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Qudratullah Jahid  
Clark University, qjahid@clarku.edu

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**CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION  
SYSTEMS: LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN**

**QUDRATULLAH JAHID**

**May 2019**

**A Master's Paper**

**Submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester,  
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**And accepted on the recommendation of**

**Edward R. Carr, Chief Instructor**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS: LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN**

**QUDRATULLAH JAHID**

How can monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems better support improving the aid effectiveness? What are the existing challenges to the M&E systems in Afghanistan? I try to answer these questions by briefly looking at the development aid in Afghanistan since 2001. I provide summary of attempts made at improving aid effectiveness through mutual accountability frameworks. I then try to briefly discuss the principles of Paris Declaration and provide brief insights from Afghanistan. I then discuss the status of monitoring and evaluation in Afghanistan by providing a picture of functional M&E system and then discussing the existing challenges in Afghanistan. Finally, I provide some recommendations for improving monitoring and evaluation in Afghanistan.

Keywords: international development, aid, monitoring, evaluation, M&E, management, Paris Declaration, Afghanistan

**Edward R. Carr, Ph.D.**  
**Chief Instructor**

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## Introduction

The goal of this paper is to understand the challenges in monitoring and evaluation of development aid in Afghanistan. The country has been focus of the development aid since 2001, after the establishment of the US-backed Afghan government. However, development aid has not been effective enough to generate the desired results. Issues have included weak oversight of the development, lack of alignment of donor funding with Afghanistan's national priorities and heavy use of contractors. These are discussed under the development aid and aid effectiveness sections.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, if properly developed and utilized, have the potential to improve the effectiveness of aid. However, government and donor M&E systems in Afghanistan face numerous challenges and issues. These include lower capacities, lack of exchange of M&E information between the government and development organizations, improper organizational structures, low demand for M&E information, resource constraints, insufficient baseline data, lack of utilization of existing M&E data and unsustainable M&E systems. Information sharing with donors and lack of clear distinction of M&E system among government donor organizations makes it difficult to improve the status of M&E. These issues and challenges are discussed in detail under the section on the status of M&E.

I provide recommendations at the end of the paper to improve the status of M&E systems based on the existing studies and assessments, lessons-learned from other countries and organizations and my personal experience in the government and development organizations.

## Background

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) was established in 2001 following the overthrow of the Taliban regime. GIROA, with support from the international community, has established executive, legislative and judiciary institutions with varying levels of capacities and functionality. The reconstruction and development progress in Afghanistan has been possible through a large amount of development aid. Afghanistan currently has a nation-wide education system with over 9.2 million students enrolled, of which 39% are girls (MoE, 2016), as well as a state-funded higher education system with annual admissions of over 141,000. The country also has over 100 private higher education institutions with admissions of over 70,000 (Ibrahimi, 2014), and a health sector that has shown improvement in all health indicators since 2001. The necessary infrastructure such as transportation, communication, access to water and electric systems have also improved with varying levels across the sectors and regions.

Despite these achievements, GIROA faces major challenges in providing security and economic opportunities to Afghanistan. According to the latest Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, 55 percent of Afghans live below the poverty line (NSIA, 2018), a figure higher than the World

Bank's baseline of 51.4 percent in 2003 (Bjelica, 2018). Afghanistan's current GDP per capita stands at around \$600, while the annual economic growth is 2.4 percent (IMF, 2017; World Bank, 2018a). The unemployment rate stands at 24 percent (NSIA, 2018). Insecurity resulting from the ongoing conflict has been increasing since the drawdown of international security forces, with a significant share (over 41 percent) of government expenditure going to the security sector (IWA, 2018). Even so, the government is only able to control 55.5% of Afghanistan's territory (SIGAR, 2018). Afghanistan remains heavily dependent on foreign aid both for development and security-related funds. GIROA can generate only 47 percent of the national budget from domestic revenues (IWA, 2018).

Development aid has been instrumental in achieving progress in Afghanistan, but the extent of effectiveness is an issue that needs further investigation. The following section describes the development aid and the bilateral and multilateral funding since 2001.

## Development Aid

Afghanistan has been among the top three world recipients of development assistance since 2001, along with Iraq and Syria. The annual average was \$5.2 billion between 2010-16 (OECD, 2018). Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies have been operating in Afghanistan since the establishment of the GIROA. The principal bilateral donors to Afghanistan have been the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, Japan, Germany, the Nordic countries and Australia and multilateral donors included The World Bank and The Asian Development Bank.

The donor and the GIROA have established several development funds to serve as delivery mechanisms for aid to support the GIROA, simplify and ease the management of the funds, and achieve aid effectiveness. These two development funds include the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF). There also are some other multi-donor funds in the defense and security sector. These funds include the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), and the NATO's Afghan National Army Trust Fund (NATF).

The early development and reconstruction efforts after the establishment of GIROA focused on immediate and humanitarian support, followed by stabilization and alternative livelihoods/poverty reduction programs (see Lister 2009 and McNerney 2006 for discussion). USAID's portfolio, for instance, was until very recently focused on stabilization projects to generate quick employment and income in insecure areas (USAID, 2016). Realizing its low impacts and in the context of the drawdown of US military operations, USAID closed its last stabilization project in Afghanistan in 2015.

A significant portion of development aid was implemented using third-party international non-government organizations (INGOs) and consulting firms. In 2012, as part of the Tokyo Mutual



Accountability Framework (TMAF), the international community committed to provide 50 percent of development assistance through on-budget<sup>1</sup> mechanisms and align 80 percent of the aid to Afghanistan's national priorities. The donor community highlighted the weakness in GIRoA public financial management systems and corruption as prerequisites for increasing on-budget assistance.

Before the commitments under TMAF, most of the donors used off-budget<sup>2</sup> and direct implementation using contractors, including international non-government organizations (NGOs) and consulting firms. Donors that channeled on-budget funding established Project Management Units (PMUs) and Project Implementation Units (PIUs) within the government Line Ministries and Agencies (LMAs) to implement on-budget development programs and projects. The PMUs/PIUs proved to be useful for the donors by successfully implementing their programs and projects and meeting the monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements. But these independent units based in government LMAs, could not build government's capacity rather they focused on the meeting donor requirements. Typically having more capacity and resources than the government agency, these units acted as parallel structures in some cases. As part of TMAF, the GIRoA and donor community agreed on integrating these units into the government structures. However, the capacity built within PMUs/PIUs could not be maintained after their integration in the government agencies due to insufficient resources of the government and lower capacities of civil service. There are still some of these independent units to be integrated into the government structures as highlighted in the GMAF (GIRoA, 2018).

Another primary mechanism used to deliver aid was the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) model that combined civilian and military teams and objectives to provide support on the sub-national level across Afghanistan (Eronen, 2008). At its peak, there were 26 PRTs across Afghanistan operated by countries engaged in the battleground. PRTs aimed to use aid for stabilization and enhancing local governance and security. Zürcher (2012), in his study on aid effectiveness in Afghanistan, provides insights on this 'securitization of development' and claims that there is no evidence for development aid's role in bringing security.

Contractors and PRT models were adopted as means of addressing the low GIRoA capacity, a new government struggling with expanding its control over a war-torn country. The government capacity was even lower on sub-national levels, where most of the development projects needed to be concentrated. Though created to implement aid in the context of low government capacity, these efforts came with their own problems. Major issues associated with them were poor oversight and massive implementation costs (Fayez, 2012; Zürcher, 2012). The problem of poor oversight is a direct result of limitations in existing systematic monitoring and evaluation staff and

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<sup>1</sup> On-budget support is provision funding through the national budget of the recipient government. The funds are managed by the national public financial management systems and implemented using the existing government structures.

<sup>2</sup> Of-budget programs and funds are not part of the national budget of the recipient country and are implemented by third-party contractors.

organizations, compounded by worse security conditions. Some donor agencies used third-party monitoring (TPM) by hiring external consulting firms to conduct monitoring and verification of their programs and projects, but TPM comes with its issues such as higher operational costs and lower rates of sustainability. The external consulting firms are mostly contracted for 1-3 years to monitor and verify the projects and programs, an inherently internal task of the organization. The constant transition of TPM contractors creates gap in the monitoring and each contractor begin establishing their own data management systems requiring additional operational costs.

The international community and donor organizations along with the GIROA has repeatedly committed to improving aid effectiveness, oversight, and reduce operational costs, but there has not been fully realized. This outcome is difficult to accept after thirteen international conferences on Afghanistan, since 2001, which included important decisions on development aid and aid effectiveness. Table 1 below provides a summary of these decisions.

Table 1. Conferences on Afghanistan and their decisions around aid.

<b>Conference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Aid-related events and decisions</b>
The First International Bonn Conference on Afghanistan	Bonn, Germany	Dec 5, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan	Tokyo, Japan	Jan 21-22, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first preliminary needs assessment of Afghanistan presented by the World Bank, UNDP, and ADB that led to comprehensive needs assessment</li> <li>• United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was selected to lead early reconstruction efforts on behalf of the United Nations</li> <li>• Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) established to serve as a bilateral and multilateral fund under the administration of the World Bank to provide on-budget assistance to the Afghan government</li> <li>• Establishment of an Implementation Group (IG) to support early reconstruction and development efforts</li> </ul>
The International Conference on Afghanistan	Berlin, Germany	Mar 31 – Apr 1, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising reconstruction and development funds</li> </ul>

<p>Building on Success The London Conference on Afghanistan</p>	<p>London, UK</p>	<p>Jan 31 – Feb 1, 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals Country Report 2005 – Vision 2020</li> <li>• Adoption of the Afghanistan Compact. The Compact called for improving aid effectiveness with the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness both from Afghanistan and the international community</li> <li>• Establishment of Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) to provide overall strategic coordination of the implementation of the Compact including the commitments to aid effectiveness</li> <li>• GoIRA's commitment to provide detailed plans for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and MDGs, improve the generation of domestic revenues, performance monitoring systems, and reporting to the nation and international community</li> </ul>
<p>International Conference in Support of Afghanistan</p>	<p>Paris, France</p>	<p>Jun 12, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The launch of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)</li> </ul>
<p>The London Conference: Afghan Leadership, Regional Cooperation, and International Partnership</p>	<p>London, UK</p>	<p>Jan 28, 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GoIRA requested the international community to provide 50 percent of development aid through on-budget assistance including through multi-donor trust funds to support the implementation of ANDS in the next two years. The international community put the condition of robust GoIRA public financial management systems, reduction in corruption, improved budget execution, and development of a financing strategy.</li> </ul>
<p>The Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan</p>	<p>Kabul, Afghanistan</p>	<p>Jul 20, 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) established to support the GoIRA's anti-corruption and reform programs</li> <li>• The Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund established to be administered by the Asian Development Bank as a multi-donor fund to provide on-budget assistance to the GoIRA</li> <li>• Afghanistan launched 22 Afghanistan National Priority Programs as detailed plans for the ANDS</li> <li>• GoIRA and international community restated the goal of providing 50 percent on-budget assistance to the Afghan government</li> </ul>

Afghanistan and the International Community: From Transition to the Transformation Decade	Bonn, Germany	Dec 5, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommitment to the provision of development aid through the "Transformation Decade" 2015-2024</li> </ul>
Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan: From Transition to Transformation	Tokyo, Japan	Jul 8, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) with mutual commitments for aid effectiveness, performance monitoring, improved governance, the rule of law and human rights, improved public financial management systems, and inclusive and sustainable development</li> <li>• The international community affirmed to align 80 percent of aid with the NPPs and provide 50 percent of development assistance through on-budget mechanisms</li> </ul>
Afghanistan and International Community: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership	London, UK	Dec 4, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirmed commitment to TMAF</li> <li>• International community announced its commitment to providing significant but declining social and economic development aid through the transformation decade</li> </ul>
The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan Partnership for Prosperity and Peace	Brussels, Belgium	Oct 4-5, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Afghanistan's National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) with 10 National Priority Programs</li> <li>• Commitment to Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), as a renewed version of the TMAF</li> </ul>
Geneva Conference on Afghanistan Securing Afghanistan's Future: Peace, Self-Reliance, and Connectivity	Geneva, Switzerland	Nov 27-28, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework (GMAF), as the latest version of the SMAF framework that serves as GoIRA and international community's commitments to reforms and development</li> </ul>

*Sources: Conferences Declarations and Communiqués*

### **Mutual Accountability Framework**

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) served as a benchmark document for mutual commitments from the GIRA and the international community. The goals of the Framework were to improve accountability, governance, economy, human rights, rule of law, and condition of Afghan women. Aligning aid, on-budget assistance and monitoring were adopted among the principles of the Framework to enhance aid effectiveness. In 2018, the GIRA and international community presented the latest version of the framework as the Geneva Mutual

Accountability Framework. The fundamental commitment the same, but with more specific, time-bound short and long-term actions and indicators to be achieved.

Table 2. GMAF development aid-related commitments.

No.	GMAF Commitments
1	GMAF16.0: Six core reforms under the ARTF Partnership Framework and Financing Program (PFFP) are implemented and reported to the ARTF Strategic Group in 2019 and 2020.
2	GMAF17.0: To improve aid effectiveness and build institutions and capacities in Afghanistan, development partners will review options to continue channeling on-budget development assistance as appropriate in 2019 and 2020. Decisions to increase on-budget support from individual donor's current annual level depend on, amongst other factors, the implementation of the agreed reforms, in particular, significant progress on Public Financial Management (PFM) and Treasury strengthening reforms as well as the development of the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP) for development partners involved in the relevant sector.
3	GMAF18.1: Development partners and the Ministry of Finance finalize financial agreements or other arrangements for all new off-budget projects (individually per project or grouped) above the value of USD 5 million with minimum required information*, starting from 2019 consistent with the Presidential Decree # 3250.
4	GMAF18.2: Development partners register all existing and new off-budget ODA projects in the Afghanistan Development Assistance Database (DAD) and conduct regular annual Development Cooperation Dialogues (DCDs) with the government in line with the budget calendar.
5	GMAF19.1: Development Partners and international agencies align at least 80% of their new off-budget ODA development activities with the policy framework of ANPDF and operationalized NPPs starting from 2019; and adjust where possible existing pre-2019 commitments.
6	GMAF19.2: Development partners provide information about off-budget programs and projects in a timely manner to the Development Assistance Database (DAD) which will be regularly updated by MoF. The DAD informs the annual Development Cooperation Dialogue (DCD) which results in timely publication of the Development Cooperation Report (DCR) to facilitate sector wide and cross-sectorial coordination.
7	GMAF20.3: Individual reporting by development partners and international agencies takes place one month prior to annual Development Cooperation Dialogues (DCDs) starting in 2020.
8	GMAF21.1: Prepare and approve roadmap in consultation with development partners and implementing agencies for the integration of the common functioning of PIUs and PMUs into the government Tashkeel in line with the civil service commission's five-year strategic plan by mid-2019.
9	GMAF21.2: Implementation of roadmap started by third quarter of 2019 and regular reporting based on the roadmap.
10	GMAF22.1: Development partners and International agencies confirm by the end of 2019 that their implementing partners are encouraged to implement the National Technical Assistance (NTA) scale in their programs and projects.

11	GMAF22.2: Reporting mechanism to be developed by MoF in consultation with development partners by mid-2019. Development partners report to MoF annually starting from 2020 with respect to the NTA scale in programs and projects.
12	GMAF23.1: Modalities and process standards for technical assistance to government agreed between government and development partners by mid-2019. All new technical assistance to government approved by Ministry of Finance as per the agreed process starting from mid-2019.
13	GMAF23.2: The government and development partners and implementing agencies coordinate technical assistance at sectorial level starting from 2019 through existing coordination mechanisms.

Source: GIRoA (2018)

## US Government Assistance

According to the SIGAR (2019) report on Afghanistan reconstruction, as of 2018 the United States government has provided \$132.30 billion in military and development and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. This aid amount includes \$37.48 billion in development and humanitarian assistance.

As per the US Foreign Aid Explorer records of aid that include 2001 to partial 2018, USAID has provided funding of almost \$20 billion to Afghanistan. Table 3 provides a summary of the US Government's assistance to Afghanistan.

Table 3. United States foreign aid to Afghanistan 2001-2018

Funding Agency	Economic	Military	Grand Total
Department of Agriculture	\$1,373,057,139		\$1,373,057,139
Department of Commerce	\$14,421,308		\$14,421,308
Department of Defense	\$853,393,727	\$3,938,253,495	\$4,791,647,222
Department of Energy	\$1,049,966		\$1,049,966
Department of Health and Human Services	\$73,907,788		\$73,907,788
Department of Homeland Security	\$270,129		\$270,129
Department of Justice	\$5,301,343		\$5,301,343
Department of Labor	\$7,850,000		\$7,850,000
Department of State	\$6,038,777,349	\$15,500,000	\$6,054,277,349
Department of the Air Force	\$(68,142)		\$(68,142)
Department of the Army	\$3,414,062,964	\$68,739,078,997	\$72,153,141,961
Department of the Navy	\$885,831		\$885,831
Department of the Treasury	\$14,564,691		\$14,564,691
Department of Transportation	\$4,098,098		\$4,098,098
Trade and Development Agency	\$10,631,538		\$10,631,538
U.S. Agency for International Development	\$19,875,710,268		\$19,875,710,268
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$31,687,913,997</b>	<b>\$72,692,832,492</b>	<b>\$104,380,746,489</b>

Source: Foreign Aid Explorer: The official record of U.S. foreign aid (2018)

### Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund

Established in 2002, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund is administered by the World Bank and is the largest reconstruction trust fund for Afghanistan. The Fund receives contributions from bilateral, multilateral and other organizations, which are channeled through on-budget mechanisms to support the Afghanistan government's national priorities and programs, specifically to the line ministries and agencies. Major donors to the fund are United States, United Kingdom, European Union, Germany, and Canada.

ARTF progress and achievements are reviewed by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) and Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). ARTF has dispersed \$11.38 billion between the years 2002-2018.

Table 4. List of top ten ARTF funding countries as of December 21, 2018.

Donor	Total Amount (in million USD)	Percentage of Total ARTF Funding
United States	\$3,527.68	31.0%
United Kingdom	\$1,922.99	16.9%
EC/EU	\$978.32	8.6%
Germany	\$906.52	8.0%
Canada	\$805.30	7.1%
Netherlands	\$559.85	4.9%
Norway	\$543.95	4.8%
Japan	\$481.35	4.2%
Sweden	\$450.45	4.0%
Australia	\$424.36	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,600.77</b>	<b>93.2%</b>

Source: World Bank/ARTF (2018)

### Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF)

AITF was established as a result of demand by the Afghan government with the goal of providing support to enhance infrastructure development. AITF provides on-budget support to government-led infrastructure initiatives that are prioritized under the national development plans and agendas, with priority sectors in roads, railways, airports, energy, water management, and irrigation, and private sector development. The total AITF commitments as of December 2018 have reached \$841 million (AITF, 2018). Major AITF donors are the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Germany, and the European Union.

## Afghanistan National Development Plans

The Government of Afghanistan presented its first national development plan in 2006 as a first report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and MDGs vision for 2020 which was presented at the London Conference on Afghanistan. This report laid the foundation for Afghanistan's National Development Strategy. The Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) was launched in 2006 followed by the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), in 2008 at the Paris Conference. ANDS covered the period of 2008-2013.

In 2010, the Afghan government launched 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs) grouped into security, governance, human resources development, infrastructure development, private sector development, and agriculture and rural development clusters to achieve the ANDS objectives. As specified in the ANDS, NPPs are the GIRoA's strategy for collective efforts in each sector. The NPPs were not individual programs rather they combined the projects and activities undertaken by line ministries and agencies in each sector under national priorities to improve its strategic management, funding and reporting. All of the NPPs were inter-ministerial programs led by a national steering committee. The plans for 22 NPPs of 2010 are not publicly available, I could not verify whether these NPP plans were internal documents, were lost on the government website servers or were not even developed.

Following the completion of ANDS in 2013, the Afghanistan government relied on interim national plans until the adoption of Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) in 2016 under the new administration. As part of the ANPDF, the Afghan government announced 10 National Priority Programs namely, comprehensive agriculture development, citizens' charter, private sector development, national infrastructure plan, women's economic empowerment, urban, national justice and judicial reform plan, mining sector roadmap, effective governance program, and human capital program. GIRoA is still working on finalizing the NPP plans; hence the final versions for these NPPs are also not publicly available.

The national strategic development frameworks and priorities are reflected on the provincial level through the Provincial Development Plans (PDPs) developed at the sub-national level using a consultative process. PDPs aim to serve as the prime sub-national strategic framework to identify provincial priorities and development needs using multi-stakeholder process including reviews at the national level to ensure their alignment with the national priorities and strategic objectives. However, the recent national budget analysis by a prominent Afghan civil society organization, the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) indicates that development projects proposed under PDPs are usually replaced with other projects during national budget planning by the line ministries and agencies (IWA, 2018) perhaps due to political priorities and stakeholder dynamics mainly involving the members of the parliament.



## Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs)

The government of Afghanistan launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) nationalization process in 2016, a government-wide process designed by Ministry of Economy, the lead GIRoA agency for coordination and reporting of SDGs (MoEc, 2018).

Nationalization included holding awareness workshops and consultations on national level, establishing governance structures such as technical working groups and national ministerial committee for chairing the SDGs implementation and reporting processes, and developing a nationally adopted version of SDGs goals, targets and indicators. GIRoA adopted 16 SDGs, 121 targets and 188 indicators in 2018.

Afghanistan was among the second group of countries that provided its national review at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2017. Afghanistan's national review report mainly highlights SDG structures, reporting processes and challenges to their implementation in Afghanistan. There is no actual progress report on the implementation of SDGs except for some statistics from the existing government programs and achievements (MoEc, 2017).

However, it is unclear that how the SDG agenda will drive national development in Afghanistan. The current nationalization process has tried to align the existing budgetary sectors and leading line ministries and agencies with reporting on the progress for SDG targets and indicators. However, it is too early to say how the SDGs will provide a difference in development in Afghanistan and to what extent will these targets be achieved. Evaluating SDG implementation will highlight their role in driving development agenda and achieving national priorities in Afghanistan. Figure 1 below provides a summary of Afghanistan's SDGs, their targets and indicators.

Figure 1. A-SDGs targets and indicators

National Budgetary Sectors	Goals in Each Sector	National Targets	National Indicators
Security Sector	G3, G11, G16	6 Targets	9 indicators
Education Sector	G4, G8, G11, G12, G16	14 Targets	30 indicators
Health Sector	G2, G3	11 Targets	21 indicators
Governance Sector	G16	3 Targets	4 indicators
Infrastructure Sector	G5, G6, G7, G9, G11, G12, G13, G15, G17,	34 Targets	40 indicators
Social Protection Sector	G1, G4, G5, G8, G10, G11, G12, G16	21 Targets	33 indicators
Agriculture and Rural Dev. Sector	G2, G6, G9, G12, G15	12 Targets	22 indicators
Economic Sector	G1, G8, G9, G10, G12, G17	20 Targets	29 indicators
<b>8 Sector</b>	<b>17 Goals</b>	<b>121 Targets</b>	<b>188 Indicators</b>

Source: Ministry of Economy (2018)

Afghanistan has organized the SDGs around budget sectors. See Appendix for detailed list of Afghanistan SDGs, targets and indicators.

So far, I have described the major donors and multi-donor funds, the GIRoA and donor organizations mutual commitments to improving aid effectiveness and the GIRoA's national priorities and development plans. The next section of the paper attempts to explore the effectiveness of development aid around the principles of Paris Declaration<sup>3</sup>.

### **Aid Effectiveness and Afghan Priorities**

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action require donor community and national governments on improving the effectiveness of aid through the commitment to principles such ownership, partnerships, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, mutual accountability and capacity development. This alignment of aid with national priorities and plans is considered crucial for improving capacities and ownership and delivering greater results. In Afghanistan, the international community and donors agreed to these principles under the Afghanistan Compact of 2006 followed by the TMAF to improve aid effectiveness, provide on-budget assistance and align 80 percent of aid to the national priorities set by the Afghan government. The recent Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework of 2018 indicates that these goals have not been achieved (GIRoA, 2018).

Rati Ram (2003) argues that both bilateral and multilateral donors have different motives, characteristics, and conditions and donor-recipient relationships play an important role in decisions regarding aid. These decisions include issues such as alignment, amount of aid and the delivery of aid.

The United States' Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) recent Quarterly Report (2019), the United States has provided \$37.48 billion in governance, development, and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan since 2001. However, only \$4.45 billion has been provided through direct funding of Afghan government efforts or multilateral trust fund support.

While recently, the UK government and European Union along with other small donors have channeled a significant share of their development assistance through multilateral trust funds and direct on-budget support to the Afghan government. The on-budget assistance and bilateral trust

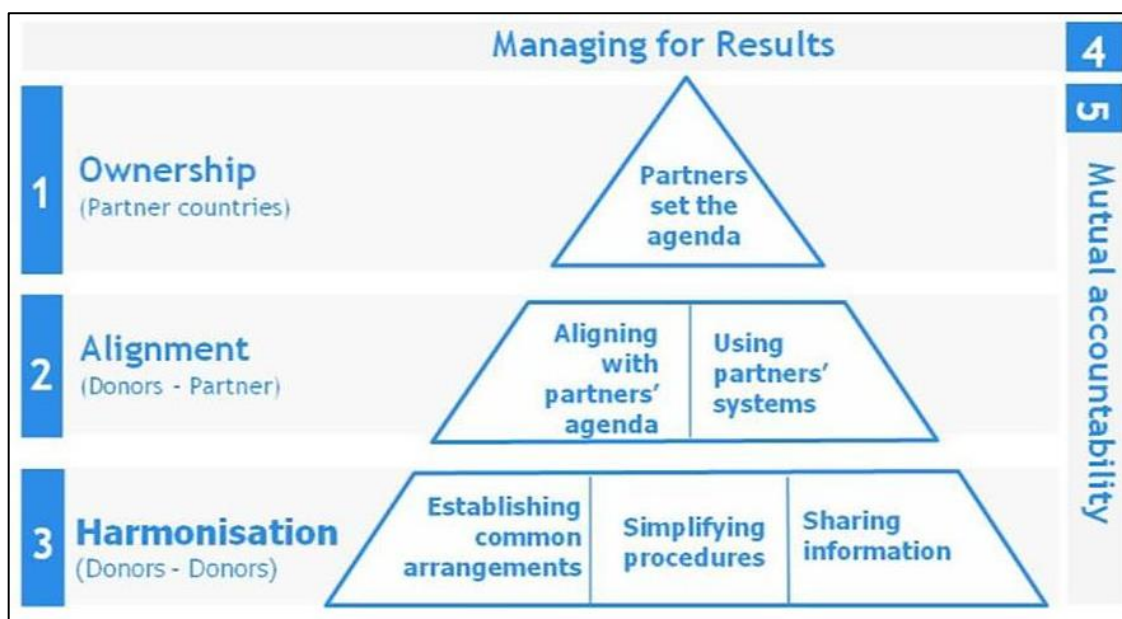
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<sup>3</sup> In 2005, the donor and recipient countries for the first time came together to agree on a set of goals for improving aid effectiveness and accountability to each other. These agreements lead to the Paris Declaration, the first documents outlining mutual accountability to the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The principles of Paris Declaration are used as basis for assessing aid effectiveness since then.

funds have more buy-in and ownership from the GIRoA who takes lead in planning and designing of the programs and projects.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness sets the fundamentals and principles to serve as a guiding document for the international donors' community and the partner countries to enhance the effectiveness of development aid.

Figure 2. Paris Declaration Pyramid



Source: OECD (2005)

**Ownership**

Under this principle, the recipient country takes charge of development planning and agenda setting for their own countries and leads the implementation of the development programs with support from donors who will support the countries to strengthen their capacity.

Brown (2016), in his paper on foreign aid, national ownership, and donor alignment in Mali and Ghana, has provided analysis of the Paris Declaration's principles in practice. He describes the multiplication of national plans, over-inclusiveness (an effort to develop plans that are agreed by all stakeholders in a country), ineffective follow-up, and deficiencies in planning and implementation as significant challenges and issues with these principles. Most of these issues and challenges could be seen in Afghanistan's context. Brown (2016) also notes that Ethiopia and Colombia are among the countries with stronger ownership and ability to hold donors accountable to this principle. He argues that these countries have relatively strong public financial management systems and planning agencies that can work better with donor agencies.

In Afghanistan, the ownership of most aspects of development aid did not lie with the government, since most of the development programs and projects were planned and implemented based on donors' priorities and agendas that were presumed to be beneficial for Afghanistan and the newly established Afghan government. As outlined earlier, only portions of development aid were channelized through the on-budget support or aligned with national priorities.

The level of ownership of programs and projects varied across sectors and ministries. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), for instance, has been one of the ministries with higher levels of ownership due to its capacity to design health services packages using a consultative approach and gathering donors around those prioritized programs (Dalil et al., 2014). MoPH has also established strong grants and contracts management unit that was fully staffed with Afghan professionals.

There is a need for more government-owned robust studies and evaluations across the line ministries and agencies to understand the varying levels of ownership, challenges and lessons learned. GIRoA also need to enhance the efforts on improving national planning, public financial management and oversight systems to in order to be able to take greater ownership of the donor funding and programs.

### **Alignment**

Under this principle, the donors and recipient country development plans and priorities should be aligned, and the established systems and national procedures and policies should be used in programming and implementation activities. These include using the national procurement and public financial management systems, building their capacity by providing on-budget support under the leadership of the national governments. Alignment has not been fully achieved in Afghanistan. Under the Afghanistan Compact and GMAF, the donor community and GIRoA agreed on the alignment of programs. However, the extent of alignment has not been determined yet. From my knowledge and experience in the Afghan government, there are varying levels of alignment among different donors. The US Government funds, the largest of all donors, stand out in this regard. Recent ARTF and AITF reports indicate a small portion of US funds are channeled through these funds (World Bank, 2018b; ADB, 2018). This issue at least partially involves the militarization and securitization of aid, that is aid programmed with the objectives of securing and, in military terms, "winning hearts and minds" of the people. Examples of these efforts include USAID's stability programs, including those managed by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. As noted above, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams model has been critiqued by scholars and practitioners in Afghanistan who could not determine its role in improving security. PRTs in some cases have even resulted in parallel structures to the GIRoA (Eronen, 2008). These challenges are not unique to Afghanistan, as Brown (2016) notes similar alignment issues in Mali and Ghana.

### **Harmonization**

The principle of harmonization requires donors and governments to agree on data sharing, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation, under the leadership of the national government. Harmonization is considered an essential step by the Paris Declaration to avoid duplication of programs. In fragile states where most governments lack strong leadership, the donors will coordinate using their mechanisms and support strengthening government agencies on the national and sub-national level.

Since the beginning of the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, the declarations of international conferences on Afghanistan indicates efforts at harmonization. These efforts include the creation of implementation group to coordinate and oversee the early reconstruction efforts, Senior Officials Meetings mechanism to review progress to international commitments, and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board for governance and aid effectiveness. However, the results of these efforts have not been encouraging. There are many instances of duplication of efforts, and there have been many projects that did not endure. SIGAR (2018) has published details of such instances in US Government programming. There is also a great deal of evidence for programs and projects implemented in the same sectoral, programmatic and geographic area with approaches undermining each other. Delving into the details of these is beyond the scope of this paper.

### **Managing for Results**

Under this principle, aid should have a focus on results-based approaches and improve evidence-based decision-making by collecting and providing timely data and information. The World Bank has particular focus on the results-based approach as laid out by Imas and Rist (2009). Managing for results and using results-based systems cross-cuts all principles due to the way this approach can fundamentally improve development interventions and results over shorter and longer terms, and in both ongoing and future programs and projects (Imas & Rist, 2009). Stronger systems to provide timely data and information can improve national ownership, harmonization, alignment, and mutual accountability. Results-based management systems have been a significant issue in Afghanistan. Establishing functional results-based systems, robust monitoring and evaluation systems that are the essential part of the country systems to enable evidence-based decisions has been challenging in Afghanistan's context. Afghanistan has never had comprehensive national-level baseline statistics to serve as basis for measuring the progress of development. The government has failed to build M&E systems. The donor community traditionally has been better than the government in terms of evidence base, data, and M&E systems. I discuss the details of the current Afghan M&E system and how it should be improved in the next section of the paper.

### **Mutual Accountability**

Under this principle, donor and partners should enhance practices to involve broader perspectives and stakeholder groups, including national parliaments, in the agenda-setting and implementation

stages and donors should provide timely information on aid to enable better government planning and reporting. Mutual accountability has been an essential part of aid to Afghanistan in all international conferences. The Afghanistan Compact called for aid effectiveness, reaffirming the commitments of the Paris Declaration, and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board was established to monitor the progress on the commitments under the Afghanistan Compact. The Senior Officials Meetings was a mechanism to review the JCMB plans and reports on Afghanistan, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The GIRoA and international community also established the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee in 2010 to enhance anti-corruption efforts. Most of these initiatives, committees, and programs provide commitments to the objectives of accountability and transparency and government support.

### **Status of Monitoring and Evaluation**

Achieving the principles of aid effectiveness, Afghanistan's Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework commitments, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, and its associated national priority programs require robust monitoring and evaluation systems. M&E systems measure progress and performance, improve accountability and highlight lessons learned around the design, implementation, and results of policies, programs, and projects. The existing GIRoA monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting systems have a range of weaknesses, and function in limited capacity, preventing the effective monitoring and evaluation of development programs by the government.

In this section of the paper, I will provide an overview of the GIRoA's M&E systems based on the existing literature and assessments and draw on evidence and experience from M&E systems in other developing countries to suggest improvements for Afghanistan. However, before that, I will provide a summary of the characteristics of a functional M&E system.

M&E systems are important public management tool across developed and developing countries that support and enhance evidence-based decision-making, policy-making, and budgeting. In many countries, the Ministries of Finance use performance data as part of their performance-based budgeting systems (Anderson, Biscaye, LaFayette, Martin and Richardson 2015; Imas & Rist, 2009). Performance-based and data-oriented decision-making is not possible without the presence of robust M&E systems. Therefore, for governments the principal objective of M&E systems is to enable evidence-based decision-making. Mackay (2006, 2007) suggests that the role of information utilization in decision-making, a national custodian agency and objectivity and quality of information are essential factors of M&E systems that succeed in achieving this objective.

Figure 3. Components of a functional M&E system



Structural independence—the administrative structure and reporting are designed in a way that does not influence the credibility and objectivity of data.

Scope—the programmatic and geographic scope of the M&E system is comprehensive enough to cover the organization’s activities.

Human capacity—the M&E unit has capable staff that suffices for the scope of the system.

Strategic and annual plans—both the organization and M&E unit has strategic plans to design long-term indicators based on them and annual work plans for budgetary and operational purposes. M&E information is used in planning and budgetary processes both by the organization, Ministry of Finance or Treasury and other national planning entities such as the Ministry of Economy.

Management information systems—the M&E unit has the capacity, resources, and systems to operate a functional management information system to store and report data and information.

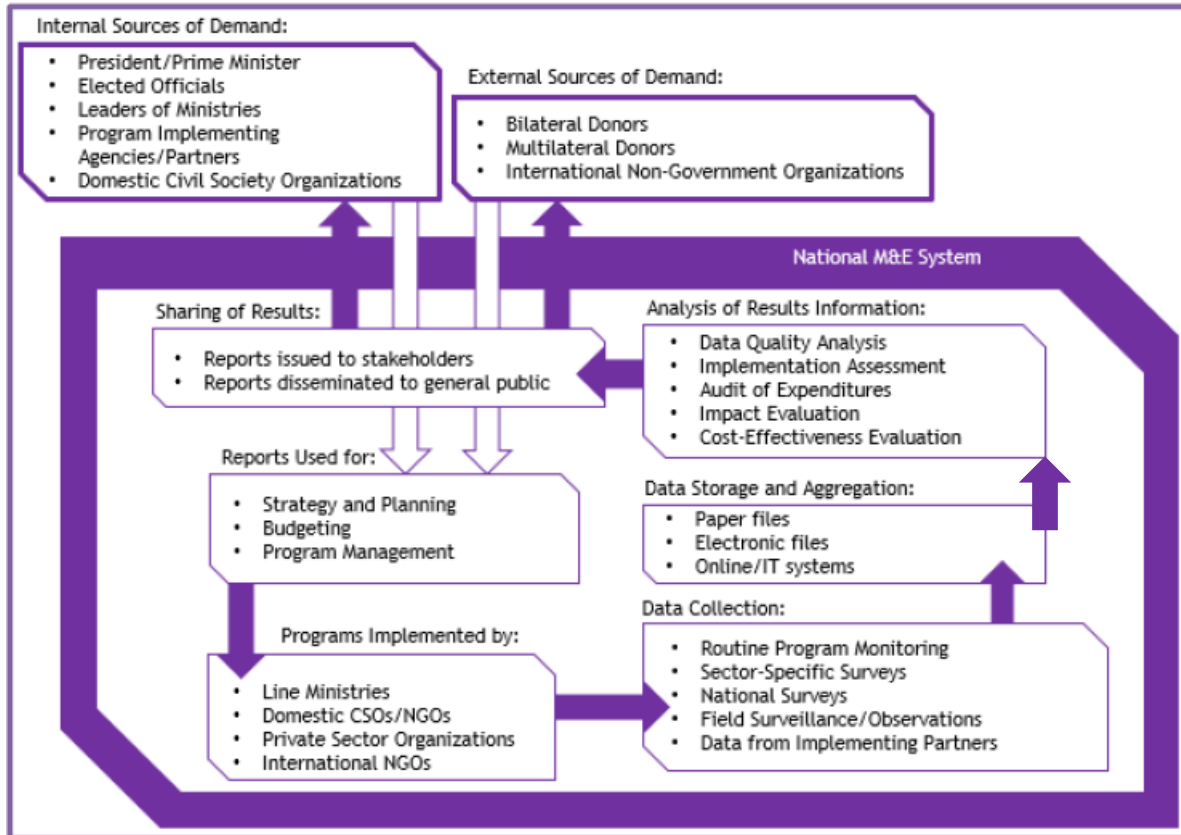
Evaluation—the function of internal evaluation and budget for outsourcing external evaluations exist in the department.

Synergies and coordination—coordination with the organization's internal departments and external organizations to avoid duplication, improving data sharing and enhance organizational and national planning.

Dissemination and reporting—Reports and information are disseminated to relevant stakeholders and publicly available where allowed to maximize its utilization.

Utilization—M&E system improves evidence-based decision-making. Information is used by the organization that leads to improvement in subsequent programming.

Figure 4. A flow of information in M&E Systems.



Source: Anderson et al., (2015)

Anderson et al. (2015), in their paper on Evaluating Country-Level Government M&E Systems, reviewed 42 national M&E systems in 23 developing countries. They have listed the following as significant challenges across these countries:

- Governments face challenges with institutionalizing and coordinating M&E systems, including defining and clarifying roles and leadership, aligning and coordinating across sectors and building internal staff capacity
- Data collection challenges include inadequate staffing, high staff turnover, infrequent training for data collection skills, duplication of efforts, delays in data collection and submission, and limited data verification.



- Many systems do not report rules or standards for data collection, aggregation, or verification. An increasing number of systems, however, are using electronic tools and systems to improve data collection.
- Almost all systems have strategic frameworks, often expressed as a theoretical causal chain outlining activities, outputs, and outcomes, but there is a greater focus on tracking outputs of programs than evaluating their outcomes or impacts.
- Few systems consistently use M&E data for decision-making around strategy, budgeting, or program management.
- Harmonization between donors and governments is limited by donors' ongoing use of parallel implementation and reporting systems, but the number of these separate systems is falling in many countries.

They also note some opportunities across these countries:

- In many countries, strong demand from elected officials is supporting improved coordination of M&E.
- Efforts to align donor and government M&E systems include the use of common indicators, technical support from donors, public dissemination of M&E data, and systems for mutual accountability.

Since 2001, the GIRoA has established M&E systems, mainly in response to growing demands from donors for performance data. Before this period, there was no culture of results-based management and evaluation in the government.

The demand for M&E systems and data grew as donors routed funds through on-budget assistance using the public financial management and procurement systems with a requirement to improve government performance management and supervisory systems. Requirements by donors increased the focus on performance measurement, information management, and M&E systems in the GIRoA, which at the time were in their early development stages.

For example, as detailed in the Automated Directives System (ADS) 220 guidelines, USAID requires all its partners to have useful internal M&E functions in order to be eligible for on-budget assistance (USAID, 2019). As a result, the systems improved over time and included increases in staffing, but most improvements were concentrated at the national level.

Both GIRoA and donors have conducted assessments of the M&E systems in the government to understand current capacities and provide support for improving them. USAID commissioned a rapid assessment of the government's M&E systems in 2014 that provides details about the line ministries and agencies that typically received USAID on-budget assistance (USAID, 2014).

The Administrative Office of the President (AOP) commissioned a more comprehensive assessment in 2015 that covers both government and donor agencies' M&E systems to also highlight areas of collaboration and knowledge exchange (AOP, 2016a). Both assessment reports

indicate same set of challenges and issues. The AOP (2016a) assessment found that 73 percent of the government LMAs have a unit or department on national level to undertake M&E related tasks.

However, these are marked by insufficient resources, low sub-national presence, low rates of utilization of data and reports, insufficient in terms of enabling evidence-based decision-making and improving ongoing and subsequent programs. Only 36 percent of them have written or approved mandates (AOP, 2016a). GIROA M&E systems are mostly concentrated at the national level while the majority of the projects are implemented at sub-national levels. Since programs and projects are implemented at sub-national levels, the focus of the M&E systems and resource allocation should be at the same level to generate useful performance information and lessons learned. The sub-national presence of and capacity for M&E vary among the LMAs.

The AOP (2016a) assessment states that the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health have some M&E staff at the sub-national level. Based on my experience working with the government, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock and the Ministry of Economy have also recruited some M&E staff in regional provinces.

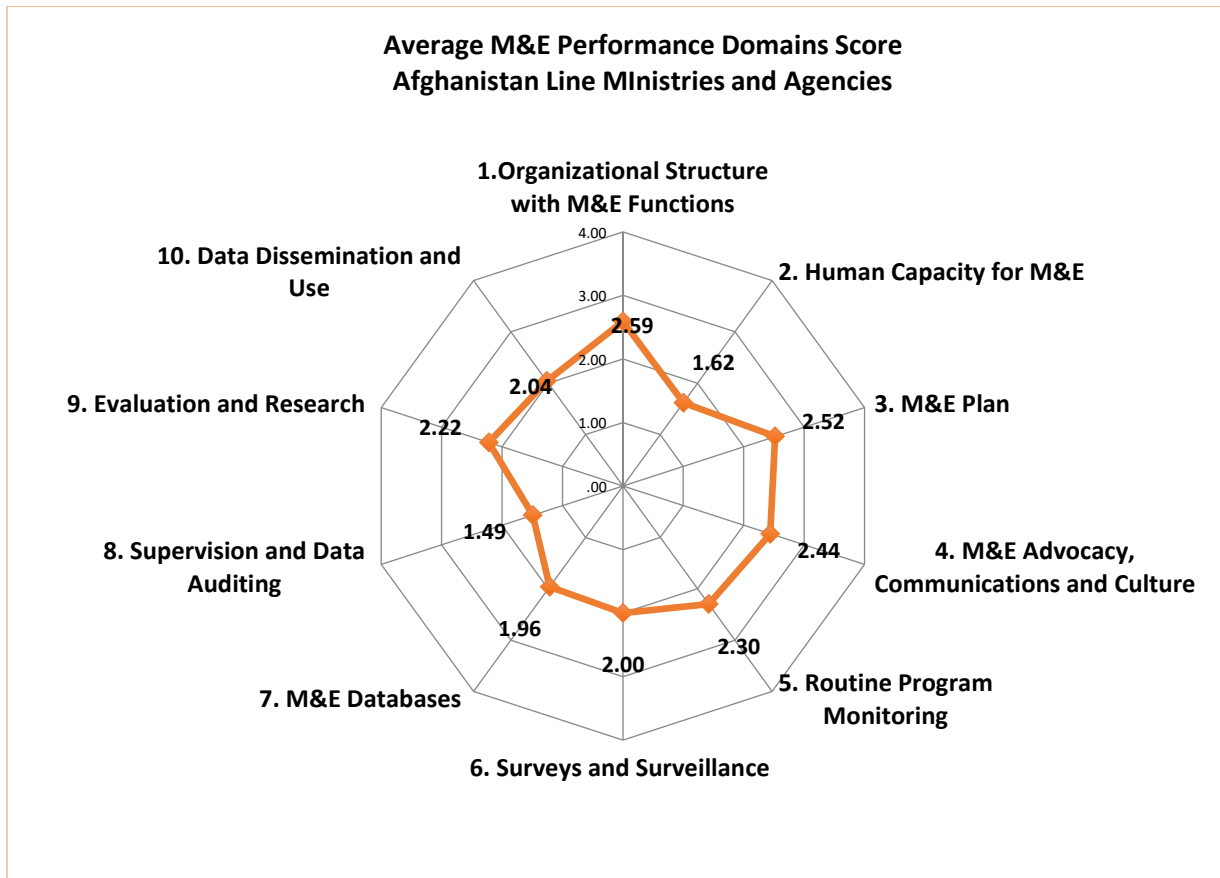
For the sub-national coordination of M&E systems, there is an overlap of responsibility among the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), which is the prime agency responsible for coordinating sub-national governance, and the Ministry of Economy which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of national development plans at national and sub-national levels. In a perfect world, each of the LMA will have their internal M&E staff at the provincial level, and the role played by a national agency will complement the government's effort to enhance external M&E and to coordinate the internal M&E functions on national and sub-national levels.

IDLG developed an M&E system using the whole-of-government approach (Sarwary, 2014), trying to establish an M&E system across all sub-national units and municipalities without looking into the details of varying levels of capacities in each province. The IDLG national M&E framework combines monitoring, evaluation, research, and data management and reporting functions under one system, but the Directorate failed to implement the framework. Sarwary (2014) refer to low capacities, lack of resources and lack of political will as barriers to institutionalizing the M&E system in government, specifically in the IDLG.

The Ministry of Economy has been working on developing M&E plans, guidelines and tools on the national and sub-national level to play a coordinating role. Following the adoption of the A-SDGs, the Ministry of Economy has taken a broader role in receiving data from other LMAs, but this is a challenging task. The details will be discussed in the following sections. Another major issue is the focus of government M&E systems on ad-hoc and nonsystematic monitoring and reporting. The evaluation function is almost non-existent in the government. Donor agencies and organizations usually commission external evaluations of the government and donor-government interventions, but those evaluations lack government ownership, and therefore the implementation of the evaluation findings and recommendations does not happen.

AOP (2016a) assesses M&E capacity around ten selected domains, using a score of 1-4, with one being lowest and four being highest. The spider chart below is a summary of the assessment in 15 LMAs. It indicates that the government has done a good job of establishing M&E function and structures (2.59) in its LMAs on a national level, but there is insufficient human capacity for M&E (1.62). Low human capacity is the result of low resource allocation to M&E, which is missing in the assessment.

Figure 5. LMAs M&E capacity around the selected domains (score 1-4)



Source: AOP (2016a)

Afghanistan’s challenges are not unique. For example, Goldman and his co-authors (2012) list the clarification of roles, issues around coordination, the integration of M&E into planning systems, the capacity to use M&E data for evidence-based policy-making and decision-making, the quality of data, and sustainability as challenges to M&E systems in South Africa. These challenges are similar to those seen in Afghanistan.

**Capacity**

The GIRoA’s capacity has been cited as a significant challenge to implementing on-budget assistance programs and projects, which also affects the quality of M&E systems (USAID, 2014). As in any other fragile and conflict-affected state, the government of Afghanistan suffers from

weak institutional and human capacity. Donors have assisted in building capacities within GIROA. The World Bank-funded Afghanistan Capacity Building for Results Facility (CBR) is a recent flagship capacity-building program to recruit competitive professionals to enhance performance and reforms. After the completion of CBR, the World Bank launched the Tackling Afghanistan's Government HRM and Institutional Reforms (TAGHIR) project as their most recent government capacity building initiative. The CBR project did an excellent job in attracting skilled professionals into the government, which led to the achievement of some objectives of the program, but only an evaluation of the CBR will be able to reveal the extent to which it was able to achieve its objectives. Some of the line ministries and agencies are dependent on donor-funded consultants and advisors to fulfill their mandate, a problem noted in the USAID (2014) assessment.

Although Afghanistan has qualified M&E professionals, the government's ability to attract them into government systems is limited due to various factors, with the pay scale the most important. The government civil service pay scale in Afghanistan is not attractive to specialists who have better opportunities in consulting and non-government sectors. Thus, the government is only able to attract entry-level professionals in most of the third-grade and lower positions. Over the past two decades, a large number of Afghan professionals were trained in international development organizations, acquiring specialized skills. However, with continuing conflict and the worsening security situation, many of these professionals have become part of a flight of human capital, mostly to western countries. The government of Afghanistan has traditionally attracted Afghan technocrats from the diaspora community, who mostly work on senior advisory and executive positions, but the presence of such professionals is mostly limited to the highest levels of government.

### **Lack of proper structures**

The lack of a national custodian of M&E functions and improper structures in the government of Afghanistan is another reason the country lacks a robust M&E system. The government of Afghanistan's highest-level authority, such as the President's Office, can serve as the custodian of the national government-wide M&E system. This has been articulated in the draft Afghanistan's Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework that was developed by the Administrative Office of the President (AOP, 2016b). However, the policy framework has not been officially adopted, and no other legal or policy framework or document mandates any of the highest-level government agencies to lead the implementation of M&E functions across the government.

Although the Ministry of Economy (MoEc) has the mandate over ANPDF and A-SDGs, it is not responsible for establishing and implementing a government-wide M&E system. The Ministry of Finance (MoF), while well-positioned in many countries to serve as the leading agency to implement a national M&E system (Mackay, 2006), does not have this mandate in Afghanistan. MoEc and MoF also have challenges around the duplication of mandates around supervisory functions and leading the implementation and monitoring of national development plans. For

instance, MoEc lacks proper authority and influence over peer LMAs that would allow it to collect comprehensive statistics and information on the progress towards national strategies and plans. The Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee was established in July 2010 in the Kabul Process conference as an independent agency to support the GoIRA's anti-corruption and reform programs. It was also intended to enhance the LMA's understanding of corruption vulnerability and provide viable recommendations to strengthen their anti-corruption capacity. The scope of MEC, since its inception, is limited to anti-corruption and accountability efforts.

The human resources and reporting structure play an important role in the effectiveness and utilization of M&E and its findings and recommendations. Currently, in most of the GIRA LMAs, the M&E is placed in lower levels of the organization without proper access to the leadership and planners.

Establishing and functionalizing a government-wide M&E system is a challenging task which has been acknowledged by Kusek & Rist (2004). Thus, other approaches that are easier to implement can be used to establish M&E systems. A known approach is an enclave, establishing an M&E system in one entity, which can be replicated in other entities after its success.

Both the government-wide and enclave approaches require a national custodian with relatively higher authority and influence, national champions, and ongoing advocacy. While the absence of laws and a national custodian for M&E hinder Afghanistan's efforts, they may not be the only way to achieve capacity. Mackay (2007) argues that a lack of reliance on laws, decrees, and regulations is an element of success for M&E systems. He argues that M&E culture, integration with planning systems, and demand for M&E information is more important than enacting laws and regulations.

## **Demand**

M&E, as a new phenomenon in Afghanistan's government, has no prior history in the government sector. Afghan policy-makers and decision-makers currently depend on ad-hoc data and assessments decide on the status of programs and projects and to develop strategic plans. Parliament lacks the necessary capacity to analyze and evaluate government interventions and reports, and thus it focuses only on the quantitative data and statistics.

Although over the past two decades some capacity, culture, and demand for M&E has developed in Afghanistan, M&E still suffers from low demand, especially among policy-makers, decision-makers, and parliament. Low demand stems from lack of understanding of value and importance of M&E information and challenges around accessing timely usable information.

Lessons learned from other countries show that demand is an essential factor in enhancing the quality and supply of M&E information (Mackay, 2007). Both internal demand from the national stakeholders, including the government, parliament and civil society, and external demand from

international organizations (Anderson et al., 2015) are necessary to build and strengthen M&E systems.

### **Resource constraints**

Allocating sufficient resources has been cited as an essential element of the effective M&E systems in government and any other sector, and therefore it has also been cited as a challenge to the success of M&E system (Mackay, 2006, 2007; Anderson et al., 2015; Kusek & Rist, 2004). Due to competing demands for the limited government budget, M&E is usually left without a sufficient budget. For instance, Afghanistan's national budget does not allocate funds to a specific evaluation budget. Although the operational costs of LMAs include support to M&E staff in terms of monthly salaries and some travel costs, there is no budget allocated to conducting evaluations. For example, the Ministry of Economy's budget includes planning and monitoring functions, but no budget is allocated to evaluation although it is the agency most responsible for monitoring and evaluating government's progress on the national development strategy, priority programs, and the Sustainable Development Goals. With limited resources, the LMAs rely on collecting limited monitoring data mostly at the national level through the program and implementing units with very weak verification functions.

### **National level baseline statistics**

To understand the components of a functional M&E system, one has to understand the importance of the comprehensive national level baseline statistics around key indicators, objectives, and national priorities. Afghanistan has not been able to generate such statistics. Most of the LMAs have some baseline data and information, but no single system compiles data from various data flows into one comprehensive national management information system. The government's ability to regularly report on national progress backed by quality data and information is limited which is an issue of major concern. All policy initiative and program should be based on accurate data and information and should contribute to improving national goals and targets. Lack of existence of such data and information leads to relying on partial data that have consequences for program design, implementation and results.

Redundant data collection and complex data flows have also hindered the establishment of national baselines by increasing the data collection burden in government agencies. For instance, the USAID (2014) assessment mentions the existence of over 1,000 indicators in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), while MAIL was only collecting data on 32 indicators. If analyzed in detail, the vast set of indicators includes repetitive measures, indicators for the same data using a different approach, or differently worded measures to collect the same data.

### Quality and utilization of data and information

The value and importance of monitoring and evaluation data and information lie in its usability. Mackay (2007) claims that it is wrong to believe that M&E has inherent value. Instead, its value is related to the use of the data and information, and therefore it is essential to understand that the usability of M&E information enhances its quality. The utilization of M&E data and information is a significant concern in most conflict-affected and fragile states. The same conditions mark Afghanistan. The existing M&E systems generate some data that is partly useable to enhance decision-making, but it is not used to its full extent. For instance, the AOP (2016a) assessment reports that only 47 percent of government entities utilize some M&E data for decision-making. The lack of quality information, lack of analytical capacity, weak culture, and lack connection between M&E systems and decision-makers are all significant factors that affect the use of M&E information (Anderson et al., 2015).

### The Sustainability of M&E systems

Sustainability is a significant consideration in any national M&E system. It has been cited as challenging task for M&E systems and should be considered in the design stages to identify the success or failure of the systems (Goldman, Engela, Akhalwaya, Gasa, Leon, Mohamed and Phillips 2012; Kusek & Rist, 2004). It is vital for M&E systems to continue functioning without being affected by a change in the leadership. Therefore, the continued production of usable of M&E data and information in planning system can serve as a measure of success in building a sustainable M&E system. This, however, is an issue in Afghanistan. The government M&E systems are often affected by staff turnover and change in leadership. Lack of institutional memory has affected the entire government, let alone M&E systems.

### Recommendations

In order to improve the status and functionality of the monitoring and evaluation systems in Afghanistan, I make the following recommendations:

- **Capacity building:** building capacity is the first step towards improving the M&E systems. There should be a comprehensive effort toward delivering M&E capacity building. This can be achieved through:
  - a. Introducing in-service M&E trainings through the Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission of Afghanistan (IARCSC) and through the human resources directorates in the relevant line ministries and agencies.
  - b. Including M&E training in the curriculum in public universities and partnering with private universities to deliver M&E training.

- c. M&E staff from line ministries and agencies should receive regular refresher trainings and participate in knowledge and experience exchange sessions with their counterparts in other government and development agencies.
- **Partnership:** A national M&E partnership and forum should be established that includes the M&E professionals from across the government, development agencies and civil society organizations to serve as a platform for reflection, exchange and knowledge sharing. The Afghan Evaluation Society (AfES), the independent national M&E association of Afghanistan is well-suited bring the technical expertise to such forums.
  - **Improve usability and usefulness:** Improving usability and usefulness of M&E data and information requires high quality data. Utilization-focused M&E systems with higher data quality standards will result in increased demand for such data. Therefore, any effort to improving M&E systems should be utilization focused to improve the use of information and be efficient in using the limited government resources.
  - **Clarify and define authorities and roles of entities engaged in M&E:** The roles and authorities of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Independent Directorate of Local Governance and National Statistics and Information Authority in regard to M&E should be clearly defined in a national evaluation policy and in the mandates of the specific agencies. The roles of these government agencies should be clarified both on a national and sub-national levels. A mechanism and information management system should be established that facilitates exchange of information among these key agencies to complement and enhance the national planning, budgeting, decision-making and reporting processes.
  - **Establish proper organizational structures and a national entity:** M&E require proper level of authority and access to decision-making structures to generate the desired results. Therefore, a process of restructuring the current M&E organizational structures at the line ministries and agencies should be held to improve the positioning of the function. Also, a national entity should be established or identified from among the existing line agencies to serve as custodian of M&E function. This entity should serve as a champion for M&E in the government to strengthen M&E systems, improve capacities, enhance use of M&E data and information and build stronger coordination with development agencies.
  - **Aligning M&E systems:** Efforts should be undertaken to align M&E systems in government and development organizations. The alignment should start from basic components including, developing common national indicators, exchanging data and information and providing technological support to each other where required.
    - a. Off-budget programs and projects should be given greater consideration as they often function with little coordination with the existing government structures. The donor organizations who commission such projects are the best way to approach in aligning M&E functions of these projects.



- **Planning:** A focus should be given to increasing the utilization of M&E information in national budgeting and planning processes. The timely availability and usefulness of M&E data and information is a fundamental to its use in national and sub-national planning.
- **Adopting a national M&E policy:** A national M&E policy should be adopted that guides the improvement of M&E systems and lays out actions and procedures to establishing a robust M&E system and to achieve the above recommendations.

## Methods

This paper relies on the secondary sources and publicly-available data and documents. Most of the documents and data used were acquired through web searches. The data and reports were located on the donor organizations databases and websites, government of Afghanistan online archives, and the website of research organizations. I have also used some of internal documents of the GIRoA that I have accessed through my professional networks and as part of my engagement with the development organizations and government of Afghanistan.

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## Appendix: Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTOR	
TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>	
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex A. Male B. Female C. Urban D. Rural E. Kochi
1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means to implement program and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	1.a.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction program; 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)
<b>SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum	8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita
8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all;	8.10.1 Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adult 8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank per 100,000 person 8.10.3 Number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults
<b>SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>	
9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of: a. GDP b. per capita 9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment
9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets	9.3.1 Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added 9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit
9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in the country through enhanced financial, technological and technical support	9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure
<b>SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>	
10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 25 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average	10.1.1 a. Per capita income b. Income growth rate of the bottom 25% of the population

<b>SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>	
12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
<b>SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</b>	
17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP 17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for country from multiple sources	17.3.1 Foreign direct investments (FDI) as a proportion of total GDP
17.11 By 2030, Significantly increase the exports of the country in particular with a view to doubling the country's share in global exports	17.11.1 Afghanistan's share in global exports
17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence	17.13.1 Gross Domestic Product (in billions USD)
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships	17.17.1 Amount of money allocated to public-private partnerships (in millions USD)
17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics; 17.18.2 Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries	17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries; 17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration

## 2. AGRICULTURE SECTOR

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>	
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.1. Percentage of food insecure population;
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.1. Average wheat and rice harvest by farmers (MT/HA); a. Irrigated wheat b. Rain-fed wheat c. Rice 2.3.2. Average income of small-scale food producers.
2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture;

2.5 By 2025, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national level; and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed	2.5.1 Number of registered and protected plant and animal genetic resources. Disaggregated by: a. Fruits b. Plants c. animals
2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity	2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures;
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	2.c.1 Number of agricultural products, livestock and basic food needs which prices are published on a weekly and monthly basis.
<b>SDG 6: . Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>	
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services. Disaggregated by: 1. Total a. Urban b. Rural
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services disaggregated by: 1.Total 2.Urban 3. Rural 6.2.2 Proportion of population with access to hand-washing facility with soap and water disaggregated by: 1.Total 2. Urban 3. Rural 6.2.3 Proportion of population who use open defecation by: 1.Total a. Urban b. Rural
<b>SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>	
9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road;
<b>SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>	
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	12.3.1 Percentage of wheat and rice losses during the production in a year disaggregated by: a. Wheat b. Rice
<b>SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b>	
15.1 By 2030 ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area
15.2 By 2030, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management

### 3. EDUCATION SECTOR

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>	

<p>4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes</p>	<p>4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in a. Reading b. Arithmetic at 1. Grade 2 or 3 2. the end of primary education 3. the end of lower secondary education by sex;  4.1.2 Implementation of a nationally-representative learning assessment a. in Grade 2 or 3 b. at the end of primary education c. at the end of lower secondary education  4.1.3 Gross intake ratio to the last grade 1. Primary 2. Lower secondary;  4.1.4 Completion rate 1. Primary education 2. Lower secondary education 3. Upper secondary education;  4.1.5 Out-of-school rate 1. Primary education 2. Lower secondary education 3. Upper secondary education;  4.1.6 Percentage of children over-age for grade 1. Primary education 2. Lower secondary education 3. Upper secondary education;  4.1.7 Number of years of primary and secondary education a. free b. Compulsory that is guaranteed in legal frameworks</p>
<p>4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education</p>	<p>4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age (Age of 6);</p>
<p>4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</p>	<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of a. Youth and adults (Age of 15 – 24) b. Elders (Age of 25 – 64) in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (male, female);  4.3.2 Participation rate in technical and vocational programs (15- 24 years old), Disaggregated by: a. total of both sex b. male c. female;  4.3.3 Percentage of new enrollments in public and private universities, disaggregated by: 1. Public a. Male b. Female 2. Private a. Male b. Female</p>
<p>4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;</p>	<p>4.5.1 Proportion of gender balance enrollment in 1. Primary education 2. Lower secondary education 3. Upper secondary education;  4.5.2 Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction;  4.5.3 Explicit formula-based policies for relocation of resources to disadvantaged population;  4.5.4 Education expenditure per student disaggregated by: A. Level of Education 1. Primary 2. Lower Secondary 3. Upper secondary B. Education expenditure for each student per capita GDP</p>
<p>4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy</p>	<p>4.6.1 Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in a. Literacy b. Numeracy by sex (male and female);</p>



	<p>4.6.2 literacy rate among individuals, disaggregated by: A. 15 – 24 years old 1.Total of both sex 2. Male 3. Female B. 15 years and above 1.Total of both sex 2. Male 3. Female;</p> <p>4.6.3 Participation rate of a. Youth (15 – 24 years) b. Adult (15 years and older) in literacy programs;</p>
<p>4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development</p>	<p>4.7.1 Extent to which 1. Global citizenship education 2. Education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights are mainstreamed at below levels: a. National education policies b. curricula c. Teacher education d. Student assessments;</p> <p>4.7.2 Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based, HIV prevention and sexuality Education;</p> <p>4.7.3 Extent to which the framework on the World Program on Human Rights Education is implemented nationally a. inclusion in curricula b. educating students on human rights in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary c. educating teachers and administrative staff on human rights;</p>
<p>4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all</p>	<p>4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: a. electricity b. Internet for pedagogical purposes c. computer lab for pedagogical purposes d. Adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; e. Basic drinking water and washroom f. single-sex basic sanitation facilities g. Appropriate building;</p> <p>4.a.2 Percentage of students experiencing bullying, corporal punishment, harassment, violence, sexual discrimination and abuse;</p> <p>4.a.3 Number and type of attacks on students, personnel and institutions;</p>
<p>4.b. By 2030, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs</p>	<p>4.b.2 number of higher education scholarships in foreign countries. Disaggregated by: 1. Bachelors scholarships 2. Masters scholarship 3. PhD Scholarships</p>
<p>4.c. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training</p>	<p>4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: a. Pre-primary education b. Primary education c. Lower secondary education d. Upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level, by sex (male and female);</p> <p>4.c.2 Pupil-trained teacher ratio by education level: 1. Primary 2. Lower secondary 3. upper secondary;</p> <p>4.c.3 Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards, by Level: 1. Primary 2. Lower secondary Upper secondary;</p> <p>4.c.4 Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by level of education 1. Primary 2. Lower secondary 3. Upper secondary;</p>

	4.c.5 Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of qualification; 4.c.6 Teacher attrition rate; 4.c.7 Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months;
<b>SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	<b>8.9.1</b> Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP; <b>8.9.2</b> Number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total; disaggregated by: a. Male b. female;
<b>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>	
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage;	11.4.1 Proportion of national budget dedicated for the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural, natural and world heritage;
<b>SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>	
12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	12.a.1 Amount of support of developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies
12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	12.b.1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools
<b>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months; 16.10.2 Number of adopted and implemented constitutional, statutory and/or policy that guarantees access to information for public

4. SOCIAL PROTECTION	
TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>	
1.3 By 2030, Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by: 1. Persons with disabilities 2. Families of martyrs 3. Retired person (Pension) 4. Vulnerable families with children under 10 years old
1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	1.5.1 Percentage of population at risk by climate and other disasters; 1.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP);

<b>SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>	
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.4 Participation rate of youth and adults in non-formal vocational trainings, disaggregated by: 1. Male 2. Female
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1 Percentage of disabled people in non-formal vocational trainings.
<b>SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>	
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1 Ensure that frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (legislations, manuals, conventions, and agreements)
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2.1 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by partner; 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than partner in the previous 12 months;
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage	5.3.1 Proportion of women who were married at the age of 15-19
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament; 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions;
<b>SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, disaggregated by: 1. Occupation 2. Age group 3. Disability 4. Male 5. Female 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, disaggregated by: 1. Male 2. Female
8.6 By 2030, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms	
8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	
8.b By 2025, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labor Organization;	
<b>SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>	
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	10.4.1 Workforce proportion, disaggregated by: 1. Male 2. Female
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	10.7.1 Percentage of afghan refugees who are registered at host country, by: 1. Pakistan 2. Iran 10.7.2 Number of returnees who receive humanitarian aid upon their return in last 12 months.;

	10.7.3 Number of displaced families who are permanently settled in each year; 10.7.4 Percentage of returnees settlements that has basic services and infrastructural; 10.7.5 Percentage of returnees and displaced people who benefits from employment and livelihood opportunities
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent;	10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted;
<b>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>	
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people, disaggregated by: 1. Death 2. displaced and missing people 3. Affected people
11.b By 2030, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	11.b.1 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b>	
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries;	13.1.1 Percentage of development of local disaster risk reduction strategies and action plans at district and locality levels;
<b>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population 1. due to known mines 2. due to explosive material 3. due to remains of ammunition from conflict
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.1.3 Percentage of land cleared from mines and unexploded ammunition;

## 5. HEALTH SECTOR

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>	
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons;	2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age; 2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight);

<b>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>	
3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio (per 100000 live birth) by: 1. Total A. Urban B. Rural 2. age group; 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (From total of births);
3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 15 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate (Per 1000 live births); 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate (Per 1000 live births);
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population. 1. Total of both sex 2. Male 3. Female 4.Key population (drug addicted people, prisoners, male and female sex workers); 3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population in last 12 month; 3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population in last 12 month; 3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population in last 12 month by: A. National level B. Percentage of HB+ in VCT centers.
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (aged 30 – 70 years);
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	3.5.2 Percentage of drug users whom have received treatment for substance use disorders;
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and program	3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods; 3.7.2 Proportion of adolescent birth ( aged 13-19 years);
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.8.1 Proportion of population whom have access to equal and quality essential health services with distance of two hours walking (10 km); 3.8.2 Percentage of health sector dependency to international donors;
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	3.a.1 Prevalence of current tobacco use (active form) among persons aged 15 years and older;
3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	3.b.1 Proportion of the population with access to affordable vaccines and medicine on a sustainable basis;
3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in the country.	3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution (per 1000 population); 3.c.2 Percentage of budget allocation for health sector by government.

## 6. GOVERNANCE SECTOR

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population. Disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	16.3.3 Number of beneficiaries of legal assistance to have access to justice
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female 16.5.3 Proportion of high-ranking government officials whose asset is recorded, investigated and published as per the national law.
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of Afghanistan in the institutions of global governance	16.8.1 Proportion of membership and voting rights of Afghanistan in international organizations. Disaggregated by: 1. International Organizations
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	16.9.1 Number of registered births

## 7. SECURITY SECTOR

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>	
3.6 By 2030 halve the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100 thousand person per year disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female 2. Social economic status a. Low b. Medium c. High
<b>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>	
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment during the last 12 months. Desegregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. Female
<b>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	16.3.1 Number of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to relevant authorities. Disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex a. Male b. female; 16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population;
16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows;

	16.4.2 Proportion of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments;
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles;

## 8. INFRASTRUCTURE

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<b>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>	
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of population who own a mobile telephone, by sex 1. Male 2. Female
<b>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>	
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater (household and all economic activities) safely treated 1. Urban
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	6.4.1 Proportion of change in water-use efficiency over time 1. Energy Sector 2. Agriculture Sector 3. Industries Sector 4. Urban Sector 6.4.2 Increase water reserves capacity for per-capita use (m <sup>3</sup> /year)
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	6.5.1 Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100); 6.5.2 Implementation of Helmand agreement and other water resources transboundary agreements;
6.6 By 2030, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time (Percentage of change)
6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	6.b.1 Proportion of councils in 5 river basins with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water resources management and development
<b>Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b>	
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity network, disaggregated by: 1. Urban 2. Rural
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP
7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all	7.b.1 Investments in energy efficiency as a percentage of GDP and the amount of foreign direct investment in financial transfer for infrastructure and technology to sustainable development services
<b>Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>	
9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet	9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, disaggregated by: 1. Technology

<b>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>	
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in country	11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste out of total urban solid waste generated that are: a. Regularly collected b. Adequately discharged after collection; 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	11.a.1 Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections, resource needs, and size of city
<b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>	
12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	12.4.1 Establish and implement national actions plans for international multilateral environmental agreements including Stockholm, Vienna, Minamata, Basel, Rotterdam conventions and Montreal protocol on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet Afghanistan's commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement;
<b>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b>	
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning;	13.2.1 progress towards the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases Afghanistan's ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other);
<b>Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b>	
15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	15.3.1 Proportion of land that is upgraded over total land area (Area of degraded land by floods over total land area along the rivers and water passages using construction and non-construction measures)
15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	15.4.1 Percentage of important sites for mountain biodiversity that are covered as protected areas



15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2030, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species	15.5.1 Red List Index (preparing the list of protected species in accordance to IUCN standards)
15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products	15.7.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked
15.8 By 2025, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species	15.8.1 Approval of national laws and legislation for the prevention or control of invasive alien species
15.9 By 2030, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020
<b>15.a</b> Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	15.a.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems
<b>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</b>	
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	17.6.2 Percentage of fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, disaggregated by: 1. Speed
17.8 By 2030, fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	17.8.1 Proportion of population using the Internet