- Ensuring a smooth transition from NSS phase 1 to 2 while making sure there was no disruption to the implementation of the NRVA 2005.
- Agreement of Memorandum of Understanding, signed by EC, MRRD and CSO.
- Refining Project planning and clarification of Project direction (see logical framework, annex A1).

Phase 2 of the NSS Project (March 2005 to February 2008) incorporates the lessons learned of Project's first phase (September 2003 to February 2005). The Project started in March 2005 on a very solid household survey methodological, data collection and analysis as well as on a strong team within the VAU in MRRD. The continuity in personnel structure and composition allowed a best possible transition from NSS' first to second phase.

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

The technical support to the project needs to work towards building institutional structures and links for carrying out NSS Project activities.

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 Project's TORs, 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 and planning pilots planned underway by MRRD in Kandahar. See steering committee meeting minutes November 17, 2005. Planning activities have just started (February 2006 for this pilot planning exercise) and the NSS unit in CSO is currently providing data and analytical support for this process.

3.2.1 Activities regarding Institutionalisation of NSS activities: Result A

During the first year of the Project's second phase, the institutionalisation of the NSS activities within MRRD (VAU) and CSO was a focus. The essential logistical, organisational and institutional operations and measures concerned the following components:

- Institutional establishment of NSS Project within MRRD and CSO:
 - International and national staff recruitment and NSS team mobilising in both MRRD and CSO.



- CSO offices installed (June 2005), including a Teleform data scanning office.
- Promotion of an analyst of the NSS/VAU-team to the position of senior analyst, Nov. 2005.
- Annual staff evaluation of the NSS/VAU-team, December 2005.
- Ongoing team building process.
- Regular participation at the MRRD Programme Coordination Meetings.
- Promotion of database manager at two NSS CSO unit director while maintaining his roles and responsibilities this database manager for the project.
- Creation of technical steering committee for NRVA 2005 composed of three senior staff from CSO with oversight and quality control functions.
- Memorandum of Understanding: EC-MRRD-CSO:
 - Preparation and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between EC, MRRD and CSO (March to July 2005) – see annex A3
 - Meeting between MRRD, CSO, EC and NSS staff to improve collaboration, coordination and involvement of CSO in managing NRVA 2005 assessment (26/ 07/ 2005).
 - Preparation and signing of a second memorandum of understanding between CSO and project – December 2006.
- Establishment of NSS Steering Committee (in order to guarantee that NSS outcomes meet the expectations of MRRD, CSO and other primary stakeholders); first meeting, 17th of November 2005 (invitation and minutes, see annex A2).
- Coordination with the data analysis- and policy advice- department of the Ministry of Agriculture (FAAHM within MAAHF) in order to transfer VAU's district market price data collection responsibilities to the FAAHM unit, September 2005.

Comment:

The structures within MOH and MAAHF are rather 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 under way.

Problems:

- Delays in finalising a Memorandum of Understanding between MRRD, CSO and the European Commission created institutional barriers for effective early participation of CSO in the preparation and implementation of NRVA 2005. Once the MoU was signed, this changed and rapid recruitment of staff has taken place.
- Long-drawn-out process for staff recruitment and procurement, following unclear EC regulations. Solution: clear communication from European Commission procedures relating to staff recruitment and procurement.
- Lack of agreement on process of staff selection from within CSO creating delays and appointments.
- Loss of two key NSS CSO unit analysts, one to a better paid job outside of government and second, and another did not return from Germany after training in January 2006. Both these staff were perhaps the stronger analysts available within the CSO, and replacements may not



prove to be is capable of taking on the roles and responsibilities required. 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 despite there being provision for six analysts. The six analysts will be recruited as soon as appropriate office space and computers are available.

- Resignation of the director of the NSS unit within CSO after only 3 months work, citing personal health reasons. The database manager within the NSS unit of CSO has been promoted to director while maintaining his role as database manager. He has proved himself to be a reliable competent technical worker and one that can create an effective team.
- Electricity availability to the NSS unit in CSO (Sept. – Nov. 2005) delaying the Teleform scanning process. Solution: purchase battery-powered DC/AC inverter and proposed purchase of backup generator.
- Currently the office space for the NSS unit within CSO is split between two locations in different buildings. This is not a satisfactory long-term arrangement and CSO has made a commitment to providing contiguous office space once there new multipurpose building is occupied, releasing office space.
- Not clear status for NSS CSO unit PRR participation.

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.

- Recruitment process for the NSS/ VAU- completed for the time being.
- It has been agreed the senior CSO management that the analysts and the NSS CSO unit will remain under incentive payment basis until the end of the project at which point they will be recommended for PRR status immediately. This was decided in order to avoid staff disappointment caused by a salary reduction from the current incentive level of US dollars 200 to a likely PRR salary level for the analysts. This depends upon their current government grade but for a staff would be expected to range from USD120-USD180.
- Clear job descriptions available for all staff members.
- NSS Project units integrated in the new organisational charts of both MRRD and CSO:
 - The new organisational structure of MRRD relocate 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 organogram is likely to come 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. After the new organisational chart has come into effect, project staff must guard against loss of interaction with key MRRD program data clients.
 - CSO will incorporate the NSS unit in its own new organisational structure to come into effect at the beginning of 1385 (21st March 2006).

**Indicator A2: Regular meetings of Project Steering Committee**

- First meeting of Project's Steering Committee, 17th of November 2005 (see annex 2).
- Further meetings on 6 monthly schedule or more often, if required.

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

Status of attainment									
					60%				
<p>Comment: fully 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 chat - The institutionalisation of the NSS Project within CSO started in a problematic manner (very traditional government agency); but the process shows significant progresses based on Project's diplomatic, transparent, participative and output oriented approach. 									

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

- Further 2 meetings of Project's Steering Committee.
- Relocation of NSS CSO unit to larger contiguous office space to create a usable Teleform scanning room that can offer its services to support other surveys, as well as sufficient room to conduct effective sensible training activities.
- 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 distribution of all of CSO's data.
- Supporting a small team of CSO staff to maintain and improve the CSO web site.
- Support CSO in its discussions with the formation of the National Statistics Council.
- Participate in the discussion of government reorganisation of monitoring and statistical reporting post London Conference. This will ensure high profile for NRVA data and effective coordination with other data collection activities and incorporation of new any database standards.

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.

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

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

- Stakeholder group established for the design and the implementation of the NRVA 2005 (and other surveys):
 - Definition of data needs and contributions to the design of the NRVA 2005 questionnaire; participating partners: Ministries of Rural Development, Agriculture, Health, Education, Women's Affairs, Energy and Water; international organizations such as WFP, UNICEF, World Bank & FAO.
 - In collaboration with WFP: development and implementation of a Household Food Security and Early Warning Monitoring System, with financial support coming from WFP's ECHO emergency food security monitoring system grant (details see expected Result D).
 - Ongoing development of Web-based interactive database platform for NRVA 2005 and CPI and other CSO data. The latter was requested by senior CSO management staff after seeing presentation of project vision for NRVA interactive data platform in December 2005.
- Discussions about NSS' role as information provider within MRRD and contributions to MRRD's (and other stakeholder's) strategic development:
 - Meetings with Senior Advisors to MRRD Programme Deputy Minister: NSS' role within MRRD.
 - Participation in workshops for the development of Ministry's 3-Years Strategy.
 - Project's participation in the discussions about the conceptualisation of a 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 MDG's, Afghan Compact and IANDS indicators post London conference
 - Contributions to the 5-year-masterplan of the Ministry of Agriculture, Sept. 2005.
 - Elaboration of a "Strategy for the Use and Transfer of Data and Analysis into Policy Design and Programming", Oct. 2005 – see Annex 4.
 - Elaboration of an updated list of key persons (decision makers) within NSS related Ministries, Oct., Nov. 2005 – see Annex 5.
 - During MRRD coordination meetings informed MRRD senior management and directors of MRRD programmes about:
 - Status of NRVA 2005 as well as the "Strategy for Policy Design and Programming".
 - New data dissemination through interactive database on CSO web site.
 - Meetings with senior management and advisors of NRVA 2005 related Ministries in order to inform about the status of NRVA 2005 and to discuss the data and information transfer:



- Ministry of Public Health (MOH) - signing of a Memorandum of Understanding – see annex A6
- Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) – Oct./ Nov. 2005
- Ministry of Education (MoE) – Oct./ Nov. 2005
- Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH) – Nov. 2005
- Ministry of Women’s Affaires (MOWA) – Oct. 2005
- Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF) – Sept./ Oct. 2005
- o Meetings with interested NGOs regarding status of NRVA 2005 and expected results:
 - Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement (URD) – Oct. 2005
 - German Agro Action (GAA) – Sept. 2005
 - Solidarités – Nov. 2005
- o 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 creates a high interest and inquiry 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 to the development of the NRVA 2005 questionnaires.
- In close cooperation with WFP, the NSS Project continues to design further surveys (Household Food Security and Early Warning Monitoring et al.), IDP survey and started to analyse the NRVA 2005 data. There is a high demand for NSS data, particularly NRVA 2005.

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

- Constant updating of Project’s web site www.mrrd.gov.af/vau; and ongoing improvements to CSO website (www.cso.gov.af) to access to an interactive NRVA 2005 database.
- Until Sept. 2005: Market prices have been published regularly within ANFS bulletin. Responsibility transferred to FAAHM/ MAAHF.
- Printed and electronic dissemination of analysis of NRVA 2005 district market price data.

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.

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

- Starting with March 2006, NRVA 2005 data will be available for all stakeholders from February 2006. The NSS Project has started to analyse NRVA outcomes, and provisional



results have been given to partners that contributed to the costs of NRVA 2005, namely UNICEF and WFP.

- During Dec. 2005 and January 2006, the NSS Project provided information for the Interim-Afghan National Development Strategy.
- Secured information about the degree of satisfaction of Project's clients will be based on a next so-called Consumer Satisfaction Survey, which will be realized after NRVA-2005 data and information dissemination (not before end of 2006).

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

- Workshops and other forum and platforms for information dissemination: after data analysis and first main findings regarding NRVA 2005, but not before April 2006.

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

Status of attainment							
	30%						
<p>Comment:</p> <p>MRRD started to demand and to use data and information, coming from Project outcomes. UNICEF and Ministry of Public Health, as well as MRRD related development programmes demanded results coming from NRVA 2005. Key persons (decision makers) within all NSS related ministries are identified. The Project started to provide NRVA 2005 analysis and information in January 2006.</p> <p>Progress on NRVA 2005 data processing was delayed and took more than five instead the estimated three months, due to the lack of appropriate computer hardware and reliable electricity supply.</p>							

3.3.4 Planned activities for March 2006 - February 2007

- Web-based interactive database published on CSO website.
- Formal and on-the-job training for NSS staff within CSO and MRRD: user friendly NRVA 2005 data analysis, policy oriented report writing as well as development of relevant guidelines for the transfer of data and information into policy and programming
- 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
- April 2006: NSS' input to MRRD Programme Coordination Meeting: presentation of NRVA 2005 main findings in the area of "socio-economic situation in Afghanistan".



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 2005 – February 2006)

The continuous transition from Project's 1st to 2nd phase guaranteed a smooth transition, with no interruptions to designing and implementing NRVA 2005. Formal and on-the-job training for the VAU staff started early in Project's first phase and has been continued until today.

Project's activities during the first year of the implementation of the second phase included:

- Ongoing capacity building process for MRRD-VAU staff: on-the-job and formal training for:
 - The implementation of NRVA 2005 – the whole survey cycle (see Result D); training for surveyors and on-the-job training for the VAU staff focused on the analysis of District Market Prices, Dec. 2005 – Feb. 2006.
 - The quantitative analysis of the National Multi-Sectoral Assessment for Kuchi (NMAK, 2004).
 - The update of Vulnerability Analysis Unit's website: data, analysis and information dissemination.
 - The rural district market prices analysis and dissemination (ceased in October 2005, transfer of responsibility to FAAHM/ MAAHF).
 - Training on ADATI software (for clustering and classification of food security data).
 - On-the-job training in favour of 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).
 - Non-formal training for staff members within CSO: mathematics, January 2006.
 - Formal training in Germany for NSS-staff within CSO (database manager and analyst) as well as 3 CSO senior analysts (non Project staff): design of an interactive (web based) database, January and February 2006

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 has been successfully implemented by VAU staff with little or no support from international technical assistance. Decentralised training of more than 500 surveyors took



place at eight regional locations with two master trainers conducting all the training to ensure maximum training consistency.

- Within the NSS/ CSO component of the Project, the capacity development has been focused on data cleaning and optical scanning of questionnaires data in form of on-job-training: seven CSO analysts, recruited for the NSS team between June 2005 and January 2006 and 4 extra staff had been contracted on a short-term basis.
- Following the NRVA 2005 field assessment and during the data scanning process, the NSS/VAU staff started to design a further survey together with WFP. The capacity of the national staff to implement different NSS components without significant external support is increasing.

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

- The NSS Project ceased rural market price data collection at end October 2005. The Project will provide to the Early Warning Information System all available data. The Project will be able to provide analytical outputs from NRVA 2005 data, and results from the pilot Household Food Security Monitoring system to the Early Warning Information System.

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).

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 at on-the-job training issues; altogether 9 persons. Additionally, 7 persons of the Ministry Section of CSO (no staff members) participated at different formal and non-formal training issues: production of questionnaires, data scanning and data cleaning.
- During NRVA 2005 data analysis process, stakeholder Ministries can send participants for the analysis of data relevant to their Ministry.
- Training issues at provincial level are not yet defined. Project's approach has to be defined, based on the outcomes of NRVA 2005.



3.4.3 Assessment and Estimation of Status of Attainment, Result C

Status of attainment									
			40%						
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Taking into account the status of the NRVA 2005 assessment, the Project is fully in line with the capacity building issues, defined in Project's logical framework. Parallel with the data analysis of NRVA 2005, the provided on-the-job training (and should the occasion arise also formal training) has to be focused on three 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. 									

3.4.4 Planed Activities for March 2006 – February 2007 regarding Result C

- Ongoing training of NSS staff in MRRD and CSO on data management and analysis, 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.

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 the implementation of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA). The planning of NRVA 2005 started during the latter part of phase 1 of the Project. This started off with a consumer satisfaction survey from the main MRRD programmes and other ministry clients who were thought likely to have used NRVA 2003 data. Extensive stakeholder review, both within Afghanistan Government departments, UN agencies and interested NGOs as well as centres of excellence in terms of education, health and poverty methodology were consulted widely during the process of developing the NRVA 2005 questionnaires (December 2004 to April 2005).

This process was much easier in preparation for NRVA 2005 (in comparison to the survey in 2003), because institutions and their staff were already well aware of the NRVA process and the type of products that it was likely to produce. NRVA remains the only regularly updated and available source of information on general livelihood issues, with a focus on food security and poverty.



The necessity to plan NRVA 2005 across the end of phase 1 and in the beginning of phase 2 was not ideal. Bureaucratic delays on all sides around signing a Memorandum of Understanding (between EC, MRRD and CSO) governing the phase 2 of the NSS Project ensured that the new partner, for phase 2, CSO, was not prepared to engage in NRVA planning at the outset without signed Memorandum. This ensured that the VAU team within MRRD had to do the bulk of the planning and implementation for NRVA 2005, with support from WFP.

Table 1 gives an overview of all NRVA related activities implemented during the year under review.



Table 1NRVA 2005 activities in chronological course, March 2005 – February 2006

Preliminary preparatory work for NRVA 2005 at the end of the NSS first phase (Dec. 2004 – Feb. 2005):

- NRVA 2003 Consumer Satisfaction Survey
- Methodology and questionnaires development with government and international stakeholders.

	Mar 2005	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	Aug 2005	Sep 2005	Oct 2005	Nov 2005	Dec 2005	Jan 2006	Feb 2006	Outputs/ milestones
Capacity building: during all steps of establishment of the NRVA (and other surveys) data and information system													Teleform training guidance: 06/2005
Planning and conceptualization: methodology and assessment plan; stakeholder consultation; definition of sampling; prioritization of data need													
Ongoing design of questionnaire (adapted to MDG) and Teleform database													NRVA-05 questionnaires finalized (Dari & English: 05/05)
Sampling (rural, urban and Kuchi); village/ community selection													
Map production for NRVA- villages by CSO													
Field tests of Teleform questionnaires													
Printing of questionnaires and sent to 7 training centres													More than 1.3 mi pages printed
Surveyor identification and selection (GOs and NGOs)													
8 Regional Coordinators hired to supervise the assessment teams													Contract with Regional Coordinators signed
Training of surveyors and implementation of NRVA 2005 in the field													More than 650 surveyors trained; June: survey start
Ongoing NRVA budgeting and financial accounting (incl. contrac. co-financing)													Last surveyor payment: 14/08/05



expectations of UNICEF as well as MRRD related programmes														sent to UNICEF: 5 th Feb. 2006
Setting up a web based interactive database (NRVA 2005 database)														Staff training and short term expertise
Start of a systematic documentation: lessons learned about NRVA 2005														ongoing documentation



3.5.1.1 Early Warning Information System/ Market price collection

Famine Early Warning System Net (FEWS-Net) has been operating in Afghanistan since 2003. Afghanistan was the first non sub-Saharan country to establish a FEWS-Net office. FEWS-Net's primary role is to produce a monthly bulletin called Afghan National Food Security (ANFS) which covers the most current information on food security status for Afghanistan, in a policy oriented manner.

It has established a good reputation as a useful regular document, particularly in times of declining food security, and relies upon good collaboration among stakeholders involved in the Early Warning System.

The Vulnerability Analysis Unit contributes regularly to the monthly ANFS bulletin, including monthly price analysis as well as results from NRVA 2003, results from Kabul emergency NRVA (Spring 2004), results from NRVA 2004 models/satellite NDVI update, as well as occasional policy briefings.

From October 2005, VAU/ MRRD together with FAAHM/ MAAHF agreed that the regular monthly data collection of market prices come, once and for all, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. The NSS Project stopped its district market prices collection activities and FAAHM, who are now presenting the rural market price data in regular monthly bulletins.

The partial analysis of the market data collected until September 2005 is available at www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/rural_market_price_collection.htm.

3.5.1.2 Emergency Needs Assessments

Phase 1 of the Project has not developed the capacity to respond effectively to the data needs in certain types of emergencies, for example areas blocked by snow in winter or flooded snow melt in spring. Much of the methodology has been developed anticipating that the major covariate shock for that the Project would have to provide information and early warning information for would be drought. The increased frequency in extreme weather conditions in Afghanistan in line with global warming has broadened the range of emergencies that the Vulnerability Analysis Unit may be called upon to respond to. Therefore one of the tasks of phase 2 will be to decide if and how it responds to this broadened demand for data provision. Remote sensing images and their processing into useful program responses remains a challenge for MRRD which is seen as a front-line Ministry in addressing such covariate shocks. Afghanistan Information and Mapping Service (AIMS) has started a pilot Disaster Information Management System (DIMS) based on processing of remote satellite imagery, and it is important that the Vulnerability Analysis Unit ensures good links with this project if not encourage such initiative to be howls within the Vulnerability Analysis Unit.

The Vulnerability Analysis Unit has responded well to emergencies that can be informed by on the ground survey work, where it has clearly developed a comparative advantage to many government departments outside of CSO. This was demonstrated during the requirement for emergency drought assessment during summer of 2004. Currently the Vulnerability Analysis Unit has the ability to launch emergency assessment where the primary data sources come from surveys of some description, but currently does not have the ability to process satellite imagery, which could be a useful adjunct to survey data, or in certain situations act as the primary data source. Plans are currently underway within the Vulnerability Analysis Unit, to acquire sufficiently high level GIS training to ensure processing of before and after satellite



imagery. Results of this can be combined with findings from survey work to inform MRRD and other ministries response to such emergencies.

Likely situations where the current capacity within the Vulnerability Analysis Unit will not be able to currently respond to data requests for planning of responses are:

- estimations of extent and type of damage caused by earthquakes
- length of roads blocked by snow
- villages without access to markets because of snow
- damage to rural communities caused by spring early / summer flooding.

Should the recent overtures from the Indian government to provide free to the Afghan government satellite imagery come to fruition, this will facilitate analysis of current remote sensed images of Afghanistan for disaster response planning, without having to budget significant outlays for the purchase of remotely sensed images. Expensive and difficult to do when they are needed urgently to do a post disaster assessment.

3.5.1.3 National Multi-Sectoral Assessment of Kuchi – NMAK 2004

Until August 2005, the Project continued to give contributions for finalising the quantitative data analysis and qualitative analysis of the **National Multi-Sectoral Assessment of Kuchi** (NMAK 2004) as well as for report writing and for the development of policy and programme relevant recommendations.

Although this initiative was started by the Pastoralist Support Unit within MRRD, that unit ran into database architecture challenges, and asked the Vulnerability Analysis Unit to take on the task of redesigning the database and ensuring that data was provided to the Kuchi adviser who produced a report based on this data - www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/nmak.htm. The survey was funded by WFP and visited every known Kuchi community in their winter location. It asked a range of questions about migratory patterns, access to health, education, land and conflicts with settled people.

3.5.1.4 Household Food Security & Early Warning Information Monitoring

Household Food Security Monitoring System assessment is implemented by the MRRD/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and WFP/VAM unit. In light of the decision to move NRVA from an annual two biennial schedule, there is need for a household monitoring food security system to provide data in the intervening years with no national assessment. The main aim of doing it is to monitor those households in the districts of the felt to be most likely to be the first way livelihoods would be the first to respond negatively to the onset of drought. As the NRVA-2005 was not data ready to be used to analyse which districts would be best candidates for this food security monitoring system, NRVA 2003, 2004 and drought assessment data was used instead. The village and household within the district were those assessed in NRVA-2005, totally 127 villages of 38 districts of 27 provinces.

The same households assessed in NRVA-2005 are assessed in the house of the security monitoring system with 12 households per village. The questionnaires have been designed in Teleform software by CSO/NSS unit, the surveyors have been identified as the best from NRVA 2005 surveyor's database, and the assessment was launched and managed by WFP/VAM & MRRD-NSS/Vulnerability Analysis Unit in the field. The data scanning process has been completed (February 2006). The assessment was funded by WFP. The data



will be cleaned and analyzed soon and the results fed back to appropriate planners and decision-makers for food security.

The second round of the household food security monitoring system assessment is planned to be conducted in March, 2006. The same districts, village and households will be assessed again to look varies in the food security stats of the sane households. Some urban areas are also included in the second round of FSMS to look at the vulnerability to food security of urban population as well. Questionnaire is designed by NSS/Vulnerability Analysis Unit and CSO/NSS unit in Teleform format, the database for data scanning is ready and soon the questionnaires printing is starting. This time also WFP is funding the assessment. Aside from the benefit have been able to identify households that have become food insecure, this household food security monitoring system will have added value in giving us a seasonal understanding to the NRVA data.

3.5.1.5 Survey in the IDP camps in the South of Afghanistan

NSS staff participated in conducting of an internally displaced person (IDPs) livelihood, poverty and vulnerability assessment in refugee's camps in the South of Afghanistan – with WFP/ VAM unit. This collaborative IDP livelihoods survey conducted jointly with WFP and UNHCR was prompted by the government's desire to close down all of the IDP camps in southern Afghanistan, and had initially anticipated stopping all food distribution. In these camps in October, just before winter, concern was raised by the timing of such cessation of food aid, and the survey was commissioned to determine potential impacts of the cessation of food distributions within the camps. Project staff was active in developing an appropriate sample from within the three camps, joint development of the questionnaires and oversight of the implementation and analysis jointly with WFP/VAM. Draft report is currently under consideration by UNHCR which was produced by the WFP/VAM office.

3.5.1.6 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.

Current status 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 be 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. Do not have particular expertise in statistical analysis and geographic information system software.

Proposed solution: An Interactive NRVA data dissemination website which will:

- Enable the target audience 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.

Timetable of implementation:

Through learning by doing training of National Surveillance System government staff:

- January - 4 staff to Germany for NRVA 2005 & CSO Consumer Price Index database migration to MySQL & associated PHP training.
- February – NSS staff return with Consultant to decide on queries to populate user interface. Development of the interactive database interface.
- March – beta testing on CSO website
- April – live interactive database, graphing.
- Mapping web tools developed and incorporated.

End Goal:

- All relevant ministries (MRRD, MAAHF, MoPH, Ministry of Economy, MoUDH, MoWA & ANDS process are interrogating NRVA 2005 data through this interactive Web platform in Kabul and provinces.



- Interactive platform hosted @ www.cso.gov.af with other CSO databases, CPI, village facility survey, household listing.
- Ensure the provincial planning processes are supported by appropriate data as provinces become increasingly online.
- When interactive data of platform is ready, National Surveillance System team will go to all ministries to demonstrate its use and hopefully value. (Kabul and provinces)

3.5.1.7 Problems in conducting the NRVA 2005 assessment

The implementation of the NRVA 2005 had two main problems:

- Ongoing poor security situation in several Southern and South-Eastern districts with certain delays for the surveys in the field: 7 districts in Zabul province, one district in Kandahar, and one district in Uruzgan.

Solution: sending top surveyors in the critical districts and implementation of the survey in the field only with male surveyors.

- Delays in the data scanning process linked with lack of both, experiences with the Teleform system and hardware scanning facilities and poor understanding of appropriate data enumeration using Teleform formats in the field from northern region provinces, which unfortunately, were the first to be processed through the scanning system.

Solution: speed up the NRVA scanning process by additional hardware facilities (more powerful computers and server, second high-speed scanner and reliable electricity supply in assured by inverter and generator) as well as extra shifts (will be mentioned within NRVA lessons learned). Training before further assessments must improve surveyor's awareness of the importance of correct filling in of Teleform questionnaire formats.

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 implementation of the NRVA survey 2005 (but with delays in the data scanning process with consequences for timing of data analysis; a delay of two to three months).
- Based on the evaluation of the frequency of NRVA assessments during Project's second phase, the Steering Committee decided to agree to the NSS project implementing "only" two NRVA assessments: 2005 and 2007 (see annex 2: minutes for the first meeting of Project's Steering Committee), with further justification supply within this document.

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 this context, two further surveys should be implemented before summer 2006.



Indicator D3: Monthly contributions to ANFS

- The Project has contributed monthly to the ANFS bulletin, published by FEWS Net. The responsibility for this kind of monthly market prices assessment had been transferred (in September 2005) to FAAHM unit within Ministry of Agriculture.

Indicator D4: An Emergency Assessment related networking is established

- 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).

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

- Further needs regarding survey methodologies and/ or proxy indicators and/ or further topics related with poverty, food security, livelihood, vulnerability, disaster management etc. will be defined not before halfway through the year 2006.

3.5.3 Assessment of Status of Attainment, Result D

Status of attainment									
		30%							
<p>Comment: Regarding the time schedule for NRVA 2005 (including its data analysis) the NSS Project encountered a delay of two to three months – related to the quality of enumeration of questionnaires, computer hardware and reliable electricity supply. Further assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDP survey in the South of Afghanistan (assistance to WFP) - 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 March 2006-February 2007

The following table shows the planned activities regarding the implementation process of the NRVA 2005 as well as starting up activities for the foreseen NRVA 2007.



Table 2 NRVA 2005/ 2007: Planned Activities for Next Period

Next steps/ planned activities	Mar. 06	Apr. 06	May 06	June 06	July 06	Aug. 06	Sep Nov. 06	Dec 06 – Fe 07	outputs/ milestones
Ongoing M&E follow-up of the NRVA 2005: lessons learned									Lessons learned for all steps of NRVA
Data cleaning for household and shura data									Final data base: March 2006
Transfer and publication of NRVA data base at the interactive web side									Interactive data base operational: Mar. 06
Dissemination of fully documented raw database following approval of CSO technical Steering committee.									Availability of CD or web site download a fully documented NRVA 2005 data using micro-data management toolkit from international household survey network.
Data analysis following inquiries and expectations from MRRD related programmes and other stakeholders									Inquiries, needs, expectations known
Development of first main findings; meetings with stakeholders									First main findings: March 2006
Dissemination of analysis products at different levels – user friendly publishing									Adapted tools for different stakeholders
Development of guidelines and programme oriented narratives for MRRD									
Provincial approach for data analysis and dissemination *									
Consumer Satisfaction Survey of NRVA 2005									Consumer's meaning documented
Planning and conceptualization of the NRVA 2007: methodology and assessment plan; stakeholder consultation; definition of sampling; prioritization of data need									
Initial design of questionnaire for the NRVA 2007									

*Definition of Project's approach at provincial level is still out standing; but should be defined as soon as possible:



Pilot provincial data and analysis support service from NSS Project in order to support MRRD's regionalization/ decentralisation process:

- Analysis products at provincial and district level.
- Workshops at provincial level (data and information dissemination in an adapted manner).
- Data and information providing in order to support provincial development planning.
- Capacity building at provincial level.

Further planned activities at the level of Result D:

- Ongoing Household Food Security and Early Warning Information Monitoring, together with WFP/ VAM unit.
- Definition of contents and TOR for "special studies" and their implementation (first ideas/ needs see Inception Report, chapter 6.2)
- Contributions to emergency oriented data information and interpretation (Project's approach and role need to be defined)
- 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 has been 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 annual 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 first year of implementation, the Project realised 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 Project's Inception 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 ASA-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).

- The Logical Framework is presented within this Interim Report (Annex 1).
- Start of a systematically collection of “NRVA 2005 lessons learned”. See Annex 9
- Suggestions/ recommendations for new and enlarged impact and process indicators, based on Project’s progress during the first year of implementation (see chapter 2.6.4).

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. 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 VAU staff evaluation, Dec. 2005.
- 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-March 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; next moment: latest in August 2006 – see annex A7
- Arrangement of all lessons learned of the technical aspects of the NRVA 2005 process in order to optimize the next countrywide survey.
- Monitoring of the transfer process of NRVA 2005 data and analysis outcomes 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 Inception Report: October/ November 2005
- 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 in process.
- 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

- Support statistical analysis for the Millennium Development Goal report for government of Afghanistan, May to August 2005.
- Contributed to poverty chapter in IANDES through glimmering analysis of NRVA 2005 data-December 2005.
- Meeting with representative of German Ministry for Cooperation (BMZ) at German Embassy, Dec., 2005: data need for business & enterprise survey.
- 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 (In press).
- Technical management collaboration with UNFPA on the migration of the household listing and village facility survey database to Microsoft SQL server.
- 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. And survey and enumeration is anticipated for April/May 2006. NSS unit and CSO is contributing 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.
- 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 iANDS.



4 Project's impact – an assessment

4.1 Impact Assessment regarding the Impact Indicators

The following comments will be given about Project's impact by means of checks against the 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 not yet analysed. 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 by stakeholders (MRRD and other Ministries) as well as international organisations. Example: WFP is using NRVA 2005 outcomes for definition of its national programme for 2006, 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 date of request form six formal raw data requests have been received already from various institutions 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. 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 - not yet analysed
- 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 MOH/ UNICEF regarding co-financing of the NRVA survey 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 it is expected that drought will return to in the life of the project and therefore preparation must be continued to ensure timely and appropriate response to information needs. There has been a decrease in collaboration around the early warning system due to the change in personnel in FEWS Net. Therefore the project intends taking 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 will allow for improved economic development

Comments

There was limited economic growth during 2005. 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 in order 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.

- There are no current weather-induced nationwide disaster situations

Comments:

No current weather-induced nationwide disaster situation during 2005. Flooding with bereavements and losses of harvests limited on valleys in the North of the country (June/ July 2005).

Risks and Assumptions at the level of the specific objectives:

- Security situation does not 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 turned up in six districts were omitted due to lack of 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 11 districts had to be enumerated with male only teams due to security concerns around taking female surveyors into these highly insecure areas. So the security situation hasn't yet had a significant negative impact on phase 2 Project implementation activities.

Project's international Technical Assistants are under the security umbrella of MRRD which is supported by UNOPS.



- 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 Affairs 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.

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 a MRRD 3 year policy strategy, the value and need of NSS' outputs are often emphasised. The senior civil servants within MRRD as well as the directors of the MRRD related programmes inquire regularly of 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 Project's capacity to meet the expected results. Despite the recent provincial elections and the number of new provincial bodies 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 staff 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 recruitment process is completed, the exception of the recruitment of the sixth analysts within CSO, which will take place once larger offices and more computers are available.



- 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 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (2005) attract support from partner stakeholder organisations, who are willing to participate both as partner of the Advisory Group and to support the assessment financially. This continues the tradition established with NRVA 2003, where WFP, UNDP and FAO all contributed to the costs of the assessment. For the implementation of the NRVA 2005, UNICEF (based on a Memorandum of Understanding) and WFP has been contributed the following funds to the NRVA 2005:

WFP: \$67,800 (August 2005)

UNICEF: \$15,000 (October 2005),

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all persons responsible during February 2006, these funds have to be used only for analysis, interpretation, training, publishing and dissemination of the results of NRVA 2005 insuring maximum utilisation of these data for program and policy development. This may include dissemination workshops, training of government staff to improve analytical skills.

About 1/3 (34%) of the overall project budget has been utilised during project year 1. Therefore expenditures are very much in line with project progress and status.

Below a summary table is provided indicating the budget utilisation within the different budget categories:

**Table 3: NSS Project financial report 01. March 2005 to 28. February 2006**

A. Fees	Explanation	Total Budget acc. Contract (€)	Expenses (€)	Balance (€)
A.1	Long Term Key Experts	1.058.904,00	272.789,00	786.115,00
A.2	Long Term Non-Key Experts	160.776,00	59.682,00	101.094,00
A.3	Non-Key Short Term Experts	300.281,00	121.320,00	178.961,00
		1.519.961,00	453.791,00	1.066.170,00
C. Incidental Expenditures	Total Budget Incidental Expenditures			
C.1	Per diem Intern. and nat. Experts (indicative)	35.000,00	10.221,84	24.778,16
C.2	Domestic Flights (indicative)	12.000,00	751,96	11.248,04
C.3	Workshops/ trainings (indicative)	50.000,00	33.524,42	16.475,58
C.4	Per Diem for Government Staff	9.000,00	3.645,62	5.354,38
C.5	DSA for Civil Servants	90.000,00	30.906,31	59.093,69
C.6	Survey preparation, Data collection, Survey evaluation			
C.6.1	NRVA	730.000,00	330.551,75	399.448,25
C.6.2	EWIS	25.000,00		
C.6.3	Emergency Assessment.	25.000,00		
C.6.4	Special Studies	25.000,00		
C.7	Others	18.868,00	7.000,00	11.868,00
	Total Incidental Expenditure	1.019.868,00	416.601,90	603.266,10
	Total Expenditure (Mar 05- Feb 06)	2.539.829,00	870.392,90	1.669.436,10

* NRVA costs net of WFP and UNICEF contributions (total NRVA costs for March 05 to February 06: 398.543,76 Euro)

About 40 % of all expenditures have been used for NRVA activities. This figure includes: transport costs for 8 Regional Coordinators and about 630 surveyors, training costs for the surveyors in 8 regions, DSA for surveyors, costs for paper, toner and other stationary as well as costs for non key personnel for the production of 1.3 million pages of questionnaires and for the scanning process.

Not calculated within this figure are the personnel costs of NSS' staff as well as WFP's contributions (labour costs).



As mentioned above the project does see the continuation of supporting analysts and directors of the VAU unit at MRRD and the NSS Unit at CSO as a crucial precondition for project success and sustainability. The planned expenditures (under budget line C.5) for project year 2 are summarised below:

Table 4: **DSA for Civil Servants trained under the project:** MRRD Vulnerability Analysis Unit Director, data analysts in operations Department at CSO, data analysts at MRRD Vulnerability Analysis Unit.

Position	Project Year 2 (March 2006 to February 2007)			
	Unit		Cost/Unit	Total in €
MRRD VAU Director	12	months	1.400,00	16.800,00
3 Data Analysts at CSO	36	months	200	7.200,00
3 Data Analysts at VAU	36	months	200	7.200,00
2 additional Analysts at VAU*	24	months	200	4.800,00
3 additional Analysts at CSO*	36	months	200	7.200,00
Additional (Super Scale type) payment for Senior Analysts at VAU*	12	months	300	3.600,00
Additional payment for Senior Analysts at CSO*	12	months	300	3.600,00
Total				50.400,00



6 Conclusions and recommendations

The second phase of the project has successfully maintained the momentum established during phase 1, despite the challenge of maintaining the integrity of the implementation of NRVA 2005 which spanned the end of phase 1 of the beginning of phase 2 of this project. At the same time the project started with trying to build a new office and relationship with a new government stakeholder, CSO.

The NRVA provides products that are in high demand by government and other agencies. This instrument will continue to play a very effective role in providing data to government and other agencies. It has been two years since a previous NRVA and it is clear that an update was now needed. While there was a need for an update on the number of food insecure households in 2004 (provided by mathematical modelling of 2003 NRVA with satellite data) it is less clear that there is the need for a regular annual assessment of the scope currently undertaken by NRVA 2005.

There is widespread agreement that it is cost efficient and appropriate to continue with a bi-annual frequency of NRVA implementation, particularly if the early warning system is proven to be effective at identifying areas of concern, for which local assessments can be implemented to determine the scale of the problem. This ability of the early warning system to identify areas of concern only in the onset of the drought is being tested with the pilot of household food security monitoring system. Within 2006, it will become clear whether this is an effective and cost-effective mechanism for monitoring households over time to understand their response to large slow onset covariate shocks. At this point funds from this project may need to be mobilised to ensure continuation of this work. 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 buy any old 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 the 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 discussions are ongoing across MRRD wide software solution for upgrading to Arc GIS 9, which will be part of a 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 from maintaining 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 are available from the Vulnerability Analysis Unit.

Activities in phase 1 were driven by the imperative to deliver data and analytical products very quickly. The environment was still dominated by the drought driven humanitarian agenda, information was scarce, and desperately needed by MRRD for programming and prioritisation. This demand to deliver data and analysis quickly compromised capacity building, and must be avoided in phase 2 if both quality data products and capacity building are to be produced during the second phase of the project. For example, it is intended to invite the World Bank Institute to come and give a course on the development of poverty lines (currently planned for April or May 2006). Such courses can be given not only to the VAU/NSS staff, but other staff within CSO and maybe even the University. It is recommended that the project ensures that Afghan staff is fully involved in all data production, management analysis and interpretation.

The staff numbers 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 with the exception of the six analysts in CSO, which will be completed once larger contiguous office space and new computers are available.

The concept of part-time regional coordinators is not sustainable. These personnel come into the project for a short time and take on a very important role in terms of ensuring quality data collection during NRVA. These coordinators of operated with a varying degree of effectiveness during NRVA 2005. It is proposed therefore to use regular project staff as regional NRVA field supervisors, and they need to be much more numerous and eight, probably one assigned to each province for the next NRVA.

The Priority Restructuring and Reform (PRR) of the civil service of Afghanistan have fallen behind its original schedule of implementation. During phase 1 it was anticipated that by this time in the project all staff would have passed through the PRR process and be receiving interim additional government payment. Therefore the project does see the continuation of supporting analysts and directors of the VAU unit at MRRD and the NSS Unit at CSO by providing interim allowances as a crucial precondition for project success and sustainability.

The creation of a senior analyst post has ensured that a key staff member has remained within the project. This level is open for other people to aspire to within the project, and has insulated the project from the threat of losing staff the higher paid jobs outside. 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.



It is strongly recommended 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.

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. 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 shall be 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's. 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 further sources. This is a testament 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 rare real data collection and analytical experience to the table.

Parallel to the discussions on the post London Conference monitoring agenda, there are also currently discussions on the formation of the new National Statistics Council. It is recommended that project staff continues to participate in these discussions, as the creation and operation of an effective and representative National Statistics Council is going to be crucial to improvements in the range of data collected, coordination across government and improved data utilization.