

Evaluation of Integrated Rural Livelihood Programme in Afghanistan

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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A- Objectives & Methodology

Oxfam is running an rural recovery and food security programme in 40 villages of the districts of Panjao, Waras, Lal o Sarjangal and Ashterlaï in Hazarajat and a community based rural livelihood programme in 40 villages of the districts of Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg in Badakhshan province. Oxfam is also implementing the NSP programme in 5 districts of Daykundi.

The Hazarajat and Badakhshan livelihood programmes are ending over in August and September 2006 respectively.

The evaluation was organised internally by Oxfam and carried out by an external consultant during the period 20 July to 31 August 2006.

The objective of the mission is dual:

- To design a [new] integrated rural livelihood development programme:
 - For the same districts and villages in Badakhshan where Oxfam is currently working
 - For one district in Daykundi (to be selected amongst districts where Oxfam is currently working); and
- To make recommendations for a sustainable exit strategy for the current rural development activities being implemented in the districts of Hazarajat (Panjao, Lal, Waras, Ashterlaï).

The expected outputs are the following:

- A programme developed and designed for integrated and sustained rural livelihood development in the selected districts of Hazarajat and Badakhshan.
- Recommendations drafted for a sustainable exit strategy for the current activities in Hazarajat.
- A SWOT analysis, context analysis, needs assessment, specific objectives, implementation methodology, activities, inputs, outputs, exit strategy, sustainability, impacts and mainstreaming of gender and good governance.
- Programme log frame developed.
- Programme budgets to be formulated in cooperation with Oxfam staff in field and in Kabul.
- Staff capacity built in the basics of programme designing.

The Terms of reference is attached in annex 1.

The methodology is based on the following activities:

1. Meetings with key people (see annex 2):
 - Oxfam Country Programme representative in Kabul
 - Oxfam programme managers in Kabul
 - Oxfam provincial and districts field staff
 - EC officials in Kabul
 - Officials of FAO and NGOs

2. Field visits to Ashterlaï, Panjao, Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts and individual and group meetings with the field staff, project beneficiaries, shuras and NGOs. The itinerary of the consultant is attached in annex 3.
3. Reading project proposals and reports (see bibliography in annex 4).

Findings are reporting in next five sections:

- Section B provides background information on the programme and detailed contextual information on the targeted area.
- Section C is dedicated to a needs assessment.
- Current programme achievement is evaluated in section D.
- Section E offers recommendations for an exit strategy for the current development activities in Hazarajat.
- A new livelihood development programme for Hazarajat and Badakhshan is detailed in section F.

B- Background & contextual analysis

1- Programme background

Oxfam GB has been present in Afghanistan since 1991. During this period, it has gained extensive humanitarian and development experience across the country. Oxfam GB has been implementing programmes of emergency relief and integrated rural development programmes in Hazarajat and Badakhshan since 1998. The Hazarajat programme is funded by the EC. Badakhshan programme is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia and Oxfam GB.

Oxfam GB currently works in 40 villages of Badakhshan: 25 in the district of Shar-e Buzurg and 15 in Yawan district. Hazarajat development programme benefits 40 villages in 4 districts – Panjao, Waras in Bamyān province, Lal o Sarjāngal in Ghor province and Ashterlaī in the province of Daykundi.

In Daykundi, Oxfam is currently implementing the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) funded by the Work Bank to the Ministry of Rural Development and Rehabilitation (MRRD). Oxfam GB has been working since 2003 as the facilitating partner, in 293 villages spread across 5 districts.

Programmes are ending over in August and September 2006 in Hazarajat and Badakhshan.

Oxfam intends building on the strengths and achievements of the existing programme and of NSP. Oxfam GB has started changing its approach from 2002. The strategy is to move from delivering services to mobilising people towards a community driven and owned development process, to supporting community and local authorities in better governance, to improving linkages and communication among communities and local governments and to providing continued support for gender equity and policy advocacy.

2- Contextual analysis

Oxfam Head office in Kabul has selected four areas to benefit from the new rural development programme in collaboration with the consultant: Ashterlaī district and the Sakhdez valley of Panjao district in Hazarajat and Shar-e Buzurg and Yawan districts in Badakhshan province. Oxfam's criteria for selecting target areas include stability in security, population vulnerability, food insecurity levels; cooperation levels of community to participate and contribute, the absence of other aid agencies and the implementation of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP).

A livelihood context of the four-targeted areas has been analysed by the consultant. Findings are reported in Annex 5.

C - Needs assessment

From the contextual analysis, we analyze in this section the needs and constraints to address in priority in Hazarajat and Badakhshan province.

1 – Food insecurity & drought

- Hazarajat & Badakhshan are traditionally a food deficit area where 50% to 80% of households are food insecure even in good years.
- The farming community is of an extreme vulnerability. Harsh winters, climate variations, environmental disasters, crops and animal failures have dramatic consequences on the household welfare.
- Farmers have consequently developed a survival strategy, including out-migration and selling of assets.
- Southwest Hazarajat and Badakhshan province are currently experiencing a severe drought with 50 to 90% estimated yield losses. This will lead to asset depletion to respond to the shortage of food and massive displacement in the coming months and years if the situation does not recover. In the worse affected areas of Badakhshan provinces, displacement has already started. A quick response is highly needed.

=> Food security remains the top priority. Emergency intervention is to be the first phase of a development programme.

2- Poverty

- Poverty is the norm in Ashterlaï, Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts and constitutes a major constraint for change due to lack of time, education and resources...
- Apart from seasonal migration and sporadic local employment there are few other opportunities than agriculture and livestock husbandry.
- Farmers have usually no access to credit and interest rates are discouraging. Any crop failure or exceptional animal loss initiates a vicious circle of assets selling and out-migration and leads to displacement. 10% of families have definitely left the village over the past 12 years.
- There is a certain inequity in terms of land resources and livestock ownership among village inhabitants. Landless farmers constitute 30% of the whole population. This rate reaches 50% in a few villages of Shar-e Buzurg and 5 to 10% in Ashterlaï district.

=> There is a need to break the poverty cycle and facilitate the access to credit to successfully engage a development process.

3- A limited agricultural potential

- The scarcity of productive arable land is a major constraint. Rain-fed land cultivation has become a common practice whose productivity is 5 to 10 times lower than irrigated fields and highly dependent upon climate variations. Rain-fed lands represent 50 to 85% of land resources in Ashterlaï and Panjao districts while they represent 100% of land resources in Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts.

- Crops provide food for 4 to 6 months self-sufficiency and forage for livestock in good years.
- The continental climate combined with high altitude, impact the crop productivity and limit the alternatives for change (the altitude of targeted villages in Ashterlai and Panjao district varies between 2600 and 2900 meters).
- The shortage of water is the major constraint to address in Badakhshan.
- There is an existing tradition for vegetable and fruit production for household consumption mainly. The quality and productivity are not optimal.
- The access to improved seeds & saplings, fertilizers and training on improved cropping practices is also very limited.

=> Efforts are to be primarily concentrated on the increase of crops productivity and diet diversification.

4 – livestock, a key component of the local economy

- Livestock provides dairy products for household consumption, by-products such as wool for handicraft, and cash (through livestock sales) to cover household food requirements and other basic needs.
- Small livestock (sheep & goat) cost 5 times less than cattle to breed and provide with additional benefits such as wool.
- In absence of vaccination the annual mortality rate reaches 50% of the total herd. Vaccination services are currently provided but do not offer a full coverage. 85% of the total herd is vaccinated against the main diseases in Panjao district, 50% in Ashterlai district and 30% in the Shar-e Buzurg and Yawan.
- Vet clinic and mobile veterinarian services are absent in 3 out 4 districts.
- The cattle and flocks productivity is low. There is a need for renewing the genetic pool and improve livestock management practices. Extension services are absent.
- The scarcity of forage is the major constraint in Hazarajat.

=> Livestock is a key component of household welfare and priority is to be given to strengthen the livestock productivity.

5 – Remoteness from markets

- The combination of harsh winter in a mountainous area with over-3000 meters elevation passes, isolate valleys and villages for nearly 6 months. The access to local and main markets for selling and buying items is usually cut off from late November to early April due snow and mud.
- The roads are of a poor quality and the access to market is a constraint for development even in summer. The rehabilitation process undertaken as part of NSP would significantly improve the situation temporarily.
- Absence of farmers-based trading organization for a higher access to the market.
- A particular attention should be given to strengthen the local market whose activity is currently low.

=> The access to market is of a key importance in a long-term development strategy. It should be carefully analyzed and improved prior to introduce cash crops and other income generating activities.

6 - Time unavailability

- The year is divided in two periods: a 6 months-winter which is a jobless period, and an overworked 6 months cropping season, to collect bush for fuel (3,5 months) to prepare the land (1 months), to harvest (2 months)...
 - Time unavailability during the cropping season is a major constraint for change.
- => Time saving is to be a key component in the strategy designing.

7- Environment degradation

- Environment degradation is a major concern in Hazarajat and Badakhshan province. Soil erosion and flood disasters lead to the destruction of arable land due to over-farming practices on rain-fed hillsides and bush collection as fuel resource.
 - This creates a vicious cycle whereby the destruction of irrigated land leads to a higher pressure on rain-fed land resources.
 - Fuel requirements are also constantly increasing with the size and needs of households. Organic manure was the traditional fuel resource but is no longer sufficient to address family needs. Flooding is a recent phenomenon.
 - Farmers are fully aware of their responsibilities in the environment degradation. Time unavailability is considered as the major constraint to take actions such as protection walls construction, soil conservation through rain-fed alfalfa sowing, bush maintenance between fields and reforestation.
 - A number of watershed management initiatives were undertaken and constitute references for analysis and replication.
- => Emphasis is to be given to natural resources management in order quickly to reduce the environment degradation.

8- Gender development

- Women play an active and a specific role in the farming activities and in the household's economy. Beyond enhancing women status within the society, actions might be taken to upgrade women skills and activities outputs.
 - A significant number of initiatives have been undertaken locally by Oxfam to increase women capacity building and governance within the *shuras* and constitutes a relevant basis to develop women activities.
 - The access to women substantially differs from one province to another. However, it remains the major constraint for gender development. The recruitment of female staff is indispensable. The presence of health facilities in some of selected valleys creates an additional opportunity to target women.
 - The study conducted by URD in Lal district (Ghor province) shows that "male and female roles remain firmly entrenched" and "programs targeting women should be careful not to upset the social balance".
- => Oxfam has demonstrated a strong expertise and background in Hazarajat and Badakhshan to facilitate the promotion of gender issues in the livelihood sector.

9- Local governance

- The NSP implementation and community mobilization projects run by Oxfam, have sharply contributed to restructure the communities and enhance their capacities.
- More remains to be done to strengthen shura legitimacy and to improve good governance.
- The enhancement of local authorities capacity building is also crucial to take over most of NGOs “public service” activities in a short run. Regulations are currently under preparation and require the support of aid agencies.

=> A long-term development program is designed on a closed collaboration with shuras, local and national authorities. Efforts in local governance strengthening are to be pursued.

10- Income generating activities

- In a context of remoteness from markets and food insecurity, farmers have developed a survival strategy in both areas targeted, where income-generating activities are very low developed.
- The low access to credit and the traditional exchange in kind of agricultural products are additional constraints.
- However, a number of initiatives were undertaken in the neighbouring districts (beekeeping, carpet weaving, wool spinning) and constitute a relevant information baseline for replication.
- There is also a tradition for fruit drying (apricots in Ashterlaï, mulberry in Badakhshan) and surpluses are currently marketed, which creates an opportunity for development. Badakhshan was engaged in silkworm production before the war.
- The experience gained by the communities in the process of needs identification and project management will facilitate the development of income generation activities.
- Road facilities are currently under construction, which constitutes a real opportunity to have access to the market.
- 20% of Shar-e Buzurg farmers are involved in poppy cultivation, which creates an additional incentive to introduce livelihood alternatives.

=>Income generation projects may not create any saving mechanisms and direct income on a short-term basis. It may first contributes to decrease food insecurity and assets depletion and improve the overall welfare of the household.

D - Assessment of the current programme achievement

In this chapter, we will analyse the programme effectiveness in order to underline its strengths and gaps.

We will successively look at the project activities and the project management. Specific objectives and expected outputs of the Hazarajat & Badakhshan Integrated Rural Development Programmes activities are not reported in this section. Please refer to the log frame reported in annex 6.

We will regret that Oxfam provincial and district field staff was not fully available to accompany the mission to facilitate the investigations and the whole understanding of project achievements.

1- Project Effectiveness

1-1 Agriculture

Establishment and support of kitchen gardens – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

This activity is extremely relevant in the context of food insecurity in both Hazarajat and Badakhshan. Vegetables are highly productive and contribute to the diet diversification. Oxfam took the initiative to distribute a wide range of vegetable seeds and to provide technical support, which has aroused a strong interest within the communities and paved the way for a rapid development of the vegetable production in both areas.

Yet, a higher productivity of kitchen gardens could have been achieved:

First, seeds were distributed to a large number of beneficiaries through shuras. More than the 40 initially planned kitchen gardens were established in the four districts of Hazarajat. 250 farmers have reportedly established a kitchen garden in Panjao district. The problem is that the extensionist has attempted to provide an on-the-field technical assistance to those 250 farmers instead of concentrated his efforts on 10 kitchen gardens for a better output as initially planned.

Second, a more careful selection of the most productive vegetable species is needed to adapt the types of species cultivated to local climate conditions of upper and lower valleys.

In a context of short cropping season, the introduction of greenhouses, solar shelters and/or plastic tunnels could have proved efficient to gain in productivity and to increase the length of the cropping cycle.

Women and men beneficiaries could have been trained on seed multiplication over the 3 year programme period to sustain the whole process since the local market usually offers a limited range of vegetable species and seeds of variable quality. Farmers met in both areas were expecting Oxfam to renew the distribution early 2007 while the programme stops.

Training beneficiaries on harvesting at the right stage, cooking and preservation would have helped to strengthen the project and increase the impact on diet diversification and health. This training could target women preferentially.

Training small farmers on improved practices & exposure visits – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Training is a relevant activity. Significant gains of productivity may be achieved through the improvement of cropping practices and the valorisation of local resources. A few aid agencies have given priority to training and extension.

Due to time constraints, the consultant did not look at the quality of the training content.

But the experience shows that the trainers are not systematically knowledgeable about the most recent developments and approaches in their respective fields. Oxfam agriculturists admitted not having been trained by any technical agency or by any external expert for years.

Second, workshops and exposure visits are to be followed by a regular on-the-job training, which requires substantial staff resources and a closer monitoring on extensionists' recommendations and capabilities to practically train beneficiaries and bring simple changes. Indicators like the absence of weeding in improved wheat fields and the absence of fruit tree pruning show that additional efforts should be made to improve the technology transfer efficiency. The risk is also to assist too many farmers and to weaken the quality of extension services as mentioned earlier. Therefore, accurate technical guidelines would prove needed both for the technical staff and head office monitors as well as a detailed field work plan.

At last, the establishment of Farmer Field School is an excellent concept and should be implemented as it is indicated in the EC proposal. More details will be provided in the next section.

Establishment and support of demonstration plots– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

This activity is a substantial component of the strategy and the consultant fully supports this initiative taken in Hazarajat and Yawan district. It creates technical references, increases farmers' responsiveness to new practices and strengthens the agency technical know-how and credibility. Farmers were very impressed by Oxfam demonstration field in Panjao when visited as part of the exposure visit on the 1st of August.

Ten demonstration fields were initially planned in the four districts in Hazarajat as the proposal log frame reports (Annex). One unit was eventually set up in each district centre. Since access and distances are one of the major constraints in the two districts visited, two to three demonstration fields per district would have had a better impact.

Demonstration field is an excellent support to train farmers. Training sessions on the site could be held on a regular basis for the most competent or key farmers, all along the crops biological cycle. One visit per year is insufficient to cover all practical subjects.

It also appears that demonstration fields are devoted to vegetable and fruit production only. Cereals, legume (potato) and pulse varieties could be introduced and tested since they are of a key contribution in the household cropping system. Improved practices could also been compared to farmers practices on fertilising, irrigating and pest managing. Innovative technologies such as greenhouses could be built on the demonstration site. At last a clear communication is to be developed through detailed signboards to facilitate farmers' visit.

The present project failed to closely assist women, while women received vegetable seeds and an on-the-job assistance. Adjustments will be proposed in the next section.

A demonstration field establishment and management require staff resources, technical competencies and monitoring. Any failure, like in Yawan district, will directly affect Oxfam credibility.

Nursery establishment & management– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

A network of nurseries was established in Hazarajat (3) and in Badakhshan province (2) to respond to the demand of high quality fruits for both household consumption and marketing.

It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the whole project since 4 nurseries are not producing saplings yet. They were recently established and still require support from Oxfam.

However, we may formulate the following remarks from our field visits:

- The site selection for the establishment of a private nursery in Panjao was not fully relevant since the nursery may not be economically viable for two reasons: 1- the nursery is located at 2700 meters elevation which requires 4 years to produce saplings with risks of spring frost damages and high losses. 2 – the size of the nursery (one jerib) is insufficient.
- A full package of equipment and material should be provided as well as a close monitoring. A contract should be signed up with a clear description of partners' responsibilities. Panjao nursery is permanently under a threat of animal destruction in absence of barbed wire.
- Yawan nursery is established on a two-jerib governmental land in the district centre. It has aroused a significant interest from the community farmers. High losses occurred at the germination stage and the nursery management could be improved. This highlights the need for specific qualifications, training, on-the-job support and technical monitoring.

Shar-e Buzurg nursery is currently producing saplings. It has been established in 2001 on a private land of three jeribs and is under Oxfam management. 3300 saplings were produced and distributed in 2005 at 80% subsidized price. The production is much lower than current standards (10 to 12000 saplings produced per jerib).

Second, peach and almond trees were badly affected by leave diseases during our visit. Those diseases have not been identified so far and properly struggled. On top of training, there is a need for technical literature, which is currently unavailable at Oxfam office and for basic communication facilities (telephone and internet access) to contact resource persons within technical agencies.

Similarly, no exit strategy has been formulated after 5 years of direct management. If Oxfam suspends its support by September 2006, the nursery may stop operating since it is not economically viable. Second, the nursery owner is not technically capable to take the nursery over. He has not been trained on grafting and on pest control (disease identification and proper utilisation of pesticides).

In both Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg nurseries, pesticides have been recently applied under the supervision of Oxfam extensionists. In both cases, the labour was not provided with recommended equipment such as a mask, glasses, gloves and suit for health protection. Similarly, pesticides are not properly stored. Additional training is urgently needed.

The direct involvement of Oxfam in the nursery management and sapling sale was an excellent initiative to quickly promote fruit and non-fruit cultivation. However, a private market is growing step by step in Badakhshan province and Southwest Hazarajat and a relevant price policy should be adopted to accompany the market development and not to discourage private operators.

Seed/grain Bank – Badakhshan

Seed banks were established in Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts of Badakhshan province. This was an excellent initiative in Badakhshan context.

The objective of a seed/grain bank is dual:

- 1- To provide improved seed on credit to small farmers.
- 2- To encourage savings and capital accumulation for further micro-credit access and/or emergency response.

The first objective has been partly achieved. In some villages the seed multiplication process has been engaged. After three years of assistance, improved seeds would be widely spread out among the community. In other villages such as Awanji in Yawan district, the project would have failed due to:

- An insufficient provision of seeds (5 bags per year for 5 farmers out of 62 households).
- An insufficient assistance of the grain bank committee on improved seed redistribution once harvested among the community members (improved seeds were mainly eaten).
- Lower performances of improved wheat varieties than local varieties in the drought conditions.
- The absence of fertilisers to increase the field productivity.

Thorough investigations would be needed to have a clearer picture on this point.

The second objective regards capital accumulation. This objective has not been achieved in the four villages visited. A capital has not been accumulated to respond to a food shortage in cases of disaster. The on-going drought has already displaced few families and could lead to a massive displacement by winter 2006. The requisite mechanisms have not been set up and seed banks may stop operating and fail to start again their activity without further external assistance.

More surprisingly, this second objective was totally ignored by seed bank committees and Oxfam field staff interviewed. No written guidelines would be available on this issue at the office level. Similarly, there is no accurate description of the seed bank activity and outputs expected in the initial proposal.

In such circumstances the grain bank project could not be fully successful.

Supporting seed multiplication and crop diversification – [Badakhshan](#)

Improved wheat varieties are multiplied and bought in Fayzabad to supply Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg seed bank committees.

As reported below, we met farmers who were not satisfied with the performances of the improved variety distributed. We did not have time to crosscheck this assumption and do not dispose of sufficient technical references locally to assess the relevance of the variety selection.

Yet, this raises the following key question: have the wheat varieties been tested in the local conditions prior to any distribution? If yes, have the wheat varieties been tested in the main cropping conditions (drought, rain-fed, with and without fertilisers...) and have the performances been recorded. This requires an experimental field in each district, which has not been established over the current programme except in Shar-e Buzurg. Experiments establishment and management require a specific expertise to meet with accurate scientific standards, which is not currently available among Shar-e Buzurg technical staff, in order to obtain verifiable and reliable results.

Experience shows that aid agencies usually underestimate the consequences of the introduction of a non-adapted wheat variety, while a crop failure directly threatens the household food security and badly affects the organisation credibility. It also compromises further development steps. A particular attention should be given to variety testing.

Second, Oxfam is currently subsidizing three wheat multipliers in Fayzabad while there is an existing private market for improved wheat seed production. As a consequence, Oxfam may face difficulties in a short term to establish a direct link between Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg seed bank committees and Fayzabad multipliers for a regular and sustainable supply. Recommendations are outlined in the next section.

Watershed management– Badakhshan

The project started in September 2004 in Shar-e Buzurg centre on a government land. The project aims at protecting the soil against erosion and landslide and besides, to promote fruit and non-fruit trees cultivation on rain-fed land as the tradition used to be. This is an excellent approach, which also contributes to support practical training on orchard establishment and management. 210 farmers were trained in 2006.

The project is to be handed over in September 2006 to the authorities. An additional year of maintenance is recommended for technical reasons (tree watering) also because the district head of agriculture does not have the financial resources to support the project.

In terms of impact, none of farmers has replicated the model so far. 12 farmers have reportedly expressed a high interest to establish an orchard in similar conditions. The drought has acted as a major disincentive since tree planting on rain-fed land imposes heavy watering constraints the first three years. The low access to saplings is an additional obstacle to overcome.

It is needed to keep on promoting the project among the communities through exposure visits and saplings distributions.

1.2 - Livestock

Veterinary services– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Numerically speaking, a large number of animals were vaccinated and treated for a range of diseases and ailments by an active and competent team of veterinarians and para-veterinarians: 300,000 animals in 2005 in the four Hazarajat districts, approximately. The support to veterinary services had a strong and rapid impact on the sanitary status of the herd and its recovery after the drought. This is a key response to breeder's vulnerability. Breeders used to lose 50% of the herd a year in average.

If 85% of animals are vaccinated in Panjao district, there is only a 50% coverage in Ashterlaï. In the two districts of Badakhshan province the coverage does not exceed 30% since Oxfam is only working with 40 villages. Staff resources are insufficient and remote areas are largely neglected. Given the key importance of livestock in the survival strategy of Hazara and Badakhshi breeders, additional efforts could be made to achieve a full coverage of the districts selected.

Would Oxfam have a wider impact if veterinary activities were privatized?

It is commonly admitted that the animal health sector should no longer be financially supported by NGOs to eventually comply with governmental policies. However difficult is it to achieve in a particular context of extreme vulnerability where the cost of vaccines is still a constraint as well as the access to remote communities, ways have to be found to make private clinics sustainable. Some para-vets have already opened shops. Others are low active. Suggestions will be outlined in the next section.

We may regret that a low priority has been given to the establishment of one clinic per district with all requisite facilities for office, drug storage and animal examination. There is only one clinic in Panjao centre out of 4 districts covered. The site is to be selected on visibility criteria, such as at the district crossroad. A clinic within the market is more likely to sustain than a clinic established within Oxfam compound like in Panjao district.

Additional equipments would be needed such as cooling storage and cool box for additional types of vaccines (foot & mouth, black leg, newcasttle, CCPP diseases).

A better coordination with all partners operating in the veterinary sector and a stronger involvement of the management team are advocated in order to define a privatization strategy and also to technically

support the field staff. Two years were needed for Badakhshan staff to diagnosis the CCPD disease (Caprin Pneumonia), and to introduce the first vaccines, while the disease causes 30% of loss a year.

Training of Women/Men Basic Veterinary Workers (BVW) – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Men and women BVW were trained by Oxfam vet teams to actively participate in the livestock vaccination process and to provide additional vet services. BVW have significantly contributed to increase the number of heads vaccinated.

Yet, the figures analysis shows, that a substantial number of BVW trained stops operating over one to two years activity. This concerns 65% of women BVW in Hazarajat (out of 58 women BVW trained in Hazarajat in 2004 2005 in 4 districts, 17 are currently active, 6 in Panjao, 5 in Ashterlaï along with 3 men BVW). The success rate seems higher in Badakhshan province.

A number of reasons may put forward:

- 1- BVWs' activity is usually perceived as a full time and profitable activity, while it is more a seasonal activity and a complementary source of income.
- 2- BVWs expect a longer support from the aid agency whose refusal acts as a disincentive to continue.
- 3- Women have a low capacity to travel alone and cover a wide area, which also limits the income generated.
- 4- Women BVW in Hazarajat are mainly young ladies under age 25, while the vaccination remains a physical work, which requires a strong interest and a personal experience in livestock husbandry to obtain breeders' reliance.
- 5- Women BVW often leave their original village once married, and stops their activity.

Even if the training and support of women BVW is not to be called into question, selection criteria should be reviewed (literacy capabilities should not be the major criteria). Second, the BVW concept should also be redesigned for both men and women and more clearly promoted within the communities to avoid any misunderstanding. Recommendations will be formulated later on.

Animal upgrading – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The access to bull for reproduction is a constraint in Afghanistan for most of small breeders. The renewal and improvement of the local genetic pool with improved breeds is also of a key importance in areas where the cattle productivity is usually low. In such circumstances, the establishment of Oxfam and community-based animal upgrading units were fully relevant in both areas targeted.

If we look at the figures, we cannot be fully satisfied with current achievements. In 2005, 120 cows were inseminated in the 4 Hazara districts. This represents less than 1 cow inseminated per bull a month. In Shar-e Buzurg, the average is slightly higher and reaches 4,25 cows fertilised a month.

A number of reasons may be put forward:

- The cultural constraint is the first obstacle to overcome.
- Records may be underestimated at the community-based level since there is a tradition for gathering all animals of the village in summer including the "improved" bull and going grazing in the mountain. This makes the follow-up more complicated.
- The bull size is an additional constraint. Priority has been given to Holstein-breed bulls whose size and weight is much higher than local breeds. This increases the risk of cow injuries during the insemination and calving.
- The distance becomes a constraint to access bull insemination facilities over one hour walk. A wider distribution of animal units all over the district is a response to this obstacle.

- The project is insufficiently promoted within the surrounding communities. Dairy and meat performances of Oxfam improved breeds have not been recorded to clearly demonstrate the benefits on cattle productivity.
- Breeders are insufficiently trained on cattle age for 1st insemination, heat detection, inbreeding and its consequences in order to fully benefit from the programme.
- Oxfam technical staff is also insufficiently trained on improved livestock husbandry and on selection and reproduction management in particular to fully valorise the genetic potential of Oxfam bulls and cows, to turn Oxfam farm into a research farm and to train breeders.
- At last, the team is not properly convinced of the project relevance. Quantitative objectives were not assigned. The team is not sufficiently supported in the project implementation and technically monitored. There is no clear activity and output description in the proposal. Therefore, few initiatives were taken to make improvements and changes so far.

Discussions with breeders show that the initiative has aroused a strong interest, since it precisely responds to breeders' needs. In Shar-e Buzurg, the number of insemination is constantly increasing.

It is too early to expect Oxfam-run units to be self-funded and economically viable. Community-based units in Hazarajat are currently not profitable either and it is difficult to know if project beneficiaries and neighbouring breeders will purchase a new bull from Kabul at a full price to continue.

More time and additional adjustments are needed to achieve significant results as other NGOs experienced.

Extension services – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The expression of a higher genetic potential requires a better nutrition and a better management. Extension is therefore essential.

Oxfam-run animal upgrading units offer an excellent support for extension. Stables were significantly improved and became models that breeders are currently replicating in Hazarajat. The organisation of the exposure visit and the animal show early August 2006 had an additional impact on breeders' practices.

The consultant could not attend the exposure visit and analyse the training content but field visits within the 40 communities show that additional progress may be achieved on feeding quality, water availability, housing, reproduction & selection management, calving and calves raising, etc. This would require substantial staff resources for a field follow-up and the implementation of a Farmer Field School approach and the establishment of a research farm to train trainers. More details will be provided in the next section.

2 – Programme management effectiveness

2.1 – Technical leadership

The whole programme effectiveness is not high as expected while most of the Oxfam technical staff met on the spot has demonstrated excellent competencies and a strong commitment in the projects implementation. This may be due to a lack of technical leadership within Kabul head office to take over the following actions:

- To coordinate the project implementation, to define objectives, to adjust the methodology and monitor projects. Discussions with the staff highlighted a high confusion in the project impact targeted and the methodology to apply.

- To technically support the team (such as for disease identification, specific vaccines provision, complementary training, etc.).
- To assess extensionists' recommendations and to define technical guidelines and work-plans.
- To lead, to challenge and to evaluate the staff performances on a monthly basis.
- To make all technical decisions and take the responsibilities of project effectiveness.
- To design and plan new technical programmes on the basis of a clear understanding of farmers' needs and in consultation with the field team.

The absence of a technical leadership within the management teams could be one of the major weaknesses of the current programme.

2.2- Management chain

The management chain seems to be too long and too complex for quick operational decision-making. It would also directly alter the involvement of the staff in the project completion and their sense of responsibilities and initiatives. The on-going drought should have aroused a strong response from the field staff in terms of basic data collection, identification of relevant actions, coordination with other local partners and reporting to the head office and local authorities.

An internal reorganisation is advocated to gain in efficiency. Suggestions will be outlined in the next section.

2.3- Staff training

Development projects are based on knowledge and technology transfer. Skills are therefore crucial to ensure the effectiveness of programme activities.

The performances of Oxfam-run vegetable demonstration fields, nurseries and improved breeding cattle, reflect the staff capabilities and know-how. It appears from our field visits, that results are very heterogeneous from a district office to another. This shows that there is a permanent need for training:

Cropping practices are improving and techniques are newly introduced such as greenhouse cultivation. Second, the range of competencies is very wide and agriculturists are usually specialized in a specific sector. An agriculturist specialized in crop production is not necessarily trained and comfortable enough on fruit tree pruning, vegetable seedlings production or experiment management to practically train farmers. As an example, Shar-e Buzurg nursery owner has not been trained on grafting because Oxfam extensionist had reportedly no competency in this field while it is the primary skill to acquire.

Oxfam veterinarians are currently running animal upgrading units. This requires competencies and knowledge on selection and reproduction management. However, those subjects are not included in the 5-year veterinary curriculum. Therefore, the effectiveness of the project may not be optimal without any complementary training.

At last, staff training is largely perceived as a professional promotion. Beyond skills upgrading, training increases the staff motivation and involvement in the project implementation.

A higher attention should be given to staff training.

2.4- Strategy consistency

We observe that similar projects are implemented with very different approaches in Hazarajat and Badakhshan. For example:

- Para-vets are partially remunerated in Hazarajat but not in Badakhshan, while the road access constraints and the low maturity of markets are the same.

- Oxfam is charging for the insemination of cows while this service is free of charge in Badakhshan.
- The network of nurseries is also heteroclit with nurseries of different sizes, with nurseries established on governmental land, and nurseries established on private land with a direct management by Oxfam staff (Shar-e Buzurg) or with a simple assistance to private nursery owners (Hazarajat).
- Under the same programme in Badakhshan, there is an un-formal vegetable demonstration field to support technical extension in Yawan district but not in Shar-e Buzurg district.

A Few other examples could be provided to illustrate the lack of consistency in the strategy implemented.

Even if there are some background differences between Hazarajat and Badakhshan, programmes and projects could be run under a common strategy with minor adjustments. On top of gains in effectiveness, further development steps would be facilitated such as the privatisation process of most of activities.

2.5 - Monitoring & evaluation

The monitoring & evaluation system is of a key importance to assess the programme achievement and the projects impact. Though Oxfam is regularly carrying out internal evaluations and mid-term reviews for donors, the current monitoring & evaluation system has proved very weak. This for two reasons:

- A comprehensive monitoring system has not been established at the beginning of the programme to provide the indispensable baseline information.
- Second, the relevance and the range of project & activity indicators are insufficient to precisely measure the programme impact. A wider range of quantitative, verifiable and more accurate indicators is highly recommended as proposed below:

Results and activities - reported in the log frame	Current indicators - reported in the log frame	Indicators suggested
Strategic Focus Activities <i>Agriculture Development & infrastructure support</i>	- <i>FFS methodology learnt and applied</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Number of FFS established</i> - <i>Number of training sessions held by community trainers per year</i> - <i>Number of farmers trained</i>
Strategic Focus Activities <i>Agriculture Development & infrastructure support</i>	- <i>Absence of activity indicator on vegetable production, while outputs are reported "Diet includes more vegetable and fruit"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>% of household involved in the vegetable production</i> - <i>Average production per household (in kg)</i> - <i>% consumed and % marketed</i> - <i>Number of species cultivated (-<5, 5<-)</i>

In absence of detailed data on the initial situation, the current position and the objective targeted, the internal evaluations may underestimate the scope of project gaps and weaknesses and fail to propose the pertinent corrective actions.

Those data would have been of a key importance to evaluate the efficiency of a strategy and justify the benefits of Oxfam interventions over the past 15 years in Hazarajat to donors, authorities and Oxfam field and management officers.

The interim period offers an opportunity to undertake the necessary actions.

2.6 – Exit strategy

When to phase out? Two other questions may be raised to answer the first questions:

- Is the long-term development project sustainable?
- Has the project achieved initially assigned objectives (for activities which may not be sustainable, extension for example)?

But in all cases, the exit strategy is to be defined at the programme designing level. The exit strategy should be a key component of any assistance programme and clearly communicated to donors, authorities, beneficiaries and field teams.

In the present situation, the programme stops in August 2006 in Hazarajat and September 2006 in Badakhshan, while the exit strategy has not been prepared. Neither the kitchen garden project, nor the veterinarian activities nor the animal upgrading programme is currently sustainable or economically viable.

Recommendations are formulated in section E to softly withdraw from the districts and to sustain the activities being currently implemented.

2.7 - Coordination

- Coordination with authorities

Since the Talebans' fall, tremendous efforts were concentrated on the establishment and empowerment of governmental and provincial structures. Regulations are currently under preparation to rule all economic sectors including veterinary activities, improved seeds purchase and distribution...

Even if, lots remain to be done, a higher priority should be given to the coordination with national authorities, especially with the Ministries of Agriculture (MAI) and Rural Development (MRRD) to actively participate in the preparation of appropriate policies, to comply with current regulations (on veterinary activities for example) and seize funds opportunities, which mostly go through the governmental authorities.

The collaboration with provincial and district authorities should also be expanded in the future at all stages of project designing and implementation. Local authorities will soon provide public services and take over most of aid agencies activities. A close partnership is therefore recommended.

- Coordination with NGOs & technical agencies

Investigations show that the project and management teams have a very limited understanding of strategies and achievements of other NGOs in Hazarajat and Badakhshan such as Afghanistanid, AKDN, DCA, MADERA, Solidarités, Concern, etc. Some of them are running very successful projects and are keen to share their experiences as we were confirmed. Oxfam whole programme could gain in effectiveness by sharing experiences not only at the monthly coordinating meetings but also at the field level, through field visits.

Similarly, we may regret that Oxfam has not closely collaborated with FAO, ICARDA, GERES and other technical agencies so far. Those agencies may provide a very high quality support in terms of training (vegetable, crop & fruit production, fruit processing, vegetable preservation and nutrition) and inputs (quality seeds). They also offer a number of funding opportunities for the implementation of high value-added projects (Greenhouse for example).

- Internal coordination

A closer collaboration between the district office team members could prove very fruitful. Extensionists and social organisers have complementary competencies since most technical projects involve shuras and women.

A closer coordination between Badakhshan and Hazarajat teams is also advocated to share experiences, overcome similar obstacles, to take advantage of specific competencies of some of the staff and to adopt a common approach for similar projects.

2.8- Inputs provision versus development

Development projects effectiveness is also connected with the quantity of inputs provided, especially in food deficit contexts in which the first priority is to break the poverty cycle and creates a dynamic.

The absence of fertilisers and the low quantity of improved seeds provided as the initial capital of seed banks has prevented this dynamic process to take place.

By providing fertilisers and introducing greenhouse technologies, we significantly increase the kitchen garden productivity, the household food security and the farmers' responsiveness to new development activities such as literacy courses and natural resources management.

The exposure visit is an excellent initiative. But it benefited to 30 farmers only out of few thousands in the 45 villages targeted in Badakhshan province. The impact is insufficient.

Delivery services and inputs provision are not in contradiction with long-term development strategy. Rural communities are to be simultaneously mobilized towards community driven and owned development process, and rural communities and local authorities are to be supported in skills development and better governance. The strategy for the new livelihood programme, outlined in the section F, is based on this principle.

E - Exit strategy for current activities in Hazarajat

EC funded integrated Rural Livelihood Programme in Hazarajat is ending over on 31 August 2006. Recommendations were formulated for a sustainable exit strategy of the current activities being implemented in Panjao, Lal o Sarjangan, Waras and Ashterlāi.

Recommendations were shared with Oxfam management and field staff and inserted in the Hazarajat Interim Programme. The consultant participated in the preparation of this internal document for funding. The livelihood section of the interim programme is attached in Annex 6.

F - Livelihood programme strategy

The strategy has been designed on the basis of the contextual analysis, the needs assessment, the current projects gaps and strengthens, Oxfam background and expertise in Afghanistan and a large number of discussions with authorities, NGOs, UN agencies and donors. The strategy was shared with Oxfam field and management staff.

The livelihood programme proposed in this section is a component of a comprehensive programme, which should include projects in community mobilization, education and gender development.

This programme is the continuation of the former Hazarajat and Badakhshan Integrated Rural Development Programmes. The target area has been defined by Oxfam Head office in collaboration with the consultant. The objective was to concentrate on a limited number of districts and villages for a better output. Districts and villages were selected on the basis of the following criteria: stability in security, population vulnerability, food insecurity levels; cooperation levels of community to participate and contribute, the absence of other aid agencies and the implementation of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The target area for the new programme is detailed below:

- Ashterlaï district (Daykundi province) – 25 villages (+14 villages in 2008),
- Saghdez valley of Panjao district (Bamyan province) – 10 villages
- Shar-e Buzurg (Badakhshan province) – 25 villages
- Yawan districts (Badakhshan province) 21 villages

We propose a common strategy for Hazarajat and Badakhshan with specific adjustments when needed.

The strategy is built on the assumption that the drought situation will end up in winter 2006/2007. If not, adjustments will be needed.

In this chapter we will successively look at the:

- Objectives
- Strategy overall framework
- Project activities
- Staff resources & organization
- Programme monitoring
- The exit strategy
- Programme log-frame
- Next steps

1- Objective

The overall objective is to strengthen the food security and to increase the sustainability of livelihood for communities in both areas targeted.

Specific objectives are the following:

- To increase crop productivity and diet diversification.
- To increase livestock production.
- To reduce environment degradation.

- To develop income generating activities.

2- Strategy overall framework

2.1- An integrated approach

The current drought and food insecurity situation in Southwest Hazarajat and Northeast Badakhshan requires the implementation of a very classical approach based on 3 stages: emergency, rehabilitation and development.

- Emergency

The objective of this first stage is to avoid displacement and the loss of productive assets in the coming weeks and months by providing an emergency assistance at the district scale (including all villages).

Funds rising could be the major constraint, since there is a tendency among institutional donors (EC, World Bank...) to reduce their support to food security programmes and to concentrate on agricultural development of the most productive provinces. This will require additional investigations for funds and lobbying actions to attract donors and national authorities' attention on emergency cases and on the need for long-term food security support. Most of aid partners met including FAO are willing to undertake lobbying actions. A broad coordination could prove very useful.

- Rehabilitation

The second phase aims at providing farmers and breeders with full agricultural assets to quickly recover a productive life. It could also prove relevant at that level to break the poverty cycle and successfully engage a long-term development process.

Rehabilitation actions could be initiated early 2007 and cover one to two cropping seasons. It requires a substantial inputs provision and basic service delivery to farmers and breeders. All district villages should be targeted.

- Development

The objective of phase 3 is to sustain the improvement of communities well being through a community driven and owned development process and eventually to prepare Oxfam phase out. The concept of sustainability and development is to be introduced at the early stages of the programme, simultaneously with emergency projects. For example: the emergency distribution of improved seeds for farmers late 2006 and early 2007 could be carried out through grain banks, which have to be first established. Seeds distributions may also be accompanied with workshop and an on-the-job training on improved cropping practices to valorise the genetic potential of new varieties and maintain the seed purity for a longer-term utilization. Training mechanisms are to be rapidly set up.

Oxfam development actions will be implemented in a limited number of selected villages. Other villages will indirectly benefit from the growth of the local economy, from technical references and the availability of fertilizers, improved seeds and vet medicine.

The programme will continue to deliver services to communities over the course of the four-year programme.

2.2- Community governance

Oxfam has acquired on strong expertise in community capacity building. Larger responsibilities would be transferred to communities in the new programme to strengthen their capacity to drive the development process. Shuras and Community Development Councils created as part of NSP are to be involved at all stages of the project identification, implementation and monitoring. Oxfam exit strategy could also be prepared in collaboration with communities for a full transparency. Similarly, the Farmer Field School concept should become a core component of the strategy. Linkages between community shuras and district government are also to be developed.

2.3- Coordination with NGOs, technical agencies and authorities

It is commonly admitted that aid programmes may significantly gain in efficiency through a higher coordination with NGOs and consultation with authorities. Oxfam is a major actor within the aid community and has a key role to play in this process.

A high priority will be given to collaboration with aid partners and authorities.

3- Project activities

Background, objective, inputs &, outputs, implementation methodology and sustainability will be detailed for each project activity.

3.1- Emergency assistance

The displacement process has started in Badakhshan northeastern districts. A race against time is going on. Food distribution should be quickly organized to jam the process.

The first step is to ensure that targeted districts are included in the Drought Joint Appeal prepared in partnership with the Afghan ministries and the United Nations. Second, Oxfam should take the lead as the main implementing partner in both regions, given its experience in this field of activity. Detailed surveys should be rapidly conducted to prepare lists of beneficiaries, to identify a relevant range of actions (including food for asset creation projects) and to prepare an action plan.

Concern and ICRC have taken some initiatives in Yawan district. In Shar-e Buzurg, WFP and local authorities have identified projects to support. Food items have already been shifted in for further distribution. Therefore, coordination with NGOs, UN agencies and local authorities is required.

3.2- Agriculture

Emergency inputs distribution – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

In context of emergency, seeds are not kept for sowing the following season but are eaten over winter. Consequently inputs such as improved crop seeds, vegetable seeds and fertilizers are needed at a large scale to avoid displacement.

Coordination with FAO emergency operations would be recommended to supply beneficiaries with improved seeds and fertilizers by November 2006. FAO budget is unlikely to fully address farmers' needs and additional funds should be raised.

A development process is to be initiated simultaneously by establishing appropriate mechanisms and community structures to improve emergency projects efficiency and to sustain the technology transfer. Additional projects will be quickly initiated to strengthen the crop productivity increase.

Improved seeds and fertilizers may be distributed through the grain banks on the basis of a revolving fund. A particular attention will also be given to training at all stages of the programme completion including the emergency stage.

Grain banks – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The concept is extremely relevant in Badakhshan and Hazarajat context to widen the access to improved seed and to encourage savings and capital accumulation. It both contributes to rapidly increase the crop productivity in food deficit areas, to set up safety mechanisms in case of climate disasters and crop failure and to engage a development process through an access to credit.

This initiative is to be extended to all villages selected in the 4-targeted districts early spring 2007. Emergency agricultural inputs are distributed on the basis of a revolving fund according to FAO new policy. It could easily constitute the grain bank initial capital and initiate a long-term development process.

This primarily requires a complete review of the current mechanisms and the methodology implemented over the winter 2006 and staff training.

Oxfam methodology could be designed on the basis of the 10 years practical and successful experience of other aid agencies such as Afghanaid and AKDN on top of the analysis of the literature available. A closer collaboration would be therefore highly recommended. The methodology should include the following key components:

- A financial contribution of the committee members in the seed bank capital to increase the sense of ownership.
- A relevant mechanism for capital accumulation, which complies with the Islamic rule on interest. The grain banks supported by Afghanaid propose a financial package including improved seeds and technical assistance that beneficiaries pay back in cash. This approach has allowed a bank capital multiplication by 40 within 3 years.
- A substantial capital provision. 100% of village farmers should be targeted on the basis of one bag per farmer over a 2 to 3 years period. The capital should be rapidly constituted especially in Badakhshan and Southwest Hazarajat where the viability of the initiative may be threatened by the high risk of drought and food shortage. The capital could be provided in 1 to 2 years with emergency seed distribution.
- A distribution of fertilizers (Urea and DAP) to increase the wheat field productivity and to quickly constitute savings.
- The utilisation of 75% of the bank savings per year. 25% of the capital is to be saved to enable a restart up of the bank activity in case of a massive crop failure.
- The connection of grain bank committees with a seed multiplication association for selection and regular provision of new improved varieties.
- A strong assistance and monitoring of the grain bank committees to successfully set up all mechanisms. On-the-field farmers training and extension is also of key importance to valorise improved wheat potential.
- Training, written guidelines and monitoring of the field staff.

Oxfam social organisers should be involved in grain bank establishment and management. Coordination with crop extensionists is recommended.

Three to five years of assistance are needed to sustain the capital accumulation process and transfer capital management mechanisms, according to partners met. A capital multiplied by 10 over the

programme period and shura capabilities to manage the savings could be the main indicators for exiting.

Fertilizer supply– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Fertilizer is the major factor of productivity and significantly strengthens the food security. It expresses the full genetic potential of improved seeds, and directly contributes to the success of horticultural and grain bank projects. Therefore the access to fertilizers is indispensable for emergency, rehabilitation and long-term agricultural development programmes.

- Emergency

Improved seeds should be systematically distributed with Urea & DAP as part of grain bank project. Quantities are to be adjusted according to the land potential (irrigated / rain-fed land). Besides, larger scale distribution of fertilizers may also be considered in a context of emergency and rehabilitation the first two years.

Priority should be given to local traders for the fertilizer supply in order to prepare further development step, and a sustainable access to fertilizers locally in particular. Second, traders would be contracted on the basis of detailed technical specifications and quality control. Fertilizers would be distributed through grain banks, on the basis of a revolving fund.

The utilization of fertilizer on wheat would be monitored to avoid poppy fertilizing. This requires a strong involvement of extensionists at the field level and a written agreement with seed bank committees and clear warnings in case of misuse.

- Development through purchasing groups

The capital accumulated within the grain banks will facilitate the access to credit and the access to fertilizers. To optimize investments, the concept of collective procurement could be introduced as well as a price information system and off-season orders to take advantage of low prices. Commercial mechanisms between traders and farmers may be developed to sustain the whole process. Solidarités has gained a pertinent experience in this field in Hazarajat, through the establishment of purchasing groups.

Training on fertilizer management is also essential in order to optimize its utilization and avoid wastage and pollution. Doses to apply, crop stages, and application conditions (watering) may be reviewed and tested on research farms and improved practices could be promoted through the Farmer Field Schools.

Those mechanisms should help developing the private market and facilitating the access to fertilizers. The exit strategy could be based a quantitative indicator of farmers having access to fertilizers (50% for example). This remains to define.

Extension & Farmer Field School – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Agricultural development is mainly based on technology and knowledge transfer in order to increase crops productivity through the valorisation of local resources and farmers skills upgrading. The provision of relevant field assistance should be the core axis of the strategy since it strengthens the effectiveness and the success of any agricultural projects. There is no point in distributing improved wheat seeds if farmers do not know how to maintain the variety purity and productivity. Skill upgrading is therefore crucial at all stages of the programme including the emergency stage.

The experience shows that the collaboration with a close number of progressive farmers has a higher impact on practices improvement than a larger scale follow up. This requires the establishment of Farmer Field School mechanisms to ensure the transmission of Oxfam know-how from the a few beneficiaries to the whole community.

FFS concept is based on the following principle: the aid agency provides a few selected farmers (men) with quality inputs, a strong training on improved practices and an on-the-job technical support in new

technologies implementation. Then the selected farmer trains the community farmers of the village on a regular basis (once to twice a month) under Oxfam supervision. The training session takes place in the selected farmer's farm, which has become a model farm and a reference for the rest of the community. Selected farmers are called community trainers (CTs).

Most of aid organizations involved in agriculture have successfully implemented this concept over the past 10 years.

It is important that the community members receive inputs from the aid agency to encourage and facilitate the transfer of technology and knowledge from the CTs to communities.

The quality of CTs' training and follow up is of a key importance. The training comprises an initial workshop, a weekly on-the-job training and technical assistance in the CT's field, and a range of monthly training sessions in Oxfam demonstration fields & research farm.

Shura members will select one CT per village, on the basis of key criteria: competencies in crop cultivation, ability to share experience and to train others and responsiveness to extensionists' instructions. Responsibilities of both partners have to be reported in a contract.

3CTs could be appointed per village: 1 female CT for vegetable production, 1 male CT for vegetable and fruit production, and 1 male CT for crop production. Additional CTs may be appointed in villages over 50 households.

The FFS concept requires excellent skills and capabilities from the staff to practically train CTs and bring changes. Agriculturists are to attend regular training workshops on crop, vegetable and fruit production. Agriculturists should also be supported in their daily activities with technical guidelines and a detailed work plan for the cropping season (definition of technical messages content according to the cropping calendar).

Extensionists have a full-time field duty, visiting and providing CTs with assistance and training 3 to 4 times a month, organizing monthly technical workshops in Oxfam research farm and supervising CTs in the community training process. Extensionists should also be monitored and their performances are to be evaluated through CTs and community farmers' progress. This requires an initial baseline survey, an initial CT's farm diagnosis and quantitative objectives.

The recruitment of an extensionist is advocated for 10 to 15 villages. Transportation facilities should also be provided such as a motorbike or a horse.

How to sustain extension services? In western countries extension is either charged to farmers or provided by public authorities. It will be a long-term process in the current Afghan context. And this is unlikely to take place by the end of the new programme. The knowledge and technology transfer is a sustainable process in itself. The challenge is to bring significant changes and improvements in crop productivity as quick as possible. The exit strategy will be based on progress achieved, which requires initial farm diagnosis and objectives.

Research farm – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Experiment is a key component of a rural development strategy. It generates all technical references for extension and crops variety selection. This initiative would be run by aid agencies until the public authorities get the resources and skills to take it over.

International donors are currently supporting aid agencies to associate authorities in the management of research farms and to prepare the hand over. Further investigations are needed to analyse in more details this funding opportunity.

A research farm should be established in each district on a public land early 2007. The objective is to introduce and test the technical and economical performances of a wide range of:

- Improved crop varieties (irrigated and rain-fed wheat, barley, pulse, potato, etc.),
- New species (oil crops, beans, lentils, fodder crops, vegetables, fruit & non-fruit trees, etc.),

- Improved practices (fertiliser and water management, depth of sowing in rain-fed land, etc.), and
- New technologies (greenhouses, farming machinery, fruit solar dryers, etc.).

It is important to test new varieties in the local cropping conditions, which means with and without fertiliser, in irrigated, rain-fed and drought conditions (plots protected from the rain). Performances will be compared with local varieties.

An experimental plan is to be designed and carried out according to scientific standards and clear objectives. Technical performances are to be recorded at key stages of the crop development and data processed statistically prior to be communicated to the whole farmers community.

A research farm establishment and management request a specific expertise and additional staff resources. UNFAO, ICARDA or an international consultant may provide training. Further investigations are needed. An agronomist is to be assigned part time and a skilled farmer recruited full time.

Appropriate equipment would also be needed, such as threshers, balance, grain humidity tester and storage.

A close collaboration with NGOs and technical agencies (FAO, ICARDA) would be highly recommended to have access to high quality genetic material. Afghanistan has a long experience in rain-fed wheat variety selection in Badakhshan province with material imported from Pakistan and Tajikistan. An improved potato variety has been recently and successfully introduced in Bamyan by ICARDA for its higher productivity and disease resistance. A seed multiplication association has been created with Solidarités assistance and could provide tubers for testing in Panjao and Ashterlai districts. Partners interviewed are all opened to any support in this regard.

The research farm is also an excellent support for a regular training of community trainers and an annual exposure visit for all other farmers. Seed bank committee members could also be invited few times and especially at harvest time to select the wheat variety to multiply.

The research farm could also be involved in vegetable quality seed and seedling multiplication and marketing, to train the CTs and generate profits to cover the operational cost.

The hand over of research farms to district authorities is to be seriously prepared since it offers a relevant opportunity to sustain the whole initiative. Economical performances will be a prevalent argument to accelerate the transition with the authorities.

Demonstration fields – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The distance is a constraint and most of farmers may not have a regular access to the research farm. A network of demonstration fields could be established in the district for technical references and training support for CTs and men and women community members.

Two demonstration fields of one-jerib size are advocated from spring 2007, one field for vegetables and one field for crops.

The model kitchen garden could be established in health facilities compound to target women more easily and to associate vegetable cropping practices with nutrition. We met the manager of Kafshad clinic funded by USAID and ADRA in Sakhdez valley - Panjao district and confirm his interest for collaboration. Schools could be another opportunity. A gardener will be recruited and trained.

The crop demonstration field may be established on a private or public land nearby the local market of the valley. The visibility is of a key importance. A range of crop varieties and species will be cultivated and improved practices and technologies introduced and promoted. The field may be run by a private farmer or a Community Trainer.

Demonstration field management would be under the responsibility of the valley extensionist.

Seed multiplication association – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

A promising start has been made through the support of wheat seed producers in Fayzabad. But much remains to be accomplished to sustain the whole process and to replicate it to Hazarajat districts.

The objective is to establish commercially viable community-based seed multiplication and cleaning units in order to sustain the access to certified and new improved varieties of cereal and legume crops when Oxfam assistance stops. Those units aim at linking seed bank committees and seed suppliers (including the technical agencies FAO, ICARDA, CYMMIT for the time-being and private seed companies later on).

A unit may be established in each district centre or at the provincial level as in Badakhshan to counter the absence of high productive irrigated fields for multiplication in Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts. Units are to be equipped with the requisite machinery for harvesting, threshing, cleaning, storing and seed treating.

A small group of skilled farmers and/or progressive CTs will be trained and closely assisted at the field level. Associations are to be constituted and mechanisms established. Oxfam support is also required to link clients and suppliers. Gradually, Oxfam will disengage from the association management process as soon as the private market gets mature enough to take it over.

Successful associations were established all over the country and could constitute baseline references for analysis and replication. Bamyan potato tubers multiplication association is a pertinent example. FAO Senior Technical Advisor on Seeds Privatization could also be of a key support in this regard.

This initiative may be extended to vegetable seed and seedling production.

A regulation on seed production and commercialization is currently under preparation. Oxfam should actively participate in the discussion with the EC, the UN and national authorities and adjust the project design.

This concept could be developed from autumn 2007/spring 2008 and assistance provided during two seasons before withdrawing.

Vegetable production & new technologies – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Vegetables are promoted both for their high productivity and opportunity for diet diversification. It is an appropriate response to emergency situations and long-term development strategies in the context of Hazarajat and Badakhshan.

- Inputs distribution and sustainability

Seed, fertilizers and tools may be distributed to CTs and community members as part of emergency and rehabilitation projects the first two years of the programme on top of strong field assistance through the farmer field school.

Simultaneously, farmers would engage in a seed multiplication process at the household level through CTs' training in order to sustain the development of vegetable production. A market for seeds will gradually emerge. By the end of programme, farmers would be capable to multiply most of the vegetable seeds and an association for quality seed production and marketing will have been established.

The seed multiplication component is of a key importance to sustain the whole activity.

- Women extensionists

Women should be targeted in priority since they are both involved in kitchen gardening activities and food preparation.

The establishment of demonstration field in health clinics is a relevant means to have access to women and to offer training on improved practices as well as on vegetable preservation, on cooking and on nutrition. The recruitment of a woman extensionist for 20 villages is recommended to run

demonstration fields, to train women on the spot and follow up the most progressive women at the village level. The FFS concept could be replicated for women.

This could be an opportunity for women health promoters to recycle and women social organizers to widen the range of their activities and competencies if they demonstrate strong capabilities in fieldwork. Extensionist should first be a gardener.

FAO Kabul and Fayzabad offer training opportunities on nutrition and material for extension. A closer collaboration with FAO Nutrition is highly recommended.

- Greenhouses

Technologies should also be promoted such as greenhouses and plastic tunnels to increase the length of the cropping season and the vegetable productivity even in a context of water shortage in summer. Greenhouses allow two additional cropping cycles, the first one from October to December and the second from February to April for both vegetable and seedling production. This will first contribute to strengthen food security on limited land resources and water shortage and diet diversification. Surpluses will be later on marketed or exchanged. Greenhouse construction is a key component of the rehabilitation process.

A greenhouse cost more than USD 1000 and is not profitable in the current economical context of Hazarajat and Badakhshan, which means that farmers may not invest in greenhouse construction. This requires a strong support from Oxfam in the coming few years given the benefits expected on food security.

Greenhouses will be established at CTs' in priority. 10 to 18 greenhouses may be constructed per district. The activity will start in summer 2007.

GERES is a technical agency specialized on renewal energy and environment and has developed an expertise in project designing, greenhouses construction, local mason training and extensionists training on cultivation practices in greenhouses. Collaboration with GERES could prove fruitful. For information, GERES usually operates as an implementing partner. Contact should be established prior to the proposal preparation.

A number of greenhouses have been set up in Hazarajat in partnership with a few international NGOs (including Solidarités and MADERA).

Sustainable steps are to be taken from the very beginning of the assistance by associating a local mason in the greenhouse construction so as to quickly transfer the know-how locally and to collaborate with local traders in order to ensure material availability in the district market.

Fruit production – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

- Rehabilitation

A sapling distribution is a component of the rehabilitation process since it helps farmers to recover a productive life. This initiative could be conducted in drought affected-districts in 2007 and 2008. Distribution at subsidized price could create an opportunity for farmers to rapidly engage in tree planting on rain-fed hillsides.

A training session is to be organized on orchard establishment, prior to any distribution early 2007 through the FFS. The FFS concept is an excellent solution to efficiently target a large number of beneficiaries in a short period of time.

Shuras are to be involved in beneficiaries' selection. Subsidized distributions may be carried out through the grain banks to contribute to capital accumulation and to develop the concept of revolving fund.

- Development

Priority should be given to the collaboration with local traders for sapling purchasing so as not to disorganize the local economy. This development step will be taken at the early stage of Oxfam assistance.

Subsidized distributions will gradually stop after two years assistance. Actions will be lately undertaken to strengthen the capability of private suppliers and farmers to meet each other. Farmers will have access to credit through the grain banks. Traders' training would be needed on sapling quality, on technical specifications and on transportation conditions. Traders may be assisted to make contacts with suppliers from other provinces. Farmers should be trained and assisted on collective procurement, and on grain bank capital management.

The establishment of nursery is also a key component of a development process for the selection and production of locally adapted saplings. Supporting private nurseries establishment is probably not pertinent in mountainous areas where the climate is a severe constraint. 10 years experience in Hazarajat shows that private businesses are not profitable enough. The establishment of a nursery in partnership with Oxfam and the district authorities could be more relevant to produce saplings for sales and to introduce and test new species and varieties (walnut, cherry, plum, pistachio, etc).

A two to three-jerib nursery and a model orchard are to be attached to the research farm. Authorities will be gradually associated with the nursery management for a full handover in four to five-year time. Meanwhile, the manager will be evaluated on the technical and economical performances of the nursery to demonstrate to authorities that the sapling sales may cover the labour and operational costs. The first saplings will be sold in 3 years time. Sale prices will be adjusted with market prices. The site will be carefully selected (low elevation, water availability, quality land, etc). The nursery is unlikely to fully respond to the demand. Commercial linkages with local traders for an external supply have to be maintained and developed.

A comprehensive training on orchard management, (including, pruning and pest control) of community farmers through CTs is highly recommended over the programme period to improve practices and increase the fruit tree productivity. The network of CTs orchards, Oxfam demonstration fields, research farms and nurseries will be an excellent support for practical training.

It should be kept in mind that fruit production and nursery management require a specific expertise. Emphasis is to be laid on winter and on-the-job staff training and field monitoring.

FAO should be associated for training support and the provision of quality genetic material. WFP offers additional funds opportunity to run an Environmental Watershed Protection Project in Central Highlands. One component of the project regards fruit tree nursery establishment.

Fruit & vegetable processing– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

There is a tradition in Afghanistan for fruit drying. This is the case in Ashterlāi district for apricots. In Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts, apricots and mulberries are dried as well as vegetable such as tomatoes for preservation and consumption over winter. Surpluses are marketed.

There is a need to improve the processing techniques so as to enhance the quality and hygiene of dried fruits. The improvement of the household diet and the food quality is the immediate objective targeted. The improvement of quality-processed fruits will also generate market opportunities. This may not be neglected even if it is not the main objective given the remoteness of both areas targeted.

FAO has acquired a long experience in this field. GERES is currently testing a few types of solar dryers. Some prototypes are a combination of greenhouse and solar dryer Experience sharing, field visits and staff training are highly recommended to design the proposal and take actions.

Equipment could be introduced for demonstration and should be quickly replicated.

Producers could be organized in "sales" groups for processing and marketing. EC AIDCO could allocate fund to support this initiative in Badakhshan.

Plant protection – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Activities on plant protection would be integrated into the extension activities of the project.

Urgent actions should be undertaken to control smut and locusts on rain-fed wheat crops. A close collaboration with technical agencies such as FAO is recommended for training, and inputs provision.

Extension information should be provided about the dangers of disease and pests (including weeds) and about the benefits and drawbacks of using chemicals and biological control methods. Training on the use of chemical and biological methods to control disease and pests could be planned for the summer 2007. Training on pesticide utilization should also focus on health protection and appropriate chemicals storage.

Seed dressing would be covered in the community-based seed unit and grain banks if needed.

Farming machinery– Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The present project aims at providing farmers with threshing services. The overall objectives of Oxfam delivery service are the following:

- 1- To increase crop productivity by decreasing losses during the threshing process (traditional method takes two to three months and sometimes over winter).
- 2- To save farmers' time so as to engage development activities.
- 3- To encourage private operators to take over the threshing activity and to meet the demand as it occurred in central Bamyan district.

One to two threshers per district could be introduced and seasonal mechanics recruited. A detailed work-plan is to be established prior to the threshing campaign. Priority is to be given to Oxfam research farm and demonstration fields, to the seed multiplication field and improved wheat fields of district grain banks. District Farmers could all benefit from the service to cover the investment cost.

The service should be charged to beneficiaries in order to sustain the activity on a long run. NGOs have supported similar initiatives and a pertinent price policy could be defined and shared.

The handover of the equipment to private operators, to a seed bank committee or to the seed multiplication units is to be considered. It is too early to define a deadline, a methodology and a beneficiary. The decision will be made prior to Oxfam withdrawal, on the basis of an analysis of the private market maturity and of the cost of the service delivery is essential to make such a decision prior to Oxfam withdrawal.

Motor cultivators were also introduced in Yakawlang and Bamyan districts by NGOs. Those equipments are presently available for sale in the local market. Further investigations are needed to study the opportunity for replication in Ashterlāi and Panjao districts. This technology does not seem fully adapted to steep slopes and remote fields of Badakhshan.

Motor cultivators with a wide range of equipments could also be considered seriously since it saves farmers' time and increases fields productivity. Besides, oxen become useless and fodder resources may be allocated for productive livestock such as dairy cows, sheep and goats. This initiative requires access to credit that Oxfam or grain banks may provide. A specific micro-credit component could be included in the next development programme. Machinery could be introduced at a small scale to test market responsiveness. It could be utilized on the research farm to better control the experiments and rented for neighbouring farmers as a first step.

Oil crops & processing – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

There is a tradition in oil crop production and processing in Badakhshan and in southern Hazarajat. flax and sunflower oil cultivation and processing in Badakhshan mainly. To be promoted / locally made oil / market / by product oil cakes for animals

Consideration might also be given to oil seed crops such as flax and sunflower, which produce seeds rich in edible oils and oil seed residues that are rich in protein. There is an existing tradition for oil seed production on rain-fed land mainly in Badakhshan in particular but the production is low developed while there is a demand. By-products of the oil processing are excellent feed for dairy livestock.

New species and varieties may be introduced in demonstration and research fields. Modern processing equipment may be introduced to replace low productive traditional mills. This initiative might be undertaken at a pilot-project scale in order to study its technical and economical feasibility.

Poppies – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Even if the targeted districts in Hazarajat and Badakhshan are low involved in poppy cultivation so far, there is a risk of poppy development in the coming years. Actions must be taken:

- 1- To quickly break the poverty cycle and the current food insecurity by providing massive inputs and access to credit. We should keep in mind that poppy traders are offering those services to farmers.
- 2- To rapidly initiate a large number of livelihood alternatives in cooperation with specialized agencies even if they provide half benefits of poppy crops.

3.3 - Livestock activities

Emergency assistance – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The range of emergency responses in the animal sector is limited. The government/UN drought appeal plans to provide fodder and concentrates for animal feeding. Oxfam could be an implementing partner for Hazarajat and Badakhshan. Needs are so high that they are unlikely to be fully covered.

Restocking could be the first action of rehabilitation early 2007 to reconstitute the herd.

All experts agreed to say that there is no point in restocking without vaccination and proper management. Therefore, development steps are to be taken simultaneously. Veterinary activities should be strengthened for a wider coverage of the areas targeted. Extension and technology transfer are also urgently needed to maximize livestock productivity. The development of poultry and beekeeping production could also contribute to strengthen household food security prior to generate income.

All activities are detailed below:

Restocking – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The drought will lead to livestock sale to compensate crop failure and to face fodder shortage. The distribution of animals could be an appropriate drought response to reconstitute the herd but also a pertinent tool to break the poverty cycle of the most vulnerable families who have traditionally low access to livestock ownership.

The rehabilitation operation requires a large-scale distribution the first year to provide a large number of breeders with sufficient heads. If livestock is distributed under a revolving fund, animals will have to be reimbursed. Second, part of livestock will be sold to generate cash and purchase food and other basic items before winter. The initial capital provided is to be important to cover those costs and keep a few animals over winter for reproduction.

The small livestock (sheep & goats) is more cost efficient and productive than dairy cows under Hazarajat and Badakhshan conditions.

Animals will be distributed once only, in spring 2007 and on the basis of a revolving fund. Sheep banks could be created in each village to strengthen community capacity building and generate capital accumulation for further activities support. To facilitate the project management by the bank committees, beneficiaries could pay back in cash instead of alive animals. The sheep bank concept has been recently introduced in Afghanistan and a close coordination with implementing agencies is highly recommended.

Animals distributed will be all vaccinated. Breeders will be trained on improved livestock management practices prior to the distribution.

Veterinary services – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Significant steps have been achieved in Southwest Hazarajat and Badakhshan where the annual mortality rate used to exceed 50%. More remains to be done and in a context of emergency and long-term development. The next steps could be the following:

- Sustainable strategy designing

How and when to privatize veterinary activities? How to hand over the monitoring process to public authorities and set up reporting mechanisms? How to sustain the provision of quality vaccines and medicine? What are the national regulations enforced and under preparation to comply with? Is there any aid partner with the full expertise and fund resources to support this long-term process and to develop a partnership with? Those are the key questions to answer. Therefore, coordination with authorities, donors, technical agencies and aid partners is highly recommended to share experience, to develop a common approach and to seize fund opportunities. A first step could be an active participation at the animal health joint steering committee.

It is important to take into consideration the current remoteness and inaccessibility of districts villages and the low maturity of the veterinary market in order to adjust the privatization plan of each district. Experience has shown that a premature privatization compromises the sustainability of veterinary activities. A full privatization of veterinary activities within the present programme timeframe seems inappropriate in both southwest Hazarajat and northeastern Badakhshan.

- Vaccination full coverage

Investigations revealed that the present vaccination coverage does not exceed 50% in Ashterlai district, and 30% in Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts. The livestock mortality rate directly impacts the household food security and threatens the Oxfam development programme success if neighbouring villages are totally neglected. We suggest that Oxfam veterinary teams fully cover Ashterlai, Panjao, Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts. This would require additional para-vets and BVWs, more vaccines and medicine and additional monitoring.

According to Oxfam veterinarians interviewed, 2 more para-vets would be needed in Ashterlai and Shar-e Buzurg districts. In Yawan, there is only one para-vet operating. 3 more would be needed. Training of new para-vets should be considered with the provincial authorities' approval. The participation at the steering committee could prove relevant to obtain the requisite authorization. Para-vets should be partly remunerated in Badakhshan. All of them should be provided with transportation facilities. The objective is to ensure vaccination in remote areas and allow a close monitoring from Oxfam veterinarians. Coordination with the steering committee could prove useful at that level.

- Veterinary clinic establishment

One clinic per district should be established with the requisite facilities on top of para-vets shops. The clinic should be opened in the district crossroad and not necessarily in Oxfam compound for sustainability reasons mainly. Oxfam veterinarian could be in charge of the clinic with a para-vet as an assistant. It is important for Oxfam veterinarian to practice both at the clinic and at the field levels and not to concentrate on reporting and monitoring only. Para-vets will open shops at home preferentially. This is cheap and facilitates the privatization process.

- Training and coordination

A closer collaboration with specialized agencies and the participation at the steering committee are strongly advocated since they may provide Oxfam field staff with a technical support (for disease diagnosis, specific medicine provision, etc) and training opportunities.

An internal coordination within Oxfam teams is also important. The most active and experienced veterinarian could take the responsibility of visiting (2 weeks every 2 months) the other districts and coordinating the projects implementation under the supervision of the Oxfam livelihood expert.

- BVWs' responsibilities

BVW are of a key contribution in the vaccination process and additional BVW would be needed for a full coverage of the district. Women BVW could also be trained on first aid for calving for two reasons. First, it is usually a women activity and second calving is a critical stage, which leads to animal losses while simple precautions and basic knowledge could solve most of problems.

BVW responsibilities could also be extended to livestock husbandry as lately detailed, but not to veterinary treatment as it is presently the case. Compared to vaccination, treatment requires skills and training. A two weeks training is purely insufficient to make diagnosis and propose a medical treatment. This activity must remain under the responsibility of a veterinarian or of a para-vet with the veterinarian's supervision.

Extension & Breeder Field School – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

- Need for extension

All agreed that a poorly nourished cow cannot be productive even she is vaccinated and well treated. The husbandry management is as important as veterinary activities to improve animal health and productivity, while it is usually underestimated.

Feeding practices, selection and reproduction management may be improved on the basis of practical and simple recommendations in order to significantly increase the herd productivity.

Additionally, skills upgrading increase the responsiveness of breeders to new technologies and facilitate the implementation of value added projects such as the current natural insemination initiative. Extension is a relevant activity at all stages of the aid assistance, from the emergency stage to the sustainable development stage.

Knowledge & technology transfer requires qualified extensionists and the replication of the FFS concept within the breeders' community.

- Recruitment & training of livestock extensionists

Veterinarians are not knowledgeable enough and have no time to implement husbandry projects (animal upgrading units) and to train and follow up the breeders on livestock management. This requires specific qualifications. Two livestock specialists could be recruited including a woman extensionist to specifically train the woman community: one male extensionist for 10 to 15 villages and one female extensionist for 20 villages. Women play an active role in the household livestock activities and should be targeted.

The major problem is that there is a low tradition in Afghanistan for extension in the livestock sector and the experience shows that experts are usually advocating high technological solutions more than locally adapted, practical and replicable recommendations. Consequently, a special attention should be given to training, technical guidelines preparation, field monitoring of the management team, and the regular evaluation of the extensionist performances to bring changes on breeders' practices. The latest point primarily requests the completion of an initial farm diagnosis and the definition of clear objectives.

A closer collaboration with FAO is recommended to seize any opportunity for training, extension material preparation, funding and project implementing.

Badakhshan social organizers could be trained as livestock extensionists if they demonstrate a real interest in this sector and full capabilities. Extensionists will work closely with a limited number of community trainers (see below). They will also train para-vets on improved livestock husbandry practices and will be in charge of the implementation of any livestock husbandry-related projects.

- Breeder Field School (BFS) & BVWs

As earlier detailed the concept is based on the training of very progressive breeders who will simultaneously train the whole breeders community. Community-based development projects will be implemented at the CTs farm level in priority. CTs' farms will become model farms to support the technology and knowledge transfer process.

Selection criteria of CTs are of a key importance. Priority should be given to competencies in livestock rearing, motivation, ability to make changes and to share the experience gained. Shuras are to select the village CTs. Oxfam extensionists will approve or reject the choice after a few weeks of collaboration. Detailed responsibilities of both partners will be reported in a written contract.

Two CTs are to be selected per village or Community Development Council (CDC), preferentially a man and his wife since male and female roles are firmly entrenched in this sector. Additional CTs could be selected for villages over 100 households.

Active men and women Basic Veterinary Worker usually meet with those criteria and will constitute the first CTs. BVWs' husbands and wives will also be associated. All CTs will first receive a BVW training by the vet team to actively participate at the vaccination campaigns. They will be trained on first aid for calving and on improved livestock husbandry practices through a few days workshop. They will receive a regular on-the-job training will be followed up twice a month at the farm level. An initial farm diagnosis is to be made and technical performances are to be measured and recorded on the basis of simple criteria, which have to be defined. CTs/BVWs will be trained on site and on Oxfam research farm.

CTs will train the community once a month on a specific subject according to pre-defined work-plan (e.g. calving, calve rearing, milking, selection management for sale, access to quality water, etc...). The training work plan is to be defined by the extensionist.

BVW are not necessarily literate. Visual training material has to be prepared. Extension activities should start in spring 2007

The question of the sustainability of extension services has been raised and answered in the previous section.

Research farm – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

All livelihood experts agreed that practical and concrete demonstration of extensionists' know-how is essential to encourage the technology transfer.

All improved practices recommended are to be tested and demonstrated in a research farm. Technical and economical performances will be measured, recorded and promoted through visual material. The research farm will become a centre for regular training of CTs and annual exposure visit for community breeders.

Significant steps have already been taken to turn the district animal upgrading unit into a model farm. Additional improvements are needed. The cow keeper should also become a trainer and will run half an hour visit for any breeder coming for a cow insemination.

Funds were available for research farm establishment, management and handover preparation with local authorities. Additional investigations are needed.

Animal upgrading units – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

The objective is dual: to have access to male breeding stock and to increase livestock performances through genetic improvement. Significant steps have been achieved with the establishment of animal upgrading units at the district office and community levels. Adjustments are needed to increase the impact of current projects:

- District office unit

The animal upgrading unit could be a major component of the district research farm.

The first adjustment regards the bull selection. Dairy performances and low bull size are to be the major criteria. Suitable breeds would be available in Pakistan according to MADERA. Further investigations are needed to replace current Holstein bulls. All performances of Oxfam cows and calves related to production and reproduction are to be recorded and promoted through visual material. Performances of breeders' cows inseminated by Oxfam's bulls should also be followed up on the basis of simple indicators. A selection plan is to be established with accurate mating records so as to identify parents and to avoid further inbreeding. The community breeders are to be trained on selection management through CTs. The price policy is to be reviewed and other actions taken to improve the profitability of the project and to cover the operational costs at least. Quantitative objectives should be assigned in order to evaluate livestock extensionists' performances.

There is a hope to sustain the whole activity, by handing over the research farm to local authorities in a near future.

- Community-based units

To facilitate the access to quality breeding male stocks and contribute to the restocking process, a network of units could be established within the district communities: one unit every 4 to 7 nearby villages in the valleys where Oxfam plans to work.

A number of CTs will be supplied with a pair of "improved" cow and bull at a very subsidized price. Accurate mating and technical performances are to be recorded. Shura will be associated at all stages of the project implementation and a contract may be signed up with all partners.

The improved livestock stock will be a key component of the Breeder Field School (BFS). Community breeders will be trained by CTs on selection and reproduction. Improvements on housing, management and feeding will also be needed to turn CTs farm into a model farm and fully valorise the cattle genetic potential. The project will be highly promoted among the communities and the profitability of CTs' unit should significantly increase.

Will this activity be sustainable? We go the wrong way if we expect this activity to be profitable and breeders to purchase new bulls at full price to specifically pursue the insemination activity. The question of sustainability should be raised up differently: will breeders select the best males to improve stock performances and will they have a higher access to breeding stock after Oxfam's withdrawal? This is likely to be achieved. The project may contribute to lift up most of cultural constraint on reproduction and demonstrates that bulls is also a source of income before castration. Second, improved genetic material will be available locally.

All activities are under the responsibility of district livestock extensionists. This requires specific qualifications. Priority should be given to staff training, technical support and on-the-job monitoring.

Demonstration stables – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Animal housing conditions in Afghanistan and in Hazarajat particularly are dreadful and severely affect the livestock health and productivity.

The experience shows that sharp improvements may be achieved with basic adjustments on the sanitary status, the ventilation and light conditions, the cohabitation of different species, the protection of the new-born animals, etc. And breeders are very responsive.

NGOs and technical agencies including GERES and Solidarités have gained some experience in stables restoring and construction. And technical guidelines could be prepared in coordination with those partners for replication and extension. Funds could be allocated for the renovation and construction of 20 stables per district. CTs will first benefit from the project with their contribution (labour and raw material).

Livestock performances and health status will be compared in both improved and local stables at the end of the winter, and promoted among the breeders community.

The project replication within the breeders' community is mainly based on the quality of Oxfam extension services and on the quality of the project completion and promotion through CTs.

Fodder crops – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

A low priority has been given so far to increase fodder crops quality and productivity in the central and northern highlands while the livestock is poorly nourished.

The introduction and testing of new and higher yielding varieties of perennial and annual species (such as sainfoin, alfalfa, vetch and chickling, barley) is advocated both for irrigated and rain-fed lands. Collaboration with FAO and ICARDA could be the first step since initiatives were taken in warmer areas of Afghanistan and several forage species were tested including sainfoin a perennial legume that is suitable for establishing on the highest plateaux where barley is cultivated. Genetic material could be provided.

Cropping practices may also be improved such as fertilizing through demonstration and extension.

This is a long-term activity, which should be undertaken early 2007.

Poultry production – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

There is a tradition in hence rearing in Hazarajat and Badakhshan. The development of eggs and meat production could sharply contribute to strengthen household food security. On top of extension on management practices, vaccines are urgently needed to protect the poultry against the main diseases (Newcastle) which still generate up to 50% loss a year in some places.

Chicks could be distributed as part of the restocking operation early 2007.

Poultry production could also generate income for households. There is a demand on the local and national market, which is currently not met. Prices are attractive and eggs may be transported more easily than expected. Technical assistance, feeding, vaccines and incubators would be the main inputs. Oxfam could assist private operators by providing the initial capital and equipment on the basis of a revolving fund. The whole process could be implemented through grain/sheep banks and at a small scale to start.

FAO has also developed a successful approach. A close partnership with the UN technical agency would offer funds opportunities and training support for the staff.

Poultry production requires specific technical competencies. Oxfam extensionist is to be well trained and supported technically all along the programme implementation.

Mineral blocks – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Small livestock fertility is exceptionally low. This is due to the poor food quality and mineral deficiency. MADERA has introduced a cost effective and replicable concept in Afghanistan 10 years ago based on mineral blocks making from animals bones (9kg), gem salt (800gr) cement (200gr) and water. Bones are burnt, and then pilled with other ingredients. Mineral blocks have an excellent content in major and minor nutrients (including calcium & phosphorus).

This activity is currently under privatization as part of Solidarités and MADERA programmes in a number of provinces including Bamyan. Bones availability is the major constraint to develop the activity in the four-targeted districts. The block-making process or bones powder-making process could be transferred in the main markets (Ghazny, Kabul, Fayzabad). Oxfam may assist a private operator to start a business. Training, initial capital for bones purchase and equipments including an oven may be provided on the basis of a revolving fund. Local traders would also be associated in the business to supply breeders in Ashterlaï, Panjao, Yawan and Shar-e Buzurg districts. A relevant price policy would be defined in coordination with Solidarités and MADERA on the basis of their experience.

Hazara breeders could be less responsive than Badakhshan where there is a tradition in gem salt feeding. Extension is recommended at the early stage of the project, including demonstration on CTs' farms and Oxfam research farm and promotion operations at subsidized prices.

This activity may start in spring 2007.

Beekeeping – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

As poultry production, beekeeping may contribute to diet improvement. Aid projects have been initiated in Hazarajat and Badakhshan and could generate baseline references for analysis and replication in both targeted areas. The bee resistance to harsh winter conditions is to be confirmed.

The technical feasibility and the economical profitability have to be carefully analyzed prior to engage breeders in business-oriented projects. Prices may not be competitive due to high production costs.

FAO is presently looking for implementing partners. Staff training is also crucial to ensure the success of the project. This activity should be quickly carried out.

Pilot-projects & feasibility studies – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

There was a long tradition in silk production in Afghan provinces where mulberry trees were cultivated. This creates an opportunity for income generating activity development even if it seems premature in the current context of Badakhshan. A technical and economical feasibility study including a market research is to be undertaken primarily.

Consideration may also be given in the coming years to cheese production since there is high demand for dairy products on the main markets. This is in line with the increase of cattle productivity and milk availability and with gender development. Solidarités has distributed modern equipments for butter making to women and this initiative could be replicated in a short run. FAO has developed a dairy-processing programme in three agricultural provinces and could offer training support and funds opportunities. Further investigations will be needed.

3.4- Natural resources management

Passive solar houses – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

A passive solar house is a greenhouse attached to the house to trap solar radiation in order to warm up the room temperature. The overall objective is to decrease the quantity of bush collected a year by substituting solar energy for fuel resources.

This has two consequences:

- 1- To save time for other activities (education, income generating activities, reforestation, etc...)
- 2- To limit the environment degradation.

Passive solar houses have been introduced in Afghanistan by GERES and a few prototypes were recently established in Bamyan and Northern Wardak provinces. This concept has aroused a strong interest from communities and should constitute models for replication. 50% of fuel is reportedly saved. It also creates a new room in the house and increases the well being of the family and children in particular. The light and warmth allow income-generating activities over winter such as carpet weaving.

The construction of the greenhouse requests beans, plastic sheet and a bag of cement. The total cost amounts at USD 300 in average. The concept is easily replicable since the construction does not require technical competencies. Second, farmers themselves provide most of material and labour needed.

The construction of a few passive solar houses has been included in the interim programme. The construction would start in autumn 2006 in both areas targeted to quickly create references. Priority should be given to local traders to supply beneficiaries with the requisite material so as to make it available locally to sustain the whole process.

Collaboration with GERES could also be considered for a larger scale project development.

The initiative could be extended to solar cooker.

Watershed management – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Oxfam took an excellent initiative by establishing a watershed management project in Shar-e Buzurg. Additional promotion among the district communities is recommended as well as technical improvements in the watering system in order to encourage farmers to plant fruit trees on rain-fed hills.

This concept should be replicated in all other Hazarajat and Badakhshan districts with adjustments in the selection of species cultivated and with a strong contribution of communities.

Wild almonds tree planting is tested by AKDN in Panjao, and the Norwegian Committee for Afghanistan has gained a lot of experience in non-fruit saplings reforestation on rain-fed land. GTZ, MercyCorp are also very knowledgeable in watershed protection. Experience sharing with all NGOs involved could prove fruitful to introduce innovative techniques and to become a major actor in this sector.

Environment degradation has become a major concern in Afghanistan and donors are allocating funds for watershed management projects. WFP is looking for implementing partners in Hazarajat. The EC has developed the Kunduz River Basin Programme, which could be extended to Badakhshan districts. The programme comprises natural resources management and irrigation infrastructures rehabilitation through community mobilization.

Reforestation – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Reforestation in Hazarajat along the springs and irrigation canals is more complicated. If objectives and outputs expected are clear for both farmers and aid agencies, the methodology to adopt is subject to question. Farmers have reportedly no time to engage in tree planting and in maintaining while it is also a substantial source of income. Therefore, the consultant is not fully convinced in the relevance of a large-scale distribution of non-fruit saplings for the time being.

Time saving through the introduction of threshers and passive solar houses is an indirect way to respond to the key issue of reforestation. It should be connected with the promotion of the concept and the introduction of new poplar varieties in CTs fields and in demonstration orchard in the research farms by the extensionists. New poplar varieties and other species are currently tested and multiplied in Bamyan province by FAO under WFP funding. WFP funds could be available to replicate this initiative in Daykundi province.

Prior to define a strategy on reforestation, Oxfam management team should analyze aid partners experiences.

Rain-fed management – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Much remains to be done in this sector.

A variety of alfalfa adapted to rain-fed land has been successfully introduced in Lal o Sarjantal district. This initiative is to be widely promoted through CTs and community farmers.

Better rain-fed management practices should be tested and promoted to limit the soil erosion. Bush planting between fields could be tested for natural terracing. New species of bush and perennial fodder crops could also be introduced. Experience sharing and coordination with aid partners is needed. External consultants could be involved in this specific sector and experience from other countries transferred to Afghanistan.

3.5- Income-generating activities

A number of agricultural and livestock husbandry activities may contribute to income generation on top of diet and productivity increase as earlier mentioned. They constitute a core axis of livelihood development even if the current priority is laid on food security.

Additional activities may be considered.

Handicraft and wool spinning – Hazarajat & Badakhshan

Handicraft and carpet weaving in particular is a prevalent axis of development in which women could play an active role. It implies a feasibility study first, focusing on market identification, local skills assessment, raw material availability, and production costs estimation. Initiatives have been taken by other NGOs and should be carefully analyzed. This is a long process and the business profitability is to be confirmed.

MADERA has developed a pertinent alternative in Besud districts, concentrating on wool quality spinning with the introduction of traditional western equipment, which is currently replicated locally. The project associates a Kabuli carpet factory for the raw wool provision and the wool purchase and a large number of Hazara women. The demand is high and MADERA would be open to collaboration. This could create an opportunity for income generating activity for women in Panjao and Ashterlai districts.

Additional actions could be undertaken to increase the wool production in Hazarajat for carpet making by orientating the sheep and ram selection on the white colour wool criteria.

4- Staff resources & organization

4.1- Livelihood coordinator

The livelihood component of the new programme is ambitious and would require the recruitment of an expatriate coordinator whose specific mission would be:

- To implement the livelihood projects.
- To monitor projects achievements and to take corrective actions.
- To report to donors.
- To link with logistic, administration and finance departments.

- To lead the technical teams on a daily basis, to define objectives and work-plans and to evaluate staff performances.
- To train and technically support the field staff.
- To coordinate with aid partners and district and national authorities.
- To identify project opportunities and to prepare project documents.

The coordinator would be based in Kabul office and would be assisted by an Afghan counterpart. The coordination team would spend two weeks a month in the field. If a competent coordinator assistant cannot be recruited, a senior staff from the agricultural, veterinary and livestock teams would take the responsibility to internally coordinate the projects implementation on top of his field activities.

4.2- Technical team organization

Three teams will be recruited for Ashterlaï, Shar-e Buzurg and Yawan district offices. Ashterlaï team will cover Sakhdez valley of Panjao district.

The agricultural team per district could be constituted of:

- One agronomist whose mission would be as follow:
 - To manage and to technically support extensionists.
 - To run the research farm and the nursery.
 - To assist grain bank committees in collaboration with social organizers.
 - To run farming machinery projects and the seed multiplication unit.
 - To run watershed management and reforestation projects.
 - To manage relationships with suppliers.
 - To link with the logistic and finance district department.
 - To report to the livelihood coordinator.
- One male agricultural extensionist for 10 to 15 villages whose mission would be as follow:
 - To assist and to train CTs at the field level on vegetable, crop, fodder and fruit production.
 - To supervise community training by CTs as part of FFS.
 - To run two demonstration fields.
 - To organize emergency distribution of agricultural inputs.
 - To link with shuras.
- One woman agricultural extensionist for 20 villages, whose mission would be:
 - To assist and to train women CTs on vegetable production and nutrition.
 - To run the vegetable demonstration garden.
 - To link with shuras.

The district veterinary team would be constituted of one veterinarian, whose mission would be:

- To run a veterinary clinic and mobile activities.
- To monitor and assist para-vets and to provide medicine and vaccines.
- To train men and women BVWs on vaccination and first assistance for calving.
- To report to the livelihood coordinator and authorities.

Para-vets are semi-private and are not team members.

The district livestock team would be constituted of one male extensionist for 10 to 15 villages and one female extensionist for 20 villages whose missions could be the following:

- To train and to assist men and women BVW/CTs in the herd management and project implementation (renovated stable construction, community-based animal upgrading units).
- To supervise community training as part of the BFS
- To run the research farm
- To organize livestock distribution.

- To train and to assist the sheep bank committee in the bank management in collaboration with social organizers.
- To run mineral blocks, poultry & beekeeping projects.
- To report to the livelihood coordinator.
- To link with shuras.

Collaboration with social organizers and civil engineers would be needed.

The agricultural and livestock technical teams will directly report to the livelihood coordinator to gain in efficiency in the programme completion.

4.3- Staff training

The success of project activities is directly linked with the staff qualifications and competencies. A high priority is to be given to winter workshops and on-the-job training. Coordination with aid partners including field visits is a first step. The collaboration with technical agencies is recommended since it upgrades the project technical nature and offers training opportunities. Funds should also be allocated for technical literature purchase.

The range of agricultural and livestock activities and qualifications is very wide. Projects would be more efficiently run if extensionists are specialized in two three fields of activity. This requires larger teams and a higher number of villages to assist (over 30 villages per district). This could be considered in Ashterlaï district in a medium run.

4.4- Consultant employment

The livelihood programme would be managed by a small field team (an expatriate coordinator and an Afghan counterpart) to cover a wide range of disciplines and activities.

External consultant employment would add disciplinary depth and would strengthen projects effectiveness through field and management staff training, technical guidelines preparation, project monitoring and project preparation. External consultant employment would be particularly pertinent to acquire a specific expertise in fields in which the technical support is low locally (e.g. natural resources management, rain-fed land management, locust control, animal husbandry management). For immediate needs, external consultant could take an active part in the proposal preparation in collaboration with the newly recruited livelihood coordinator.

5- Programme monitoring

A comprehensive monitoring system should be established at the beginning of the programme to provide indispensable baseline information and to precisely evaluate the programme impact.

The evaluation & monitoring system would comprise:

- i- A thorough initial survey conducted on the basis of accurate and relevant indicators

All villages targeted by the programme should be investigated. A sample of neighbouring villages could also be investigated to assess the influence of Oxfam activities on their own development.

A list of indicators is attached to the programme log frame in Annex 7. The list is to be completed since project activities are still at the conceptualization level.

The interim period offers an opportunity to carry out the initial survey.

- ii- A detailed CTs farm diagnosis, to measure the impact of extension services on technical criteria.

- iii- The definition of accurate quantitative and qualitative projects outputs. (E.g. the project coordinator may defines the objective of cows inseminated by introduced breeding bulls from the number of cows present in the targeted area,). Qualitative and quantitative objectives would be assigned to agricultural and livestock staff and performances evaluated once a year. Additional investigations and discussions with technical partners
- iv- The definition of a clear and written methodology per project activity. Some information are provided in the present report. They need to be completed.

The methodology definition primarily requires the preparation of technical guidelines for extensionists. The technical guidelines would provide extensionists with a detailed list of actions to take and recommendations to make to farmers and breeders in all fields of activities. They will also provide monitors with a detailed list of economical and technical criteria to follow up in order to more efficiently assess the impact of extension services such as recommendations on housing, selection management or feeding improvement for example.
- v- A monthly field monitoring by the coordination team; and
- vi- Evaluation and monitoring surveys once a year by Oxfam PDD team and external enumerators on the basis of quantitative and qualitative objectives and a comprehensive understanding of the methodology utilized.

Data would be processed and reported in an additional column in the programme log frame entitled “Level of achievement and comments”.

6- Exit strategy

The exit strategy per project activity should be defined at the proposal preparation level on the basis of clear quantitative and qualitative objectives.

A number of indications was provided in this chapter. Additional investigations are needed since some project activities are still at the conceptualization stage. Inputs and outputs are to be clarified from the survey information and further discussions with technical partners.

Beneficiaries, authorities and donors should be clearly informed of project objectives and deadline from the very beginning of the assistance so as to prepare the withdrawal in good conditions.

7- Programme log frame

A first draft is presented in annex 7.

Quantitative and qualitative inputs and outputs are to be completed.

8- Next steps

Additional investigations will provide the requisite information to define quantitative and qualitative project activity inputs and outputs in order to prepare a proposal, to define the budget and complete the exit strategy. Information could be provided through the baseline survey and collaborations with technical partners (including the field staff).

Similarly, the preparation of technical guidelines would be a key step to take in the coming months with the collaboration of an external consultant specialised on crops and livestock extension, in order to strengthen the technical framework of the present programme.

The next step would be to build the staff capacity in the basics of programme designing on top of what the consultant previously did as part of the present mission. A few days-workshop may be organized with the technical staff to thoroughly detail and discuss the objective and the methodology of each project activity and to associate the field teams to the proposal designing and planning.

G- Conclusion

Food security remains the top priority of the new programme in Hazarajat and Badakhshan. The drought situation has strengthened the need for inputs provision and services delivery, which could be implemented through a long-term and sustainable development approach.

The livelihood programme is designed in the continuation of former integrated rural development programmes. This is an over-ambitious programme, which will result in considerable value being added to the work done so far in both targeted areas.

The main challenge would be to review the internal organization of the technical team and to consider additional recruitments. The upgrading of the technical framework is the second core components of the programme so as to gain in effectiveness and become a major actor of Afghanistan livelihood development. At last, the establishment of an evaluation & monitoring system is strongly advocated.

Oxfam GB's background and resources in Afghanistan will be key strengths for the implementation of the present strategy.

H- Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to many of the Oxfam staff at management and field offices for their support in the completion of the mission. The consultant is particularly grateful to the interactions he had with Sarah Ireland, Vrinda Dar, Mohamad Salim Ghousi, Zalyann Peishi, Mayel Aminulhaq, Ahmadzai Nasrullah and Haffizullah Rahmani.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Integrated Rural Livelihoods Programme - Afghanistan

Terms of Reference

Background

Oxfam GB is an international humanitarian, development and campaign organization working in more than 70 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering. Oxfam has been supporting partners in Afghanistan since 1962. In 1991, Oxfam moved to Afghanistan to provide humanitarian and emergency relief to Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan. This assistance developed into integrated rural recovery and development programmes that have been continuing since.

In view of the ongoing changes in the political context of Afghanistan and the country's continuing struggle towards democracy and political stability, Oxfam GB started changing its approach, from 2002, from pure service delivery oriented projects towards community- oriented capacity building programmes. In view of this, the areas of intervention in Afghanistan will still remain focused on livelihoods, governance and gender equity for the next 5 years but Oxfam intends designing and implementing projects that increasingly move towards community ownership and self-sustained livelihood development and that aim specifically at enhancing the capacity of community institutions to respond to rural community development needs through participated approaches.

Purpose of the Assignment

We have an ongoing integrated rural recovery and food security programme in 40 villages of the districts of Panjao, Waras, Laal and Ashterlai in Hazarajat and a community based rural livelihood programme in 40 villages of the districts of Yawan and Shahr-I-Buzurg in Badakhshan. We are also implementing the NSP programme in 5 districts of Daykundi. Keeping in mind above strategy of Oxfam in Afghanistan, we would like:

1. To design an integrated rural livelihood development programme:
 - For the same districts and villages in Badakhshan where we are currently working
 - For one district in Daykundi (to be selected amongst districts where we are currently working); and
2. To make recommendations for a sustainable exit strategy for the current rural development activities being implemented in the districts of Hazarajat (Panjab, Laal, Waras, Ashtarlay)

The new livelihood programme and exit strategy must be based on SWOT analysis, thereby building on existing strengths and addressing the current gaps and it must be integrated within the current socio-economic and political framework and development vision of Afghanistan.

The programme must be designed in a participatory manner through meetings, focus groups and workshops with the staff and community.

The programme must incorporate gender equity and good governance as cross cutting issues and must be in line with the Oxfam approach to bringing long lasting solutions to poverty and suffering.

Objectives

The objective of this assignment is to:

- To undertake a detailed analysis of the ongoing livelihoods programme in Hazarajat and Badakhshan, including assessment of programme effectiveness, current gaps and strengths of the existing programme
- To develop a sustainable integrated rural livelihoods programme for selected districts in Badakhshan
- To develop a sustainable integrated rural livelihoods programme and/or exit strategy for selected districts in Hazarajat

Outcomes

- A programme developed and designed for integrated and sustained rural livelihoods development in the selected districts of Hazarajat and Badakhshan.
- Recommendations drafted for a sustainable exit strategy for the current IRD activities being implemented in selected districts of Hazarajat
- Programme developed includes a SWOT analysis, context analysis, needs assessment, specific objectives, implementation methodology, activities, inputs, outputs, exit strategy, sustainability, impacts and mainstreaming of gender and good governance
- Programme log frame developed
- Programme budgets to be formulated in cooperation with Oxfam staff in field and in Kabul
- Staff capacity built in the basics of programme designing

Skills Requirement

We need a consultant who is capable of designing an integrated rural livelihood development programme for the above two provinces

S/He must be an Agriculturist /rural livelihood specialist who has previous experience in designing programmes for integrated rural livelihoods, especially in Afghanistan.

S/He will bring a proven understanding and vast experience of agriculture and rural development and the socio-economic and technological context of Afghanistan with a special sensitivity to issues of gender and governance. S/He must be fluent in English, computer literate, be willing to travel to Oxfam's two programme areas of Hazarajat and Badakhshan.

Skills and Competence

S/He must be a person who has:

- Good understanding of development issues in the country
- Previous experience in designing programmes for integrated rural livelihoods, especially in Afghanistan.
- Proven understanding and vast experience of agriculture and rural development and the socio-economic and technological context of Afghanistan with a special sensitivity to issues of gender and governance.
- Strong analytical and assessment skills and experience
- Understanding of resource management, micro-finance, enterprise development and gender
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Experience in programme design
- Mature understanding of the grassroots and national rural development policy issues impacting Afghanistan generally and the agricultural environment specifically
- Holistic knowledge of the economic, political, social and technological environment in Afghanistan
- Knowledge and understanding of the role of markets and the private sector and public-private partnerships in agriculture and animal husbandry
- Knowledge of ongoing programmes been undertaken by international agencies (UN, World Bank)

Other competence

- Sensitive to gender equity and good governance issues
- Commitment to humanitarian principles and action and understanding of the aims and objectives of Oxfam
- Willing to travel to Hazarajat and Badakhshan

Consultancy time frame and fees

The assignment will be for a period of 60 days, comprising extensive field visits in each of the two programme areas and proposal development as per above outcomes. Boarding, lodging and travel in Afghanistan will be borne by Oxfam. Access to Oxfam GB facilities as an office base will be available for the period of the assignment.

At Oxfam we are committed to ensuring diversity and gender equity within our organization and strongly welcome applications from female and under represented groups to apply for this position.

Annex 2 - List of people met

[Annex Removed]

Annex 3 – Itinerary of the consultant

24 July (M)	pm: Bus Strasbourg – Frankfurt / Flight Frankfurt – Dubaï (depart home 13:00)
25 July	am: Flight Dubai – Kabul pm: Briefing at Oxfam Kabul head office (Sarah Ireland & Security Coordinator)
26 July	am/pm: trip to Bamyān pm: meeting with Charles Hulot – Geres
27 July	am/pm: trip to Panjao pm: arrive at 5:00/ briefing with Vrinda Dar (Oxfam Programme Manager) and the P D Team
28 July	am: Reading reports, briefing PD Team, meeting with Oxfam Hazarajat PC (Farodi) pm: Meeting Oxfam livestock and agricultural teams
29 July	am/pm: Field trip to Saghdez valley – visit of 1 village and Oxfam activities
30 July	am/pm: Field trip to Khodak Tartak valley – visit of 2 villages, meeting with farmers pm: Field visit of FAO nursery, ARA beekeeping project, Oxfam vegetable demonstration field
31 July (M)	am: Visit of Oxfam animal upgrading unit and vet clinic. Meeting vet team pm: Meeting AKDN – Reporting
1 August	am/pm: Trip to Ashterlaï district pm: Meeting Ashterlaï technical team
2 August	am: field visit of Oxfam vet clinic and animal upgrading unit. Meeting vet staff pm: Farm visit & reporting
3 August	am/pm: Field visit 2 village in Jingan Valley + health clinic. Meeting farmers
4 August	am/pm: field visit 2 villages in Ashterlai valley + NSP project. Meeting farmers & BVW
5 August	am/pm: field visit 1 village in Baralekandu valley. Meeting farmers pm: Ashterlaï staff debriefing
6 August	am: trip to Panjao pm: field visit of AKDN watershed management project & nursery project
7 August (M)	am: Panjao staff debriefing. PDT meeting on exit strategy pm: Field visit of Oxfam community based animal upgrading unit. Meeting with breeders. Reporting
8 August	am/pm: trip back to Bamyān pm: meeting Solidarités
9 August	am/pm: trip back to Kabul
10 August	am: Oxfam staff meeting on the drought response for Hazarajat Reporting
11 August	am: Reporting pm: Meeting Madera (Alain de Bures)
12 August	am/pm: Reporting
13 August	am/pm: Reporting
14 August (M)	am: reporting pm: Meeting Madera (Anne Lancelot). Meeting Geres (Charles Hulot)
15 August	am: Reporting pm: Meeting FAO (Etienne Careme, Samuel Kugbei, Aroon Nessar). Reporting
16 August	am: Meeting EC (Christian Hell) pm: Meeting Afghanaid (Anne Randall, Alison Rhind) pm: Meeting FAO (Charlotte Dufour). Phone conversation with Karim Merchant
17 August	am: Flight to Kunduz pm: Reporting
18 August	am/pm: Trip to Fayzabad
19 August	am: Reporting. Basar visit and price checking pm: Staff briefing

20 August am: Trip to Yawan
pm: Staff briefing. Meeting District Governor

21 August (M) am: Meeting vet team, field visit of Oxfam animal unit.
pm: Field visit 1 village. Meeting farmers

22 August am/pm: Field trip to 2 villages. Meeting farmers
pm: Meeting Oxfam vet team

23 August am: Staff debriefing. Meeting Concern
pm: Trip to Fayzabad. Meeting Afghanaid (Moujadidi)

24 August am: Meeting FAO (Dr Nazifa) & AKDN (Henry Sutter, Mohmad Darajat)
pm: Trip to Shar-e Buzurg

25 August am/pm: Field visit 2 villages Dawung valley. Meeting farmers & Oxfam technical staff. Reporting

26 August am: field visit of Oxfam Watershed project & animal unit. Meeting Head of Agriculture
pm: Field visit of Oxfam nursery. Meeting farmers and technical staff. Meeting Vet team. Reporting

27 August am/pm: trip back to Kunduz

28 August(M) am: flight to Kabul
pm: Reporting

29 August am: Debriefing Kabul managers (Sarah Ireland, Vrinda Dar, Salim Ghousi)
pm: Debriefing Salim Ghousi. Reporting

30 August am: Meeting FAO (Etienne Careme, Tek Bahadur Thapa)
pm: Meeting Solidarités (Benoit Sourrisseau, Sylvain Marilleau). Reporting

31 August am/pm: Flight back to Strasbourg via Dubaï & Frankfurt. Arrive home 23:45.

Annex 4 – Bibliography

- Rural Recovery and food Security Programme – AFG/AIDCO/2002/0360/013 – Grant application form – from 6/3/3 to 5/3/6 – Oxfam GB
- Rural Recovery and food Security Programme – AFG/AIDCO/2002/0360/013 - Interim report 01 April 2005 – 31 March 2006.
- Hazarajat 5-year Strategy plan - Oxfam GB in Afghanistan
- Badakhshan Community based rural livelihood programme – Narrative proposal - Oxfam GB. 1/10/03 to 30/9/06.
- Badakhshan Community based rural livelihood programme – Interim report 2 for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – 1/12/04 to 30/11/05. Oxfam GB.
- Interim Programme in Daikundi & Panjab – Oxfam GB September 2006
- Contingency Plan Afghanistan – Oxfam
- Enhancing women's roles in the household economy – Lal district (Ghor province) – Consultancy mission done by URD for Oxfam - draft report.
- Making horticulture projects work in Afghanistan, Guidelines for the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of horticulture projects – FAO/ MAAHF
- OSRO/AFG/506/WFP Central Highlands Environmental Watershed Protection Project.
- Afghanistan Drought joint Appeal prepared in partnership by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United Nations.

Annex 5 - Contextual analysis on food insecurity and environmental degradation

Hazarajat

Panjao district

Agriculture. Panjao district is a food deficit area, where 90% of the active population of the district is involved in agriculture. Crops provide food for six months of each year in both valleys investigated. Agriculture in Panjao is largely for subsistence. 23 years of political insecurity and severe droughts have forced farmers to develop a survival strategy.

The average land ownership per household does not exceed 3 jeribs of irrigated land (0.6 ha). This provides the food requirements for a household of one to three families. Rain-fed land is also cultivated to address food needs, but only has a low contribution for the villages visited. Investigations on land ownership also highlight a large inequity among the farmers. 30% of interviewees are reported to be landless workers.

The cropping system is mainly based on wheat (50% of irrigated land cultivated), potato (20%), pulse (broad beans, peas and lentils) and fodder. Production of potato and pulses has slightly increased over the past 10 years. Crops are not marketed, but are for household consumption, except a part of the potato production in rare cases. Wheat and potato yields in Panjao are a third of the yields in Bamyan and Wardak provinces.

A major constraint to agriculture is the lack of access to markets for both sale of products and purchase of inputs. The winter conditions isolate Sagdez-Poiboom and Khurdak Takhta valleys from local and main markets.

The crop productivity is affected by harsh climate conditions in a mountainous district. The average altitude of Sagdez and Khurdak Takhta valleys is respectively of 2,700 and 2,800 meters. The six months' winter and late frost periods in spring, drastically shorten the cropping season and the range of technical alternatives aid agencies may propose. 75% of the wheat fields are cultivated with spring varieties, which are less productive but more adapted to short cycles.

A minority of landowners (20%) had access to improved wheat seeds in 2005 and 2006. A private market has appeared. However there are no distribution and multiplication schemes in the district. Farmers took the initiative to introduce and multiply varieties (mainly Pamir 94) in Panjao from the neighbouring districts to respond to an increasing demand. In absence of technical support, the quality has proved to be very variable. This is an opportunity for further project development.

The access to chemical fertilisers is also a limiting factor. Manure is primarily utilised as a fuel resources and little is going back to the field to maintain the soil fertility. Chemical fertilisers are available in the local market but too expensive to be bought at a large scale. The cost of urea and diammonium phosphate (DAP) is respectively of 720 Afg and 1,200 Afg per bag. This is approximately 20% higher than in Kabul market. DAP is not used, and 50% of farmers spray a small quantity of urea to cover 20 to 30% of wheat crops requirements only. Other crops are usually not fertilised. The introduction of pulses (alfalfa, broad beans) in the rotation provides part of the nitrogen required by wheat crops.

Water resources are fully available, even if a few cases of water shortage in summer are reported in the upper parts of Sagdez valley. Irrigation facilities are operational.

Horticulture. Vegetable crop production in Panjao district is limited. Yet, vegetables are required to eradicate malnutrition and improve household food and income security. Vegetables are not available in the local market. A limited range of seeds is available in the market but the quality is very variable. 20% of the families who were met are engaged in this activity mainly those who received vegetable seeds from Oxfam. The seed distribution initiative has aroused a strong interest among the

communities. However, productivity remains low in most cases. Improved technologies such as greenhouses have not been introduced and the sustainability of this initiative may be limited by the absence of knowledge on food preparation, vegetable preservation and seed multiplication.

There is no tradition of commercial fruit production in Panjao district. Fruits are imported from Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. Their availability is very limited. A few farmers are reportedly engaged in apple and apricots production (5 to 15%) for their household consumption. Those are non-grafted local saplings well adapted to the climate but low productive. In a few cases, grafted varieties have been imported from Kabul or Wardak. The establishment of fruit tree nurseries with the support of aid agencies (FAO and AKDN mainly) has created a strong demand for saplings and technical assistance on orchard management. The climate conditions are the main constraint for the development of a commercial-oriented activity especially in the two valleys. However, fruit production could contribute to food security at the household level. This requires a careful selection of species and varieties cultivated.

Community farmers have no access to extension services and technical training while significant progress in crop productivity could be made with a basic on-the-field assistance.

There are no farmer-based trading organisation operates in the district to facilitate the access to inputs supply and marketing opportunities.

Livestock. Hazarajat has a long tradition in livestock production. It forms the core of the local economy. It provides the first source of income to cover food requirements over a six months period and additional basic needs.

The herd performances are higher than in any other Afghan regions. Dairy cows produce 6 to 7 litres of milk over the lactation period. Milk is usually processed in different fresh products for the household consumption such as *do* (buttermilk), butter and yogurt. The local cheese (*grut*) is not often sold in markets even though there is a high demand in the main markets. One ser (7 kg) of *grut* costs 100 afghanis. Sheep and goats are sold for their meat in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif markets, mainly in autumn. The demand is currently high and prices are attractive (2,500 Afg for a two-year-old sheep).

The average livestock assets per household comprises four dairy cows, twenty sheep and goats, and six hens. The drought has severely affected the herd size in the early 2000s, compelling breeders to sell 50 to 90% of their asset to survive. This increased the indebtedness and the emigration of the most vulnerable families (10% of households within 10 years). So far, the herd size has largely recovered due to recent and regular vaccination campaigns. The herd has multiplied two to three times over the past 10 years despite the drought.

85% of cattle, sheep and goats are vaccinated in the district against the main diseases (enterotoxemia and anthrax). The furthest areas from Panjao centre are reportedly neglected and remain extremely vulnerable to epidemics, which may affects 50 to 75% of the herd annually. Vaccination services and other basic vet services are provided by Oxfam para-vets. Nevertheless, the frequency of para-vet field visits is limited (less than one per month), and the clinic is too far away from the valleys to address breeders' needs.

Basic veterinary workers (BVWs) were trained to provide the first aid and to take part in the vaccination campaign. Yet, 70% of BVW trained have suspended their activities expecting to be supported longer with medicine and training by Oxfam. Breeders have also demonstrated a low consideration for BVW due to insufficient qualifications. They directly refer to para-vets for advice and treatments. There are six female BVW active in Panjao district.

Investigations show that the veterinary medicine is available in the local market. The price is not as competitive as the medicine supplied by aid agencies but the quality seems to be satisfactory. Private para-vets have also started operating in Sagdez and Khurdak Takhta valleys, but with low results. Few cases of vaccines inefficiency have aroused a lot of suspicion on private operators and partly ruined all efforts of privatization.

Milk and meat performances are limited by an insufficient renewal of the genetic pool and selection practices which lead to a high level of inbreeding. The distance with Oxfam and community-based natural insemination centres is perceived as the major constraint. Second, efforts were concentrated on cattle only, and improved rams and bucks have not been introduced.

Investigations also highlight the absence of extension services to breeders to increase the herd productivity through improved management practices in feeding, housing, milking and reproduction, while there is a strong interest from the communities.

Panjao breeders are also engaged in poultry production. Each family raises 5 to 7 hens for eggs and meat consumption at the household level. Besides, a commercial farm of 80 hens was also operating in Dimetapp, Khurdak Takhta valley in 2005. The fear of the bird flu compelled breeders to kill most of their flock a year ago. This has raised the demand on the local and national markets. One egg costs 6 Afg in Kabul. It also appears that the poultry is not vaccinated against Newcastle disease.

No farmer organizations have been set up to facilitate the livestock trade. Breeders have developed an individual approach.

Natural resources management. Environmental degradation is one of the major problem in Hazarajat leading to land loss and the consequent reduction in food supply. Shortage of cultivable land has led to a vicious cycle of destruction whereby farmers grow wheat on the steep hillsides resulting in erosion of topsoil, spring flooding and land destruction. The need for bush as a fuel resource for the six-month long winter, dramatically contributes to this phenomenon.

Manure is traditionally utilised as fuel. But the quantity available has proved insufficient to address the needs of an increasing village population. Bush was the alternative and the quantity harvested is constantly growing. Three months are devoted to this activity per household, which usually leaves the mountains totally bare.

All villages visited have experienced flood destruction of irrigated land. 40 jeribs of irrigated land were washed away in 2005 in Deipetap village (Khurdak Takhta valley). 40 jeribs represents 10% of the total arable land cultivated by the village. Flood is a recent phenomenon. Ten years ago, flood disasters were every exceptional.

Interviewees are aware of the cause of floods but very little has been undertaken so far to stop the soil erosion process. In Sya Sang village, a farmer took the initiative to test a specific rain-fed alfalfa variety cultivated in Lal district with two objectives: soil protection and increased fodder resources. Protection walls would also be needed as well as reforestation along the irrigation canals.

FAO has established non-fruit tree nurseries for reforestation in the district. AKDN used to distribute non-fruit trees with limited impact. Time unavailability of farmers is the main constraint to address. The cropping season is very short (6 months only). Of these, three months are devoted to bush collection and two months for harvesting. A watershed management project has been initiated in 2005 in Panjao district with the construction of terraces and the introduction of wild almonds from Shahrstan. This could constitute a model for replication.

Ashterlai district

Agriculture. Food insecurity and poverty is the norm in Ashterlai district, even in good years and particularly in the upper valleys. Crops provide food for 3 to 6 months only in a district where 50% of the population is engaged in agriculture.

Land resources act as a major constraint in the district. The average land ownership per Household does not exceed 1.5 jeribs of irrigated land (0.3 ha). Consequently, food requirements are also provided by rain-fed lands whose productivity is 5 to 10 less than irrigated land and highly depend upon winter snow and spring rains. 10 jeribs (2 ha) of rain-fed land are under cultivation per

household. The vulnerability of the farming community is extremely high, particularly in a district, which has experienced 8 years of drought out of 10.

Wheat represents 75% of the cropping system in a context of subsistence. Corn, potato, pulse (including lentils) and fodder crops are also cultivated for household consumption. There are no cash crops.

The activity of the local market is very low. Ashterlai valleys are isolated from each other by over 3,000-meter high passes. The access to the local and main markets is a key factor for the local economic development and road rehabilitation initiative undertaken as part of the NSP programme is a real opportunity.

Though the average altitude remains high (between 2,600 and 2,700 meters), the climate conditions are warmer than in Panjao district. The introduction of corn crops and winter wheat varieties is a relevant indicator of the district's climate potential.

In Jingan valley, the spring wheat tends to replace winter wheat. This is not for climate adaptation reasons, but for pure technical reasons of weed control. But, spring wheat varieties are less productive. This illustrates the absence of extension services, which could propose basic alternatives to control the weeds and allow winter wheat varieties cultivation.

The crop yields are as low as in Panjao district. Oxfam and FAO have introduced improved wheat varieties in 2001 and 2005 respectively, but at a small scale and without any on-the-field extension to assist farmers multiplying seed and maintaining the variety purity. As a result, the seed quality is deteriorating, the farmer-to-farmer distribution process stops and the project fails to cover the all district.

Local varieties proved less productive and more sensitive to rust. The rust contamination was severe in 2005 and moderate in 2006. A severe red-rust contamination can cause up to 20% yield loss. Smut disease and locust disasters are also reported on rain-fed wheat crops.

No initiative has been undertaken so far to introduce improved potato seeds while they are available in Bamyan district.

Most of farmers apply manure every two years to maintain the soil fertility and partly address crop nutrient requirements. The quantity of organic manure sprayed is estimated at 225 seers/jerib (7.5 tons/ha). Chemical fertilisers would be needed to increase crops yields but are too expensive and hardly available in the local market.

The shortage of water resources for irrigation is the major constraint. Ashterlai district has experienced eight years of drought out of the last ten years. 70% of water needs were covered in 2006. In upper parts of Baghali Kando and Jingan valleys, the situation is worse. The irrigation stopped in June at a key stage of the crops growth. The yield loss is of 50%. On rain-fed land, losses are higher.

Horticulture. There is a significant tradition of vegetable cultivation in Ashterlai district and all families are engaged in kitchen gardening activities. Turnip, squash, onion, carrots, lettuce and radish give good results. Seeds are multiplied at the household level or bought from the local market. Oxfam has also distributed a wide range of improved seeds. All necessary elements are there for a rapid development of the vegetable production, except the water availability.

A majority of households have reportedly planted a few fruit trees for their consumption. Apricot and apples trees are mainly cultivated in Jingan and Ashterlai valleys. The fruit production is significantly developed in Baghuli Kandu valley where mainly apricots and almond are cultivated. Moreover, apricots are dried and part of the production is marketed. Farmers claim that the dried apricots are usually of a poor quality. This is due to local varieties and old methods of processing. The presence of small individual nurseries is an additional illustration of the strong interest of Baghuli Kandu farmers for fruit production. Individually, farmers do not have access to Kabul and Wardak markets to buy good quality saplings. The introduction of improved management practices would also raise the productivity of orchards.

The drought has severely damaged the vegetables and the trees. Basic reservoirs could be built to collect the water from the nearest springs and allow the irrigation of those high added-value crops.

There are no farmer trade organizations in Ashterlai district. This is an additional constraint to access to external markets for both supply of inputs and sale of products.

Livestock. Livestock is the primary source of income for most households. 50% of sheep and goat herd is annually sold to cover food requirements over a six to nine month period. Dairy products are mainly devoted to the household consumption while the meat is sold in the main national markets for cash. The current drought will force the most vulnerable breeders to sell 70 to 90% of their asset to compensate the crop failure. The absence of sufficient forage resources is an additional reason to reduce the herd size before winter. This will initiate a de-capitalization process in most of drought-affected areas.

The poultry production has been drastically reduced to prevent the bird flu expansion. There is a tradition in hence raising with an appropriate wheat-based feeding. Modern technology, such as incubator, has not been introduced so far to increase the efficiency of traditional reproduction methods. There is a strong interest from breeders to develop this activity in order to address the local and Kabul markets' expectations.

Selling of assets as well as temporary out-migration is a widespread process and a most common coping strategy in a context of regular food insecurity. Yet, the situation is alarming and the community claimed that it would leave the village if the drought lasts one more year.

Breeders' vulnerability also comes from a limited asset per household. The average livestock ownership does not exceed two cows, twelve sheep and goats and few hens. The fodder resource is a limiting factor in most valleys. Livestock are sent in the mountain where rain-fed grazing areas have low productivity. The irrigated land resources are so limited that forage largely comes from the mountains. Rain fed fodder is harvested in the steep hillsides and animals are sent to the mountains for grazing. Therefore, the availability of forage is very variable and depends upon winter snow and spring rains. Drought will affect the crops as well as the livestock performances.

Despite of an on-going drought, the herd size has been multiplied by two, over the past ten years. Recent vaccination campaigns have played a key role even if lot remains to be done. 50% of breeders had their livestock vaccinated. Competent staff resources are insufficient for a full coverage and the market still shows signs of immaturity:

There are only two Oxfam-supported para-vets operating in Ashterlai, where remote areas are very difficult to access. Moreover, the vaccine cost is still perceived as a constraint. Cultural reasons are also put forward to reject the vaccination.

There are no private vaccinators operating in the district. All the para-vets were trained by the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) but not recruited by local NGOs have suspended their activities while most of medicine needed is already available in the district market. BVW were also trained but a few of them (5 women and 3 men) are active in supporting Oxfam para-vets activities.

Ashterlai is a mountainous area where Jingan and Baghuli Kando valleys are isolated from the central Ashterlai valley by over 3,000 meter high passes. This physical constraint prevents most of breeders from accessing the basic vet facilities and Oxfam upgrading animal centre in Ashterlai valley.

The isolation of Ashterlai valleys also leads to an insufficient turnover of genitors and of the genetic pool of the herd. Inbreeding is not controlled especially within the sheep and goats flocks. The livestock productivity is therefore affected.

Performances can be significantly increased. Extension services could prove relevant to improve livestock husbandry practices targeting women and men. Women are in charge of calving, milking and feeding. Reproduction and housing are usually a man's responsibility.

Breeders have not established any community organisation to improve the access to the market. There is currently an individual approach.

Natural resources management. Floods are a serious concern among the farmer communities interviewed. In some areas, floods occur four to five times a year. In other cases, any single rain leads to flood with arable land washed away, irrigation system damaged and fields covered with deposits of mud and stones which requires additional time and labour for clearance.

Investigations show that Ashterlai district seems more severely affected by the environment degradation than Panjao district. The reason is that there is a higher pressure on rain-fed land for crops and fodder collection due to very limited irrigated land resources and bush for fuel. Needs have also increased due to the increase in the population over recent years. The pressure is so high in Jingan valley that farmers interviewed rejected our suggestion to test a rain-fed adapted alfalfa variety, arguing a lack of space.

Farmers face with time constraints for reforestation along the irrigation channels and protection walls construction, which requires the mobilisation of the whole community. Farmers are also reluctant to plant non-fruit trees in upper valleys, where the water shortage is the most critical, in order to save water for crops.

Protection walls have proved very efficient for hundreds of farmers down Ashterlai valley. There is an urgent need to extend Oxfam initiative in many other places and to introduce alternative energy projects to reduce the quantity of bush harvested.

Contextual analysis / Badakhshan province

Yawan district

Agriculture. Food insecurity and poverty is the norm in Yawan district, where a large proportion of the population is engaged in agriculture. The crops provide food for 6 months in a normal year and 1 to 2 months this year due to a severe drought. 90% of crops are presently lost.

Farmers are of an extreme vulnerability since 100% of arable land is under rain-fed cultivation. The productivity is naturally low and very sensitive to rain and snow shortage, which is a recurrent problem over the past 10 years.

A poverty cycle has been initiated leading to asset selling and out-migration. 15% of families have definitely left the region for 10 years. 30% of farmers are reportedly landless and could be the first to flee if there is no immediate emergency response. 80% of villagers do not have the resources to face a food shortage and a massive displacement is expected in the coming months.

The situation is traditionally tense in Yawan district. The inaccessibility of villages acts as an additional constraint to provide assistance in this mountainous area. In absence of road facility, horses are the only transportation means. The furthest village assisted by Oxfam is located 14 hours from Sari-Pul, Yawan centre. The combination of 2500 to 3000 meters passes with a harsh winter leads to the isolation of the district from 1st November to late March. Snow, mud and floods prevent the access to market and to other basic facilities.

Sharp improvements are expected in a short run since the main axis between Fayzabad and Yawan is currently under rehabilitation. The priority is given to road construction as part of the National Solidarity Programme.

Oxfam, Acted and Concern are the only humanitarian agencies involved in Yawan district. The coverage is limited. Less than 50% of villages are currently benefiting from agricultural aid programmes.

The scarcity of water for irrigation is the major agricultural constraint. Opportunities for irrigation facilities construction seem to be very limited. The technical and economical feasibility are to be carefully analysed.

Wheat represents 80% of the cropping system in this context of subsistence. The climate conditions allow winter wheat cultivation in the lower parts of the valleys. Spring wheat and barley are mainly cultivated from 2500 meters of elevation. Poppy is also cultivated but at a very low scale. There is no real tradition in Yawan district for poppy cultivation in comparison with neighbouring districts. The risk of drought in rain-fed land acts as a major disincentive.

The scarcity of water for irrigation, the low productivity of rain-fed land and harsh climate conditions limit the range of alternatives for change.

10 to 15% of farmers have access to fertilisers. Urea locally costs 600 to 700 Afg/bag. The market is low developed since farmers have no access to credit to purchase inputs.

Improved wheat seeds have been distributed by Oxfam to support seed banks establishment in 15 villages since 2003 and to engage a seed multiplication process. Results are of a limited scope for the following reasons. Only one third of farmers benefited from wheat seed distribution over the 3 years period. Second the drought and the lack of fertilisers, have badly affected the crop fields productivity. At last, improved wheat varieties introduced would have been less adapted to drought conditions than local varieties and as a consequence, less productive. There is no technical reference available in the district to confirm farmers' allegations.

Concern has also distributed improved wheat seeds in 2005 for multiplication but without any substantial technical extension to train and guide farmers in this process.

The provision of a substantial extension is a constraint since the district villages are not easily accessible by road. Oxfam agriculturist provides an on-the-field technical assistance once a month.

Pest damages reportedly generate high crop failures on rain-fed crops. So far, little has been done to control smut and locust damages.

Horticulture. There is an existing tradition of vegetable cultivation in Yawan district, within the village where water resources are more available. Onions, turnip, tomato, beans, squash, okra and beet are cultivated for household consumption. There is a need to increase the vegetable productivity since the land resources for vegetable kitchen gardening are very limited and the current production does not respond to family needs. Oxfam and Concern more recently have provided seeds and technical extension on kitchen gardening practices and on seed and seedling multiplication. Fair results have been obtained even if a lot remains to be done. Quality seeds are not available in the local market. The seed multiplication process is therefore essential to sustain the development of vegetable production.

Fruit and non-fruit trees are also largely cultivated within the village. According to farmers met the area cultivated cannot be expanded due to insufficient water resources and suitable arable land. Mulberry, apricots and almonds are mainly grown. Fruits are collected and dried for consumption over winter. Dried mulberry surpluses are also marketed.

Livestock. This is a key component of Yawan economy, providing families with cash to cover food and other basic need requirements. Dairy products are mainly devoted to the household consumption while the meat is sold for cash. The current drought will force the most vulnerable breeders to sell 70 to 100% of their asset to compensate the crop failure. By-products such as the goat wool are utilised locally but are not devoted to handicraft.

Household would own 1 to 2 cows, 10 hence and 6 to 7 goats in average. In reality, 5 to 10% of households would own 70% of the flock. There is a significant inequity among breeders, which leads to additional vulnerability in case of disaster.

The vaccination campaigns have brought very positive changes in a district, which used to experience 50% of annual animal mortality. However, only 20% of district villages are benefiting from vaccination services delivered by Oxfam.

Vaccinations and other vet treatments are provided by Oxfam veterinarian, one para-vet and 6 active Basic Veterinary Workers (BVW) out of 9 trained. Women BVW should also be trained in the coming weeks to strengthen the team. Oxfam facilitates the access to high quality medicine and vaccines. Other BVW are operating in the district. They were trained by Concern but are not supported with medicine supply and do not participate in the vaccination campaign since the vaccines are not available in the market. Medicine is also low available locally and the prices are discouraging (4 times higher than in Kabul).

It should also be noticed that there is no veterinary clinic in Yawan centre.

Cows productivity is reportedly very low: 4 to 8 litres of milk a day. A lot could be done to improve livestock husbandry practices. Breeders have already access to improved genetic material through Oxfam animal upgrading unit. Experience shows that breeders do not come over 1 hour walk. The access to the unit is the major constraint and the project has a limited impact except for the 5 surrounding villages.

Goats are more adapted than sheep to the local environment according to breeders. The productivity and the fertility remains low. A goat gives one kid per year only. On top of poor management practices, there are some signs of mineral deficiency that should be addressed. The genetic pool could also be renewed and improved. Breeders interviewed proved very knowledgeable on the most adopted breeds to introduce in the region and the location where to purchase them. Pakistani “Tedi” Breed could also be tested.

The access to grazing areas is usually not a constraint in Yawan district. Breeders and nomads (Kouchi) come from neighbouring districts for grazing. Nevertheless, the drought has reduced the fodder availability for winter. Fodder prices have been multiplied by 7 in one year period.

Women are involved in different agricultural activities including animal breeding. Women skill upgrading is therefore essential but requires a specific approach for cultural constraints. Women extensionists is one of key solutions

Natural resources management. Landslides and soil erosion leading to arable land destruction is a major constraint in Yawan district. There is an over pressure on rain-fed lands since they constitute the only land resource available. Cropping on hillsides totally disorganize the fragile biological balance of soil. The low quantity of organic matter spread on rain-fed land and the absence of vegetal coverage over the winter period increase the soil sensitivity to erosion. The collection of bushes for fuel accelerates the whole process of soil deterioration. So far no action has been undertaken to improve rain-fed land management.

Income generation activities. Dried mulberries and apricots are the only source of income when surpluses are sold on the market. In a context of permanent food insecurity and no access to market, Yawan inhabitants have developed a subsistence strategy. Current processing practices may be improved to increase the hygiene and the quality of products consumed and marketed. Additional activities such as beekeeping and poultry could also be introduced at a small scale to first diversify people’s diet and creates further opportunities for marketing.

The poor quality of road facilities remains a major constraint for a rapid and large-scale development of income generating activities.

Shar-e Buzurg district

Agriculture. Shar-e Buzurg is a food deficit area where 90% of the active population is involved in agricultural activities. Crops provide food for 6 months self-sufficiency. Livestock provide cash to partly cover the food requirements on the remaining 6 months period. Out-migration of 1 to 2 family members is the most common coping strategy to survive.

Shar-e Buzurg is currently experiencing a severe drought, which has already displaced 5% of families. A massive displacement is expected in the coming months if there is no quick response from the authorities and the international community. WFP Food has already been shifted in for further distribution.

95% of land is under rain-fed cultivation whose productivity is directly linked to the quantity of rain and snow in winter and spring. The district has experienced 8 years of drought out of 10. 90% of crops are consequently destroyed reducing the self-sufficiency to one to two months.

Besides water shortage, the access to quality arable land is one of the main obstacle for development. The average land ownership amounts at 10 jeribs per household. 30% to 50% of farmers are landless. The percentage has increased in the recent years due repetitive droughts and consecutive crop failures, compelling farmers to progressively sell their assets.

80% of land is cultivated with wheat, 10% with barley and 10% with oil crop. Improved wheat seeds have been provided by Oxfam through seed banks established in 25 villages. Varieties were more productive than the local varieties and the project receive a strong support from the communities. A multiplication process has been successfully engaged through the banks and with the technical assistance of an extensionist. Training and exposure visit were also organized.

Oil crop is processed and consumed locally. There is a high demand for locally made oil in main regional markets.

20% of farmers are engaged in poppy cultivation according to the Head of Agriculture of the district government office. Authorities are expecting appropriate policies and livelihood alternatives from Kabul and aid agencies to support their effort in poppy eradication. The poppy cultivation is a component of the regional economy and provides job opportunities for Shar-e Buzurg out-migrants.

The vulnerability of farmers is linked to the low productivity of crops field. The limited access to fertilizers is a constraint to address as well as the access to credit. Less than 15% of farmers is utilizing urea.

The access to market is an additional constraint in the area where 50% of villages are not accessible by car. The district is also isolated from main markets from January to March due to snow and the deterioration of roads.

Horticulture. The climate conditions are harsh and the risk of late frost in spring may compromise the fruit tree production, especially apricots and apples, which represent 20% of the production. 80% of trees are mulberry trees whose fruits are dried and mainly consumed during winter. Orchards are located within the village where water is usually available even in summer. Most of families own a few fruit trees.

Water resource is the major obstacle to extend fruit tree production in the village surroundings.

Pistachio trees are growing on rain-fed hillsides. They constitute a key source of income once cleaned and sold in the main market.

There was a tradition in rain-fed land fruit tree planting before the war with significant results on apricot and almond production. A watershed management project has been established in Shar-e Buzurg centre as a model to replicate, both to increase the fruit production and to control soil erosion. 210 farmers were trained on the spot on orchard management in rain-fed conditions and have demonstrated a strong interest. The on-going drought is the main obstacle for project replication since trees require watering the first three years of planting.

A three-jeribs nursery has been established in 2001. Oxfam is producing 3000 to 4000 saplings of various species per year including almond, walnut, apricot and peach trees mainly. A low priority has been given to pistachio and mulberry trees. Trees are distributed at the subsidized price (10afg/fruit tree 5 afg/non-fruit tree). 4500 additional saplings imported from Kabul were also distributed in 2005. There is a high demand for good quality saplings.

Vegetables are also grown on small pieces of land within the village. There is a tradition in kitchen gardening. Oxfam has widened the range of vegetable cultivated such as eggplant, tomato, okra. Oxfam has provided seeds to a large number of farmers and trained some of them on seedlings production. Seeds and seedlings produced are redistributed among the community members free of charge. The cropping season is short and new practices and technologies could be introduced to increase the length of the cropping window and the productivity so as to address household growing needs

Livestock. Livestock is a key component of a subsistence strategy providing cash to partly cover households food and other basic items needs. Dairy products are devoted to food consumption. In rare cases milk is processed in chees (“qrut”) and surpluses are sold.

Discussions with breeders show that there is a high inequity among households in terms of livestock ownership. Some families do not own any animals except a few hence and others raise hundred goats. In a context of food insecurity, this inequity is an additional source of vulnerability. Average figures report 1 to 2 sheep, 1 to 2 cows and 7 to 10 goats per household.

Vaccination services started in April 2004 with Oxfam activities. 30% of the district livestock is presently vaccinated in 25 villages out of 74. This represents a 33% coverage. In those villages the mortality rate has decreased from 50 to 25%. The rate is still high since the CCPP (Caprin Pneumonia) has recently appeared and generated high losses. Diagnosis has been lately made and vaccination should start in autumn 2006. Hence are reportedly not vaccinated against Newcastle disease. Actions are urgently needed in this field.

Vaccination is a new process in the district and the cost is perceived as an obstacle for a full coverage. The number of doses injected is constantly increasing. In 2006, 80% of the herd was protected against Anthrax in villages supported by Oxfam. Two para-vets have been trained by the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) and have opened a shop in the district to address breeders’ needs. 24 BVW have also been trained to support para-vets vaccination activities, including 10 women. It should be noticed that

Oxfam is not remunerating para-vets in the Badakhshan province. Oxfam only supplies inputs since the local market does not systematically offer a large range of quality medicine and vaccines and fair prices. In 2005, 2500 animals were treated on top of the vaccination.

Given the importance of livestock in the subsistence strategy of breeders, there is a need to provide a vaccination full coverage of the district. This requires not more than additional medicine, the recruitment of 2 other para-vets and the training of BVW and monitoring mechanisms. The establishment of one or two clinics could also prove very relevant.

The access to summer grazing area is not a constraint except there is a drought. The current scarcity of fodder will compel breeders to sell most of their livestock. Assistance will be needed to reconstitute the herd early next spring.

The upgrading of goat fertility and productivity should also be addressed through training on livestock feeding, selection and reproduction management. The access to high quality breed is also very limited.

The productivity of cows is also low. Oxfam animal upgrading unit contributes to bring changes and improvements. The approach should be adjusted to widen the number of beneficiaries. 102 cows have been inseminated since August 2004 by Oxfam bull in Shar-e Buzurg city surroundings. The interest aroused among breeders is increasing significantly in spite of strong cultural constraints. The price of “improved” calves is twice as much local breeds. In terms of milk production, it is too early to assess the improvements. Results will be available by 2007-2008 when the new offsprings will calve and give milk. Traders are coming in the district to purchase animals. There is no breeder organization to facilitate the access to market and to better control sale prices.

Natural resources management. Soil erosion and landslides are a major concern in Shar-e Buzurg district as everywhere else in Badakhshan. Oxfam watershed project is a first response. A high priority should be given to improved rain-fed land management and innovative actions should be initiated and tested.

Income generating activities. Income generating activities are very limited in the district. Pistachio is the main source of income. Wild pistachio trees grow on rain-fed hillsides and are accessible to all families. The promotion of better orchard management practices through Oxfam watershed project in Shar-e Buzurg center will contribute to increase the fruit production and to generate additional income.

Mulberry production is an additional source of income since surpluses of dried fruits are sold in the market. Mulberry trees were traditionally utilized for silk production. This activity has not been reactivated so far. This creates an opportunity for development. Technical and economical studies are primarily needed.

Beehives have been introduced in Dawung valley very recently. It has aroused a strong interest from community members and constitutes a pertinent technical reference for analysis and replication.

Annex 6 - Hazarajat Interim Programme – Livelihood component

3. Interim programme from September 2006 to April 2007

3.1. General Objective

The aim of the programme is to improve the general well being of rural communities in the Ashterlai and Panjab districts of the central highlands of Afghanistan.

Within this purview, an interim programme will be implemented from 1st September 2006 to 31st March 2007.

3.2. Specific Objective

The specific objectives of the interim programme are:

1. to exit from the districts of Lal and Waras where we are currently implementing our EC rural development programme
2. to undertake activities necessary for beginning the new rural development programme in Ashterlai and Panjab in Spring 2007

3.3. Outputs and Activities

Output 1: office in Lal and Waras closed

- Activity 1.1. relocating furniture
- Activity 1.2. handing over premises to owner, according to contract
- Activity 1.3. terminating staff contracts
- Activity 1.4. relocating staff, if required for new programmes

Output 2. local stakeholders informed of exit decision

- Activity 2.1. informing current communities and creating an elected representative group and conducting training for the same
- Activity 2.2. complete community development planning process in current target communities
- Activity 2.3. getting document signed by shuras enlisting all activities
- Activity 2.4. informing local authorities (meeting and official letter)
- Activity 2.5. informing INGOs working in districts (Afghan Aid and AKDN in Kabul and district)

Output 3. 40 target communities provided with vegetable seeds (in current four districts). The vegetable seeds distributed by Oxfam aroused a strong interest among the beneficiaries. Yet, the project impact has been limited. Vegetable productivity is low and the activity is not yet sustainable since farmers were not trained on seed multiplication. Furthermore, many communities neither know how to recognise whether vegetables are ripe enough for consumption nor how to cook many of these vegetables. This activity must be rendered sustainable before withdrawing from communities in the following way:

- Activity 3.1. providing seeds to 20 communities in autumn 2006.
- Activity 3.2. providing fertilisers
- Activity 3.3. Holding a workshop for farmers on food preparation, vegetable preservation and seed multiplication

Output 4. Current Nurseries managed. Three nurseries are currently established in Panjao (1) & Lal (2). The first saplings in this nursery will be marketed in autumn 2008. Nursery owners have received a practical training on nursery management.

Activity 4.1. providing missing rootstocks and requisite material for grafting in Panjab (autumn 2006 and Lal (autumn 2007)

Activity 4.2. providing refresher training in autumn 2007.

Output 5. fruit saplings distributed

Activity 5.1. distributing subsidized 5000 (500 beneficiaries x 10 saplings each) fruit saplings to new and old target communities for demonstration in Ashterlai district in October 2006 to prepare for activities in spring 2007.

Activity 5.2. Identifying beneficiaries and suppliers for orchard establishment

Activity 5.3. providing training on orchard establishment

Output 6. Demonstration & field experiments designed. The objective is to prepare Oxfam activities in spring 2007.

Activity 6.1. Identifying sites for future fruit tree nurseries, vegetables, crops & fodder demonstration & experiments.

Activity 6.2. designing experiments, identifying farmers and preparing contracts

Output 7. Improved Wheat seeds distributed

Activity 7.1. distributing wheat seeds to 200 beneficiaries to initiate a seed multiplication process

Activity 7.2. providing fertilisers and technical assistance

Output 8. staff capacity built

Activity 8.1. relocating agriculturists to Ashterlai

Activity 8.2. preparing technical guidelines for staff capacity building

Activity 8.3. training staff on technical aspects of crop, vegetable and fruit tree cultivation

Activity 8.4. training staff in community development exercises

Output 9. Oxfam-based animal upgrading units managed. Oxfam animal upgrading units in Panjao, Waras and Lal may stop operating by August, 31. Activities in Panjao will be initiated again in spring 2007. Ashterlai unit is to be maintained through winter.

Activity 9.1. Transferring 2 young bulls and 2 dairy cows (one in Ashterlai and one in Panjao) to Ashterlai

Activity 9.2. transferring the best calves for further regeneration to Ashterlay

Activity 9.3. selling all other animals in the 4 units, at the market price in the 4 districts.

Activity 9.4. Identifying a less expensive stable in Panjao, in compound if possible, to reinitiate activity in spring.

Activity 9.5. preparing a selection plan and all documents for technical performance record

Output 10. Community-based animal upgrading units managed. The impact of the 6 community-based animal upgrading units (3 in Panjao, 3 in Lal) is low. The risk of inbreeding, directly threatens the sustainability of the project. Before Oxfam withdraws from the district, following needs to be done:

Activity 10.1. promoting the project among the breeders' community

Activity 10.2. training breeder's on reproduction and selection management.

Activity 10.3. preparing and organising workshop for cattle breeders in October 2006 in 4 districts.

Output 11. Livestock protected. Livestock is a vital asset in the Hazarajat subsistence economy. Para-vets are still supported by NGOs in the absence of government supportive regulations. In a context of extreme vulnerability of a large majority of breeders in remote areas, privatising Oxfam clinics and para-vets in this economic and regulatory environment would lead to a closure of services, thereby preventing full vaccination

coverage of the 4 districts. Therefore, Oxfam withdrawal from Waras and Lal should be phased out slowly.

Activity 11.1. handing over Oxfam vet activities to local NGOs. Oxfam support is to be maintained in Panjao district and strengthened in Ashterlai district.

Activity 11.2. Completing the vaccination campaign in September 2006 in the 4 districts contacting DCA & AKDN and handing over Oxfam clinics in Lal and Waras, including the recruitment of one Oxfam para-vet in Lal by spring 2007. If handover is not possible, Oxfam will support Waras and Lal teams with subsidized packages/ salary, vaccines, medicine and monitoring till DCA & AKDN offer full coverage of the district.

Activity 11.3. transferring and/or two more para-vets from Lal and Waras to Ashterlai to strengthen the team.

Activity 11.4. training 2 BVW per CDC in Ashterlai and 10 BVW in Panjab in livestock husbandry management in Ashterlai and Panjao early spring/ identification process this autumn

Activity 11.5. preparing technical guidelines (in autumn 2006)

Activity 11.6. implementing pilot project of Improved stable construction/modification of 4 stables

Output 12. natural resources management activities started in Panjab and Ashterlai

Activity 12.1. preparing a watershed management project, including identification of sites and consultation with shuras

Activity 12.2. testing cultivation through distribution of alfalfa to selected beneficiaries, with sowing in autumn, in rain-fed land for controlling soil erosion and increasing fodder resources

Output 13. Passive solar houses constructed as alternative energy initiative

Activity 13.1. constructing 4 passive solar houses as pilot project (Consultation with GERES, site identification)

Activity 13.2. designing, workplan formulation and organising material for construction

Output 14. Baseline data survey conducted

Activity 14.1. conducting a survey to provide baseline quantitative and qualitative data for monitoring and evaluation.

Activity 14.2. feasibility study conducted for proposed income generation activities (spinning wool, bee keeping, poultry production, cheese processing, including markets, traders, transportation, markets, etc)

Activity 14.3. preparing questionnaires

Activity 14.4. completing surveys among the 24 CDCs in Ashterlai and Sakhdez valley villages

Activity 14.5. processing data and reporting.

Output 15. literacy classes and winter schools continued in Ashterlay and Panjab

Activity 15.1. providing literacy course and winter school teacher's salaries and covering related costs

Activity 15.2. training literacy school teachers to include functional literacy (like account keeping)

Activity 15.3. seeking to transfer literacy class activities in Lal and Waras to other NGOs

Activity 15.4. training literacy and winter school teachers in Autumn

3.5. Workplan

activities will be implemented from September 2006 to April 2006

3.6. Staff requirements per activity

- for vegetable seed distribution in 40 communities: 4 agriculturists – 3 weeks

- managing nurseries- Resources: 1 agriculturist – 7 days
- **distributing fruit saplings- Resources: 2 agriculturists – 1,5 months**
- **constructing green houses- Resources: 1 civil engineer + 2 agriculturists – 2 months**
- conducting field experiments and demonstrations; resources- 4 agriculturists – 2 weeks
- **staff capacity built Resources : 4 agriculturists, 2 community development trainers+ external consultant – 2 weeks**
- **animal upgrading unit- Resources : 2 vets + 7 para-vets – 2 weeks/ 1 animal keeper till April 200; (fodder)**
 - community based animal upgrading untis- Resources : 2 vets – 2 weeks
 - vaccination activity- Resources : 8 para-vets, 2 vets, 1,5 months; Inputs: vaccines for total cost
 - preparing guidelines for bvwt training Resources- 2 vets + external consultant – 2 weeks
 - improved stable construction as pilot project- Resources : 2 vets + 1 civil engineer : 2 months
 - natural resource management- water sheds: Resources : 1 agriculturist / 3 weeks
 - testing alfalfa cultivation in rain fed land- Resources : 2 agriculturists – 7 days; Inputs : 10 jeribs, seeds kg/ cost:
 - constructing passive solar green houses: Resources: 1 civil engineer – 3 months; Inputs:
 - baseline data collection- Resources : 10 staff – 2 months
 - literacy classes- master trainers

Total number of programme staff required

4 Agriculturists

1 agronomist- team leader

2 vets

8 para-vets (support current para-vets until spring vaccination)

1 animal keeper

1 engineer

2 assistant engineers

6 persons for conducting baseline survey for three months

2.6. Budget

budget document attached

Annex 7 - Programme logical framework matrix

[Annex Removed]

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