

Introduction

Over the last few years, the Government has shown increasing commitment to make its development interventions more effective, enduring, equitable and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities at the district level. In order to translate this commitment into action, the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the concept of district development assembly and district development planning, which was subsequently linked with the sub-national consultation of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the provincial development planning processes conducted between June and September 2007 per request of the Inter-ministerial Committee of the Government.

District development planning is perceived as opportune mechanism for enabling communities to take charge of planning processes for their district and thereby articulate their development needs and priorities. So, it was felt necessary to establish district level community institutions to materialize this community-led development planning process. Therefore, Saighan District formed a mixed gender District Development Assembly (DDA), representing 11 clusters of Community Development Councils (CDCs) in September 2007. The cluster of CDCs and villages are presented in Annex II. The mixed gender DDA enhances cooperation between the communities and Government and ensures community participation in district development planning and management processes.

In September 2007, Saighan District welcomed a team of facilitators from the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate a comprehensive development process in the district. With their support, the DDA and district Government representatives formulated a District Development Plan (DDP) for their district..

The development planning process comprised a number of stages: coordination of the planning process with local government authorities, collection and verification of secondary data about the district, analysis of problems prevalent in the district, formulation of development goal, objectives, strategies and activities, processing of DDP and endorsement of the DDP by the District Governor.

This document explains the methodological approach for and the key outputs of the development planning process. It is expected that this plan will enable provincial and national governments, as well as donor communities, to align their resources towards the relevant development aspirations of Saighan District.

District Profile

The facilitators collected the following secondary information about the district from the provincial authorities and presented it to the participants for review, the validity of which was subsequently confirmed by the participants:

General Information	
Population (CSO 2003)	23,215
Area (AIMS)	1,741 sq. km.
Number of villages	62
Number of Community Development Councils (CDCs)	37
Average land ownership	2 jeribs (2/5 hectare) per family
Ethnic diversity	Tajik, Hazara
Sectoral Information	
Total number of schools	20
Number of health centres	2 Basic Health Centres (BHCs), 1 Comprehensive Health Centre (CHC), 12 health posts
Total length of graveled roads	88 km.

Core Problem and its Causes

The participants used the “Problem Tree” analytical methodology to identify the core development problem and its underlying causes in the district as follows:

Saighan District suffers from a very weak economy and the unemployment rate is high. Local agricultural and livestock production levels are low, grazing lands have been destroyed due to extended droughts in the area, and plant and animal diseases are uncontrolled. The local health sector has shortage of well-equipped health centres and professionally trained health personnel thus residents are compelled to take their patients outside of the district for basic treatment. Some areas of the district lack access to schools, while schools in other areas suffer from the shortage of buildings, essential education equipment and materials. The local Government administration lacks the capacity to maintain enduring peace and security in the area, reduce corruption and build the capacity of its public offices. Many villages lack road access to the district centre due to most roads, bridges and culverts and agricultural areas being destroyed by seasonal floods. And the existing copper and coal mines and other natural resources have not been exploited or extracted by the local Government.

Development Goal

In order to address the core problem in the district, the participants formulated an overall development goal for the district as follows:

To facilitate local economic development by improving agricultural and livestock production levels and quality via the provisions of modern agricultural equipment and methods; provide access to basic infrastructure services such as newly constructed and restored roads, telecommunications network coverage and public electricity, and social services such as a standardised education system and basic healthcare services; and to ensure security and peace throughout the district.

Development Objectives and Strategies

In order to achieve the overall development goal, the participants set four development objectives for the district and recommended strategies for achieving those objectives.

Objective One

To provide improved access to social services such as modern education and quality basic healthcare services.

Major Strategies

1. Provision of better access to basic healthcare services and reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates.
2. Provision of equal access and rights to a standardised education system in the district.
3. Provision of emergency relief and long-term social services for victims of natural disasters and wars.

Objective Two

To ensure overall peace and security in the area by equally implementing the rule of law in the district.

Major Strategies

1. Reinforcement of the local security forces to better impose law and order in the district.
2. Complete elimination or reduction of administrative corruption in the local Government departments.

Objective Three

To provide access to basic infrastructure services such as roads, bridges, public electricity and telecommunications network coverage.

Major Strategies

1. Regulated exploitation and extraction of natural resources and mines in the district.
2. Construction of public power generation stations throughout the district.
3. Establishment of telecommunications network systems and stations.
4. Construction of new and restoration of existing roads and bridges and establishment of a public transportation system in the district.

Objective Four

To improve agricultural and livestock production levels and quality by modern means.

Major Strategies

1. Construction of new and restoration of existing irrigation systems and water delivery schemes.
2. Construction of flood protection walls for residential and agricultural areas.
3. Establishment of veterinary clinics and provision of pesticides and other plant and animal disease prevention remedies.

Prioritized Projects Ideas

After having developed strategies, the participants identified and prioritized 43 project ideas to achieve the development objectives for the district, six of which were proposed specifically by the female participants of the mixed gender DDA. Four of these project ideas were discussed and included in the Provincial Development Plan (PDP) to ensure that community priority needs are articulated in provincial and national development plans of the Government. The PDP was prepared in July 2007 in a process of sub-national consultation and provincial development planning workshops.