

Country–Led Evaluation on Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (Afghanistan)

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1. Theme:

Country–led Evaluation on Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (Afghanistan)

2. Country:

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

3. Evaluators:

- (1) Ministry of Economy, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- (2) Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB)

4. Period for Evaluation Survey:

January 2007 – March 2007

5. Descriptions of Evaluation:

(1) Background & Evaluation Objective:

(a) Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GAGP) is an aid scheme implemented by the Japanese government that aims to assist in the rebuilding and further development of Afghanistan. Given that prioritized sectors for development are health and medical care, primary education, public welfare, environmental improvement, poverty reduction, income improvement, gender issues, support for the physically challenged (education and vocational training), projects to contribute to the resettlement of ex-combatants and returnees, and rural development, the GAGP has contributed to the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development of Afghanistan since 2002. Among the various assistance programs for Afghanistan, the GAGP has been noted as one of the most successful development programs, meeting communities' important needs with long-lasting solutions.

(b) The Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB) conducted a Country-led Evaluation on the GAGP, based on a request from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy. This report aimed to evaluate the impacts of GAGP projects, get the reactions of all stakeholders concerned including beneficiaries, and suggest how to better implement GAGP projects in Afghanistan.

(2) Evaluation Target & Approach:

(a) An evaluation survey was conducted to cover 30 GAGP projects in 3 targeted provinces, namely Kabul, Nahargarhar, and Balkh.

(b) During the evaluation survey, open-ended questions were conducted with local government officials, community members, and beneficiaries, to evaluate the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GAGP) in terms of 6 points: 1) Relevance, 2) Appropriateness of the project implementation, 3) Efficiency of project implementation, 4) Effectiveness of the project output, 5) Impact, and 6) Sustainability.

6. Background:

Since 2002, international donors pledged over US \$20.5 billion, with the US as the leading donor, followed by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and the European Commission. Japan is ranked 5th among international donors in financial contribution. This foreign aid has effected a number of development programs for Afghanistan; Mine Action, The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF); the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), and the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA).

At the same time, the Afghan government must also develop some level of self-sufficiency to make any development projects sustainable. With 90 % of its budget being supported by foreign

donors, the sustainability of any Afghan reforms is a serious concern, as the Afghan government cannot function either financially or administratively on its own. Because of this inefficiency, millions of dollars in foreign aid have yet to be disbursed. As a result of this, some donors prefer to fund projects directly through national and international aid organizations in Afghanistan, and a great portion of international aid tends to bypass the Afghan government's budget. As this will eventually lead to the Afghan Government failing to develop its legitimacy and capacity, it is to be suggested that donors should play a role in creating an enabling environment within the government, raising its human and budgetary capacity, and boosting the government's control.

On a positive side, the Afghan government has developed two broad and inclusive programs for reconstruction and development: The Interim Afghan National Development Strategy (IANDS) and Afghanistan Compact. Having been presented in 2006, the IANDS aims at the development of agriculture, mining industries, regional trade, and productive use of national assets, based upon three pillars: 1) security, 2) governance, rule of law, and human rights, and 3) economic and social development.

7. Evaluation Results:

Despite the challenges involved in the international aid situation in Afghanistan, the report on the Japan's GAGP was overall a positive one. The stakeholders made positive and constructive comments on the GAGP projects. They were especially impressed by the quick manner and sustainable outcome of the GAGP projects, which they have not generally found with other donors. Moreover, the procedures taken by the IPs were praiseworthy; they cooperated well with the communities and coordinated the projects effectively with all stakeholders. The local communities, local governments, and beneficiaries were satisfied not only with the basic facilities that have been provided, but also with the work opportunities and jobs created by the GAGP projects. The GAGP was considered to be responding well to the basic needs of the community.

As for the appropriateness of project implementation, this report regards most of the GAGP projects as being properly selected, after the assessment was done by the Implementation Organizations, which was also verified by the local government. This report attributes the efficiency of the GAGP to the full involvement of the Ministry of Economy, and states that the outputs of the projects were effective and brought about great impact, as the people in the targeted areas saw considerable change.

8. Recommendations:

In the final section, some recommendations were made concerning the continuing focus of the GAGP and the local government. First, it is suggested that the international community and

Afghan government place their emphasis more on Afghan's national development programs, as there are still extremely high needs, especially in education, health, and irrigation for existing local communities and a number of returning refugees. Next to infrastructure, agriculture is also listed as a focus area.

The overall evaluation regards the GAGP project as highly effective, and the Afghan government welcomed further joint work with the GAGP. The Ministry of Economy and local governments have decided to continue their support to the GAGP, as the GAGP projects were found to be in line with the Afghan government's attempts to implement development programs. This evaluation report considers that continued cooperation allows these two to move forward together in a united effort to improve the living situation of the Afghan people.

(Note: The opinions expressed in this summary do not necessarily reflect the views and positions of the Government of Japan or any other institutions.)