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**Capacity Building and Institutional Development  
Programme  
for Environmental Management in Afghanistan**

**Progress Report**  
January – December 2007

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**UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch**

Kabul, June 2008

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## Executive Summary (2007)

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The UNEP Capacity Building and Institutional Development Programme for Afghanistan was requested by the former Afghan Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment (MIWRE) as a key follow-up activity to the UNEP report entitled "[Afghanistan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment](#)", published in January 2003. The programme was implemented in two phases during the period October 2003 to December 2007 with support and funding from the European Commission, the Government of Finland and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). A 36-month third phase of the programme will commence in April 2008. Following the comprehensive progress reports for 2004, 2005 and 2006, this report outlines the progress that was made from January to December 2007 within the nine components of the programme as outlined in the original project document. The main activity highlights and outputs achieved during 2007 are summarized below.

- **Environmental Coordination:** UNEP supported NEPA in the establishment of the inter-ministerial Committee for Environmental Coordination (CEC) as per the requirement of the Environment Law. UNEP supported NEPA in the development of its submissions to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Secretariat – ANDS is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Afghanistan. UNEP and NEPA's involvement in the Consultative Group (CG) mechanism is now two-fold: UNEP and NEPA are members of the Natural Resources and Environment Working Group of the Infrastructure and Natural Resources Consultative Group, and NEPA is the lead agency for the Cross-cutting Consultative Group (CCCCG) for Environment. UNEP assisted NEPA and the ANDS Secretariat in the development of NEPA's agency strategy paper and in the review of other ministerial strategies from an environmental perspective. UNEP also supported NEPA to draft, revise and finalize the National Environment Strategy and provided comments on relevant draft sectoral strategies, developed by inter-ministerial sector strategy working groups within the ANDS framework, to ensure that environmental considerations are mainstreamed into strategies. Activities with regard to **Environment Policy and Planning**, particularly those related to the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) have mostly been accomplished through the mainstreaming requirements of environment within the ANDS. The environment benchmark of the Afghanistan Compact states: "In line with Afghanistan's MDGs, environmental regulatory frameworks and management services will be established for the protection of air and water quality, waste management and pollution control, and natural resource policies will be developed and implementation started at all levels of government as well as the community level, by March 2009.
- **Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR):** NEPA's Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) plan was approved by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) in August 2005. Throughout 2006 and 2007 the advertisement of positions and the subsequent recruitment proceeded at a slow but steady pace. By December 2007 the central level positions were almost all filled as were 90 % of the positions at the provincial level. The staff recruited under the PRR receive PRR salaries.

In addition to the operational budget, a development budget was allocated to NEPA by the Ministry of Finance for the year 1386 (March 2007-March 2008) for the first time since its establishment.

- **Environmental Legislation:** The final version of the Environment Law was ratified by the Parliament and republished in the official gazette. A booklet explaining, in simple lay terms, the purpose, scope and implications of the Law has been developed in Dari, Pashto and English. Two sets of Regulations have been developed under the Environment Law, which have been processed during 2007: the EIA Regulations have been sent by the Ministry of Justice to the Cabinet for approval; the Protected Areas Regulations are being finalized by the Ministry after which they will be submitted for approval. The Ministry of Justice has received the final technical draft of Forest Law which includes the comments and concerns of stakeholders, collected during the national consultation process. The first technical draft of the Rangeland Law has been finalized and is currently with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock for internal approval. UNEP also assisted the Ministry of Energy and Water in the processing of the Water Law, and provided technical input to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in drafting of the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Law. In addition to legislative input, UNEP delivered four regional environmental law and policy workshops during the course of 2007. Officials from all provinces that are accessible to United Nations staff in terms of security restrictions have received such training. UNEP has also been in discussions with the Supreme Court with regard to designing a judges' training programme, which will be implemented during Phase III of the programme. Progress has also been made in setting up the processes and procedures needed in order to implement legislation, once it is approved.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** The EIA Policy was finalized in both English and Dari and will be formally issued in terms of an executive order. A set of EIA administrative guidelines have been developed, which will act as an application and interpretation guide to the EIA Regulations and the EIA policy. In regard to pollution control, the report on the determination of waste streams in Afghanistan was finalized and circulated.
- **Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM):** Activities have been completed and all funds disbursed for the pilot projects in three provinces. In the six projects in the province of Herat relating to irrigation rehabilitation and establishment of natural resource assets, over 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> of traditional, underground irrigation (karez) was rehabilitated to deliver water to 7,500 saplings planted in newly established fruit and nut orchards. Additional irrigation features including water holding ponds, gabion and retention walls and drip irrigation were also constructed. Solar panels were installed on 40 homes in two villages one in Bamyian province and one in Badakhshan province. Prior to the installation, each village community constructed a workshop for maintenance and repair and established a committee responsible to collect the fee from the community members to pay the trained solar engineer.

- **Environmental Information and Monitoring:** UNEP RRC.AP submitted draft reports for the State of Environment Report, Guidelines and Training Manual for developing a National Environmental Policy to NEPA for review. An Initial framework for a national environmental policy, national priorities for environmental management and an environmental monitoring matrix has been developed as part of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.
- **Environmental Education and Awareness:** Environmental posters and a storybook are in process of being printed. UNEP continued to assist NEPA to develop an environmental education and awareness strategy based on an assessment initially conducted. A draft NEPA brochure is being worked out between NEPA and UNEP.
- **Multilateral environmental agreements:** Significant progress was made during 2007 in the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA) and National Adaptation Plan of Action for Climate Change (NAPA) projects. Fifteen technical and data gathering workshops were held in Kabul and four data gathering workshops in four sample regions of Afghanistan. The 3 thematic groups (biodiversity, climate change and desertification) finalized their thematic assessments, which documents have been synthesized into one single document which, in content and design, satisfies the requirements of both NCSA and NAPA. This final NCSA and NAPA report has been translated into Dari and will shortly be presented to national stakeholders for their final comment and approval. In regard to funding, the proposal for enabling activity funding under the Biodiversity Convention (CBD) remains pending, despite numerous enquiries from UNEP. A further proposal (for funding for the Fourth National Report) is currently being prepared. The Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) enabling activity proposal has been approved, and funding (\$380,000) will be disbursed in early 2008. Progress, although slow, has been made in regard to the accession to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species. Furthermore, UNEP assisted in the drafting of Afghanistan's Third National Report under CBD, which was submitted to the Secretariat in March. UNEP also advised the Government on the desirability of acceding to the Kyoto Protocol and creating the institutional framework for the implementation of CDM projects in Afghanistan.
- **Afghanistan-Iran Dialogue on Sistan Basin Wetlands:** The special Task Force Meeting on the establishment of a Joint Committee on the Sistan Basin Wetlands took place in May 2007 in Tehran and reviewed the proposed draft terms of reference of the committee. The opportunity was also used to discuss the status and way forward with regard to the GEF Sistan project, as well as to provide an update on the development of a monitoring system for the Sistan basin wetlands.

Based on the achievements made by the UNEP Capacity Building and Institutional Development Programme, in 2006 the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) expressed the need for a programme extension covering phase III. UNEP in cooperation with the European Commission developed a comprehensive project proposal to extend the programme into a third phase running from 2008 until end 2010. Phases I and II of the Project were aimed at building the basic institutional and human capacity and developing the regulatory frameworks required for effective environmental management at the national level. Phase III of the Project will build on the foundations created through the successes of Phases I and II by providing assistance to environmental authorities to implement the environmental management framework across the country, and to manage the process of environmental restoration and community-based natural resource management.

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**Annex I:** Overview on the estimated percentage of completion of the planned activities as per December 2007

**Annex II:** ANDS documents with regard to environment and natural resource management

# 1 Introduction

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While establishing a programme for reforming public administration institutions in 2002, the Government of Afghanistan recognised the need to strengthen its capacity to provide effective environmental management and to integrate environmental issues into the reconstruction agenda. To address this need, the Government of Afghanistan requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide an integrated package of capacity building activities that contribute to the development of a stand-alone and self-sufficient Environmental Authority with the required technical capacity to implement the government's environmental mandate. To achieve this goal, the UNEP Capacity Building Programme has been designed to consist of the following nine components:

1. **Environmental Coordination.** Facilitate consultation, coordination, cooperation and mainstreaming of environmental issues and projects within the National Development Framework (NDF) through technical support to the Advisory Group on the Environment (AGE).
2. **Institutional Restructuring and Human Resource Development.** Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Environmental Authority, in accordance with the national reorganization and restructuring process undertaken by the Civil Service Reform Commission, through training and technical support in relation to mandate clarification, institutional restructuring, downsizing, human resources development and performance reviews.
3. **Environmental Impact Assessment.** Contribute to the institutionalization of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) through training and technical support in the development and effective implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment policies, procedures and legislation.
4. **Environmental Legislation, Regulation and Standards.** Contribute to the development and institutionalization of environmental laws and regulations through training and technical support in the development of an integrated environmental legal and regulatory framework.
5. **Sub-national Environmental Affairs and Community-Based Natural Resource Management.** Implementation of pilot projects that encourage community based natural

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