



THE KANDAHAR MODEL

Introduction

Since 2001, development in Kandahar has been sporadic, mainly due to the insecurity within the province. It was recognized by the Government of Afghanistan and the military that without development, security would not improve. For this reason, MRRD developed the 'Kandahar Model', which from 2007 onwards, has allowed high level of project implementation success in Kandahar, which is usually considered a very difficult development environment. This success has been achieved via a new implementation modality, featuring decentralisation of procurement and financial procedures coupled with community contracting.

Kandahar Background

Rural Kandahar is deeply impoverished because of many years of war and drought. Agricultural production is a fraction of what it once was. Irrigation systems have deteriorated or have been destroyed. Nomads have lost their herds which were in many cases their only income-generating activity. Only poppy cultivation has increased. Because of extreme insecurity, very little support to the villages could be delivered by the government, international agencies or NGOs. Between 2001 and 2006 larger infrastructure was put in place near and between cities by private contracting firms. However, village roads, bridges and schools remained undeveloped. By the end of 2005, there were signs of increasing dissatisfaction amongst communities about the pace and progress of development. This, combined with the re-emergence of the insurgency, made for a volatile situation.



Digging Water Well in Kandahar Province



Construction of Road in Uruzgan Province - 2008



Retaining Wall - Arghandab District Kandahar - 2007

Implementation Approach

Between 2004 and 2006 MRRD developed an approach for greater community participation in the design and implementation of development activities through NSP and NABDP. This approach has resulted in the creation of Community Development Councils (CDCs) at the village level and District Development Assemblies (DDAs) at the district level. The CDCs formulate Community Development Plans (CDPs) in the village communities, based on the needs and ambitions of the villages; while the DDAs have been established to formulate District Development Plans (DDP), taking into account the CDPs.

The establishment of CDCs and DDAs has provided a platform for strengthened sub-national governance. Through direct participation, the voices of the people can directly feed into the planning and budgeting framework making decision making more transparent and accountable.

Once CDCs are set up in a district, they are then 'clustered' together to elect DDA members for the district level. In those districts where NSP is not yet working and there are no Community Development Councils, 'interim' DDAs are established. Once CDCs are established in the districts by NSP, interim DDAs will be replaced by real DDAs using an endorsed election process. Interim DDAs consist of local respected people. These are identified in a joint effort by the governor and the Provincial Council trying to bring together representatives of different ethnic groups/ tribes and interests. A mechanism has been put in place to ensure a fair representation of people in the district and avoid elite capture. For example, projects have to be confirmed as relevant to the whole community in order to be considered eligible for funding. At the moment, DDAs in Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan are a mix of permanent and interim DDAs.

In Kandahar, the DDAs in particular have developed and consolidated their plans through a process of:

- (a) Situation analysis and by listing priority development projects
- (b) Consolidation and fine tuning, and

(c) Regular exchange and maintenance of relationships.

One of the lessons learnt was that planning is a dynamic process that requires regular review and continuous adjustment. Within the conservative society of Kandahar, women participate little in public life. However, a requirement for establishment of CDCs and DDAs is the participation of women in the process of decision making, and special mechanisms have been set up for women to express their needs and ambitions. Across Afghanistan, almost one-third of DDA members are female, and several DDAs in the southern provinces are mixed-gender or have a Women's Advisory Committee to allow women to express their views and development priorities.

Having cultivated a relationship built on trust between MRRD and communities, communities have been able to ensure the security of MRRD engineers and facilitators visiting the districts for the implementation of the projects. Assurance of security is fixed in a written agreement. The experience of the NSP programme has demonstrated that the systematic provision of funding for a first round of projects does not ensure the required development results. However, the creation of a planning body, such as the CDC or DDA, serves to establish a coherent mobilized platform upon which further development work can be channelled effectively. A second round of projects will secure the dividends of this initial investment and will build up the social and economic infrastructure that is needed, as well as ensuring that CDCs and DDAs learn hands-on lessons in development planning and project management.

One of the main strategies of the government of Afghanistan is to enhance its credibility and build people's confidence in their government. In order to achieve this, the government needs to increase its visibility and demonstrate that it can deliver effectively on the ground. This process is ongoing and has proven successful, particularly as demonstrated by the Kandahar model. Both military and civilian authorities have stated that they believe that development work has contributed to the stability of the province, a perception which has been backed up by a 2007 NABDP impact assessment which reported improved security in areas developed by MRRD.

As noted, significant trust-building has been achieved between communities and Government in Kandahar. Communities that requested assistance regarding the rehabilitation of their social and economic infrastructure have received rapid positive response to their requests and their ownership of the projects has grown accordingly. An essential step was also to hand the finances directly over into the hands of the community leaders (CDCs or DDAs). The local people manage their budgets themselves and can therefore take more appropriate decisions based on the given amount of resources.

The Three Preconditions for the Kandahar Model were:

1. Threefold Community Participation

The local communities (CDCs and DDAs) are involved in the following three phases of the project implementation process:

- a) Identification of needs and prioritization of projects;
- b) Implementation of projects;
- c) Monitoring of projects (implemented by CDCs or in those districts where the security does not allow for external monitors to visit the sites), including taking pictures and short videos.

2. Faster Decision-Making processes and "Reduction of Red Tape"

A Task Force has been put in place that can quickly react and thereby ensure faster decision-making processes, thus reducing "red tape".

3. Regionalized Project Cycle Management (PCM)

The main bulk of work regarding the management of projects is carried out at the regional level by the provincial MRRD office. Only assistance in technical and social surveying, procurement and monitoring is provided by the national level.

This approach (community development council facilitation, trust-building, rapid decision making, reduction of red tape, strengthened regional mandate) combined with the contracting of community councils and assemblies, often without the involvement of external commercial companies or NGOs, has led to rapid implementation of community projects. One of the core elements for this approach is not only the installation of physical assets, but also the social asset base that is created by the mobilization and direct implementation process. The majority of projects also respond to the priorities of communities such as the repairing of irrigation infrastructure and providing employment for youth.

After two years in practice, the following results have been achieved in the south:

1. 277 projects have been completed by communities in Kandahar, and 33 are currently ongoing. 12,083 labourers have been employed on these projects and 332,913 local people have benefited.
2. 56 community projects have been completed in Helmand and 80 are ongoing. 3,411 labourers have worked on these projects and 291,900 people have benefitted.
3. In Uruzgan, where the concept of community contracting has only been recently introduced, 45 community projects are underway and three have already been completed. 894 labourers have been employed and 27,869 people are beneficiaries.

4. CDCs and DDAs have become more self-reliant, and are able to mobilize local resources, sometimes up to 60% of the value of projects.
5. CDCs and DDAs have much greater self-confidence regarding the capacity and capabilities of communities to deliver projects, and many local people have gained valuable technical, managerial and financial skills.
6. Communities are better able to articulate their priorities and aspirations and more cognizant of appropriate mechanisms to channel their concern to relevant authorities and to seek responses.
7. A public-private-partnership has emerged, and local governance is providing opportunities for collaboration between the government and communities.
8. The government is increasingly searching for mechanisms to bring itself closer to the people and improve visibility by upgrading regional offices and infrastructure.
9. MRRD's national programs continue to be the spearhead for the governments' involvement in local governance.
10. Partnerships with other development actors have become more focused, and are changing from a consent basis (approved by local communities), towards a consensus basis (whereby collaboration is established with local communities).

The next steps in this process will include the consolidation of the approach, improvement and further institutionalization of monitoring and an investigation of longer term sustainable development investments. NABDP is currently improving the capacity of DDAs through a number of training modules in project planning and management, conflict resolution and gender equity.



DDA Jerga in Kandahar - 2008



Local people meeting H.E Minister & DDA in Kandahar 2008



Water System Network in Kandahar - 2008

The NABDP Approach in Kandahar has demonstrated three main advantages:

1. Reaching Insecure Areas

In Kandahar, agreements were signed with DDAs in which their members guaranteed the security of experts coming into the districts to survey and design projects identified by communities. Where security restrictions did not allow for engineers to go into the districts and to survey and design projects DDAs gave warnings and announced that they would not be able to guarantee these people's security. This system worked, where DDAs had guaranteed security, no incidents occurred. As a result of this experience NABDP has started to work with traditional shuras in insecure districts where NSP had been unable to work before.

2. Creating Local Employment Opportunities and Quick Impact

In Kandahar responsibility was transferred to DDAs as much as possible. They identified many projects that did not require high qualification for local labourers to become involved (e.g. *karez* cleaning) and produced immediate benefits for local people. The DDAs chose labour-intensive projects which meant that communities were significantly more involved in the implementation process than they had been previously. The consequence of this was that the local communities also took much more ownership of activities and increasingly identified the projects as *theirs*.

3. Strengthening Local Governance Structures and Supporting the PRRD

One of the aims of the approach was to strengthen local governance structures, e.g. CDCs and DDAs, so that they can in the future be utilized by other development agencies and ministries and so that development plans at different levels are actually tailored to local needs. Community Development Plans (CDPs) contribute to District Development Plans (DDPs) and these contribute to the Provincial Development Plans. At the same time, the provincial representation of the ministry will be upgraded, and design, surveying, procurement and monitoring for projects will be done by the people in the region whose capacity is built as the process goes along.

Key Activities and Project Cycle Management

MRRD/ NABDPs approach uses the following project management cycle:

- 1. Participatory Project Identification:** Project ideas are brought forward at different levels by the DDAs, CDCs and government officials. In all cases an endorsement of the DDA and CDC is sought. A “master list” of projects is prepared and shared with other line departments and DDAs and then a pre-feasibility assessment is undertaken.
- 2. Project Selection:** The findings of the pre-feasibility study are shared with the Provincial Rural Rehabilitation Department (PRRD), line departments and the DDAs and a selection of prioritized projects are endorsed for the next stage.
- 3. Project Formulation:** The MRRD/ NABDP Regional Office confirm the relevance and technical feasibility of the selected projects. A detailed survey of each project is carried out by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) by visiting the project sites. After completion of the survey, the project is designed using the information obtained from the survey. Once this process is complete, a cost estimate of the project is made and a Bill of Quantity (BoQ) is prepared.
- 4. Approval and Procurement:** The Regional Manager prepares and submits the project proposal to MRRD for approval. After approval is obtained from the Minister, the project goes to the procurement department for bidding and contracting.
- 5. Project Implementation:** A tripartite agreement is made between MRRD/ NABDP, the DDA and CDC to implement small community-based projects. In case of large projects, a two-party-agreement is made between the MRRD/ NABDP and a private contractor.

Fund Flows: The fund flow mechanism follows the process as spelt out in the tripartite agreement. The funds are released according to an agreed financial plan: The first instalment is released after the first implementation phase as per the concluded agreement is completed¹; the second instalment is released based on the progress achieved and the submission of the work plan for the following phase and the final instalment is released after completion of works and certification by the MRRD. The arrangement for fund flow may be kept flexible, considering the security situation of the project areas. All expenditures are recorded and reports are submitted to the MRRD/ NABDP finance unit in a prescribed format.

Monitoring is carried out along the project implementation process to ensure that the project is progressing as per its objectives. Monitoring is carried out by PRRD engineers, central monitors from MRRD, and by DDAs and CDCs. NABDP is currently working on a training module on monitoring for DDAs to enhance their capacity to provide meaningful monitoring of community projects.

NABDP Institutional Arrangements

MRRD's provincial offices (PRRD), Technical Support Units (TSU) and NABDP and NSP regional support offices ensure the proper selection, design, implementation and monitoring of all initiatives.

The TSU is an MRRD/ NABDP initiative to strengthen the implementation capacity of RRD offices and assist in the project cycle management of community projects. Seven TSUs have now been set up in regional centers across Afghanistan, each of which provides technical support to the local provinces. As well as supporting the Kanadahr PRRD, the Kandahar TSU has detached engineers to Helmand and Uruzgan PRRDs to assist with project selection, survey and design.

NABDP and NSP regional offices provide backstopping and monitoring of funding disbursement to the CDCs and DDAs. In addition, they provide technical support to the facilitating partners in the province. MRRD provincial staff and NABDP and NSP regional staffs also monitor the progress and quality of all approved sub-projects.

The PRRD, representing the ministry at provincial level, is responsible for all national programmes taking place in the province. However, in practice their implementation capacity is too weak to allow them to carry out this role, due to the limited availability of professionally competent civil servants. The national priority programs do not have this limitation as they are able to recruit professional staff on a favourable contract basis.



H.E Minister Meeting with DDA in
Kandahar 2008



H.E Minister signing Contracts
with DDA in Kandahar - 2008